

The ABCs of Effective Time Management **©copyright by Robert (Bob) W. Lucas**

Many of us today have more “things” to do than time to do them. There never seems to be a shortage of new tasks or projects – either personal or professional. The challenge is finding the time to accomplish everything that is facing you. The following may help.

Accept that you cannot do it all by yourself and ask for help from others.

Buy a time planning system (e.g. Calendar, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), time management software) and use it regularly to avoid overbooking of events, meetings and tasks.

Create a network of business professionals who can assist with various tasks and projects when you need them.

Divide major projects into small manageable tasks and delegate any that you can.

Evaluate each daily task and assign a priority (e.g. A- Must do, B-Should do or C-Do if time allows).

Focus attention on one task at a time.

Gather all materials needed for a task before beginning.

Have written goals for each day, week and month and stick to them.

Invoke others to share ideas on how to improve your efficiency.

Join professional organizations that provide networking and resources.

Keep distractions down by working on important tasks early in the day before others start work or customers begin to contact you.

Learn new time management strategies by attending seminars, reading books and listening to audio tape on the subject.

Make sure that you understand requests, instructions or projects BEFORE beginning work on them.

Negotiate with your boss and others when projects are added to your schedule and you know that you are already overcommitted.

Organize your workspace so that commonly used materials and items are within arms reach.

Prepare for morning meetings planned for the next day, at the end of the current one. This prevents last minute rushing before the meeting and possibly coming unprepared.

Qualify phone callers at the beginning of a conversation to ensure that you are the right person for them to speak with.

Recognize that some things are not worth your time doing.

Say NO to frivolous projects that do not add value to you, your life or the organization.

Take time for a mental break throughout the day in order to stay alert and performing at maximum potential.

Use meeting time wisely by having a written agenda when you are in charge or a list of key points you need to address if you are not in charge.

Verify facts before creating documents. This saves time correcting later.

Write an outline of key thoughts to use as a guide before writing a letter or article or placing an important call in which several points will be addressed.

Xert willpower when you find yourself distracted while working on a project that takes a period of time.

Yesterday is gone; don't waste time thinking about what you should have gotten done. Instead look for ways to accomplish what remains.

Zero in on a maximum of two or three key points when making a presentation.

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