Manage Your Work, Don't Let It Manage You: Tips for Managing Your Time and Getting Ahead

Goals of Time Management

☺ To be able to have control over your life - manage your time, don't let it manage you!
☺ To be healthier and happier (less stress).

Seven Suggestions for Effectively Managing Your Time

1. Be Organized

- Use time saving tools: appointment calendars, "to do" lists, e-mail, answering machines, file folders, etc.
- Have an organized workplace (don't waste time constantly looking for your work).
- Use your appointment calendar for everything, including listing study time.
- Use "to do" lists for both long-term and for each day/week.

2. Plan Ahead (Schedule it and it will happen!)

- Determine how long your tasks will take (do this before agreeing to take on a task!)
- Consider whether any activities can be combined.
- Determine if big tasks can be broken down into smaller tasks that may be easier to schedule (such as studying for exams and visiting the library as part of an assignment to write a term paper).

3. Prioritize Your Tasks

- Use an A-B-C rating system for items on your "to do" lists with A items being highest priority.
- Set goals for both the short term and long term as to what you want to accomplish.
- Look at all of your "to do"s to gauge the time requirement and whether additional resources will be needed to accomplish them (if yes, schedule time to obtain those resources). Don't postpone the small tasks (a sense of accomplishment is good and overlooked small tasks can become larger tasks.)

4. Avoid Overload

- Include time for rest, relaxation, sleep, eating, exercise, and socializing in your schedule.
- Take short breaks during study and work periods.
- Don't put everything off until the last minute (for example, don't cram for exams).
- Learn to say "no" when appropriate and to negotiate better deadlines when appropriate.

5. Practice Effective Study Techniques

- Have an appropriate study environment.
- Split large tasks into more manageable tasks.
- Read for comprehension, rather than just to get to the end of the chapter.
- Be prepared to ask questions as they come up during study, rather than waiting until just before an exam.
- Do the most difficult work first, perhaps breaking it up with some easier tasks.
- Don't wait until the last minute to complete your projects.
- Read the syllabus as soon as you get it and note all due dates (and "milestone" times) on your calendar.
- Be a model student! (be attentive and participative in class, and punctual, prepared, and eager to learn)

6. Be Able to be Flexible

- The unexpected happens (sickness, car troubles, etc.); you need to be able to fit it into your schedule.
- Know how to rearrange your schedule when necessary (so it doesn't manage you - you manage it).
- Know who to ask for help when needed.

7. Have a Vision (why are you doing all of this?)

- Don't forget the "big picture" - why are you doing the task - is it important to your long-term personal goals?
- Have and follow a personal mission statement (personal and career). (Are your activities ultimately helping you achieve your goals?)
- Know what is important to you. (What do you value most?)
- Have a positive attitude!

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