



Pacific Public Health Training Center

Where Does the Time Go? Practical Time Management Tools

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
HEA
August 5, 2008

Allison Kamerman, MS
Center Administrator
UCLA Center for Public Health and Disasters



The ***Pacific Public Health Training Center*** is a consortium of Schools of Public Health at UCLA, UC Berkeley, Loma Linda University, and San Diego State University, and the University of Hawaii Manoa's Office of Public Health Studies.

Goal

To provide public health professionals with useful tools for effective time management.

Learning Objectives

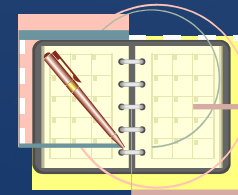
- By the end of this training, participants will be able to:
 - Apply at least four (4) techniques to improve time management.
 - Apply steps of effective scheduling to help prioritize their time.
 - Recognize at least three (3) methods useful in managing distractions.
 - Identify at least three (3) strategies to enhance team effectiveness and efficiency.

When you know how to manage your time, you gain control.

- Effective time management helps you choose what to work on and when

Systems to Help Manage Time

- Integrated Software Programs
 - Programs that manage calendar, appointments, email, tasks, notes
 - GroupWise & MS Outlook
- Calendar
 - Google & Yahoo
- PDAs/Handheld Devices
- Paper-Based Organizer (day-timer)
- Other
 - Paper calendar
 - Post-it notes
 - Whiteboard



These systems help by keeping track of information, appointments, and the tasks that need to be done,...but not the actions needed for effective time management.

Techniques to Improve Time Management

- Beating Procrastination
- Prioritized To Do Lists
- Setting Timelines
- Delegation
- Goal Setting



Why We Procrastinate

- Something else more fun
- Don't like getting out of "comfort zone"
- Too many projects – not sure where to begin
- Not sure if have skills (fear of failure)
- Waiting for right time to begin
- Waiting on others to get work back to me
- Waiting for feedback from others
- Unrealistic timelines
- Hesitate due to group dynamics

Signs of Procrastination

- Filling your day with unimportant tasks
 - Leave important tasks untouched
- Read email, but don't prioritize or do anything with it
- Getting ready to start high priority task, then do something else (i.e., check email, take break)
- Saying yes to unimportant tasks that others ask you to do and don't get to the tasks already on your plate
- Can't distinguish between the urgent/important tasks
 - React to loudest demand

Beating Procrastination

- Recognize that you procrastinate
- Understand “why” you are procrastinating
 - Factors related to you or others (i.e., group/team)
- Prioritize tasks
 - Break tasks into manageable pieces
 - Do easy/small tasks first
- Negotiate timelines with manager/project lead
- Say “No” to others
- Stay focused
- Have confidence in your skills/abilities
- Reward yourself for getting something done

To Do Lists



- To Do Lists – collection of things to get done
 - Unstructured/unplanned list
 - Actionable details are missing
 - Don't distinguish important from urgent
- Prioritized To Do List – assigns actions to tasks
 - May help with juggling multiple timelines
 - May help you feel more focused and organized

Prioritized To Do Lists

- List important tasks at the top
- Plan the order to complete tasks
 - Immediate/important vs. unimportant
- Keep tasks small and achievable – action-oriented
- Delegate what you can
- Need to constantly reprioritize



Group Exercise

Create Prioritized To Do List

Setting Timelines

- Set timelines for your Prioritized To Do List – amount of time needed for tasks
- Be realistic
- Start at the end – work backwards
- Don't sweat the small stuff (don't get buried in the fine details)
- Realize you can negotiate timelines with your manager or project lead
- Know what can be done and by when (step wise approach)
- Understand that timelines shift and rarely stay fixed

Delegation

Delegation relieves some of your own time pressures, expands jobs for others, develops skills and abilities, and empowers others.

Reasons People Don't Delegate

- Takes a lot of time
- Feel there is only one way
- Concern about others' abilities
- Don't want to develop other staff
- Waiting for the right time

Tips for Delegation

- Realize you can't do it all
- Recognize “your way” is not the “only way” – focus on outcome not details of how it should be done
- Decide what to delegate and when (if timelines allow)
- Delegate if others have skills/abilities to complete
- Discuss goals and expectations – be clear/specific
- Consider workload of others – don't over extend strong players

Tips for Delegation (cont'd)

- Provide resources for others to succeed
 - Establish realistic timelines
 - Set milestones
 - Be available for questions
 - Help prioritize
 - Provide training if needed (develop others)
 - Communicate with and support others
 - Reward success/recognize efforts of others
- Match responsibility with authority
 - Delegation does not mean that you give up the responsibility, you are still accountable for the outcome

Principles of Setting Goals

- Goal setting facilitates success
 - Goals should be:
 - Clear and specific
 - Measurable
 - Attainable – challenging, yet realistic
 - Agreed to and understood by all, especially with team project
 - Determine what you need to get done
 - Individual/personal goals (childcare, appointments)
 - Work/project goals (meetings, planning, projects, email)
 - Organizational goals (long-term goals set by management)
- Goals may help organize conflicting priorities
- Difficult goals are more motivating than easy goals
 - More of an accomplishment to achieve something you work for

Other Time Management Considerations

- Consider how you spend your day
 - Activity log – tool for tracking how time is spent
 - Pie chart – how much time spent on work, personal, etc.
- Know what time of day is your best time to work
 - Energy level and most alert/effective
- Saying No – don't overcommit
 - Protect your time
 - Depends on who is asking
 - Determine priorities



Effective Scheduling

Scheduling

- Scheduling = planning your time
- Can't just prioritize your schedule, have to schedule your priorities
- Schedule consistently – daily, weekly, monthly
- Considerations
 - Tasks not completed one day carry over to the next day
 - Time can easily get away – time is never in your control; however, you can control your time
- Need scheduling system
 - PDA, calendar, etc.



Scheduling (cont'd)

- Scheduling can help you to:
 - Know what you can achieve/get done
 - Stay focused/on track
 - Manage more than one project at time
 - Plan for interruptions
 - Leave time for the unexpected
 - Minimize stress
 - Delegate what you can
 - Balance work and personal life

Steps of Effective Scheduling

1. Identify how much time you have in your day
2. Schedule essential/high priority tasks (i.e., those measured against in your job)
3. Schedule maintenance/house-keeping tasks
4. Plan for the unexpected and interruptions
5. Schedule your discretionary time (i.e., personal priorities/goals)
 - The more time you need for discretionary activities, the less time you'll have for work
 - Monitor your discretionary time, it plays a role in how your day goes



Group Exercise Scheduling

Managing Distractions

Distractions to Time Management

- Everyday interruptions are a barrier to effective time management
- Distractions affect your ability to effectively and efficiently accomplish your goals/tasks
- Interruptions cause us to lose concentration
 - Each time you are interrupted you have to spend time re-focusing on the task/project

Types of Distractions

- Phone calls
- Email
- Clutter
- Meetings
- Appointments
- Visitors
- Conversations
- Unexpected requests



Managing Distractions

- Let phone roll to voice mail
- Minimize clutter
 - Determine importance of email or paper
 - Prioritize – handle one item at time
 - Important – act (read/reply)
 - Not important – defer (file or delete/throw away)
 - Don't need to handle (delegate)
- Review/return phone calls/emails in batches

Managing Distractions (cont'd)

Your work/office space:

- Control workspace
 - Close door or hang sign near entrance
- Control visitors
 - Have them come back later
 - Use subtle hints
 - Body language (i.e., turn body, divert eyes)
 - Get up to go to the bathroom or get a drink
 - Say you have meeting or phone call to make
 - Ask them to leave
 - Meet in another area or workspace

Managing Distractions (cont'd)

Larger work/office space:

- Ignore conversations
 - Close door
 - Ask to hold voices down
- Deal with the unexpected
 - Navigate through unplanned situations – prioritize and determine if urgent/important
- Plan for interruptions when they need your attention
 - If need to be available, do in least amount of time, but doesn't discourage others from interrupting you
 - Set a meeting, ask them to come back later, bring up at regular meeting
- Work out a plan with team members or those assigned work
 - If all you do is respond to problems or questions on tasks, you'll never have any of your own time left



Team Effectiveness and Efficiency

Team Roles

- Understand team dynamics
- People in teams assume different team roles
 - Consider roles in your office – assigned or assumed?
 - Team roles are not usually pre-determined for each project
- In defining roles, think of players' strengths and working styles
 - Teams need balance – unbalanced if all have similar working style and team role (different strengths add value)
 - Can't all be leaders, need doers – not about power, but how to best serve the project
- Value in understanding your team role – can strengthen your role in team
 - Consider project needs vs. personal style

Effective Teams

- Clear and specific goals and expectations – all working toward the same outcome
- Ensure priorities are aligned – different viewpoints of what is important
- Determine who will do what – everyone works on different piece
 - Maximize different working styles/strengths – assign tasks accordingly
- Ensure all team members are contributing
 - Feel empowered
 - Understand role
 - Part of decision making

Effective Teams (cont'd)

- Break project into achievable tasks
- Establish realistic timelines – accommodate different paces and working styles
- Set milestones – ALL are accountable
- Have meetings to discuss progress – feedback to know if on track
- Communicate – top down and peer to peer
- Keep project in motion – do what you can, especially if waiting for others to get work to you

Effective Meetings

- Planning a meeting
 - Plan ahead
 - Set time for meeting
 - Provide agenda ahead of time
 - Tell people what to expect/prepare and what they will need
 - Decide how long meeting should last ahead of time
 - Define roles (e.g., gatekeeper, timekeeper) to help facilitate
 - Stay on track (i.e., re-focus)
 - Establish action items
 - Before meeting adjourns, set date/time of next meeting

Micromanagement

- Creates feeling of powerlessness
 - Staff may feel defeated and ineffective
 - Staff not sure what expected of them
- Leads to bad environment and frustration
- Lowers morale
- Can happen with manager to staff or peer to peer
- Uses up resources
- Restricts ability to develop and grow

Signs of Micromanagement

- Micromanagers:
 - Resist delegating and take work back if mistakes
 - Immerse themselves in overseeing the projects of others
 - Correct tiny details instead of looking at the big picture
 - Discourage others from making decisions without consulting them
 - Don't trust others to succeed



How to Deal with Micromanagement

- Determine priorities
 - Deliver most that you can in least amount of time
- Keep manager or project lead in loop
 - Don't wait for them to come to you
- Demonstrate skills
 - Let them see you develop and deliver
- Clarify expectations
 - What do they want, when, how often (calendar/schedule)

Understand that project management **is not** the same as micromanagement; manager or project lead is still accountable for the final deliverable and there needs to be a certain amount of project oversight involved.

Conflict

- Conflict is inevitable when working with other people
 - Differences between people can cause problems
- Be constructive – develop plan to deal with conflict
- Conflict can be good – team with differences can be more effective
- Conflict involves emotions, perceptions, and actions
- Some teams require more time to resolve conflict

Conflict Resolution Techniques

- Recognize there are different styles of conflict resolution (i.e., different levels of cooperativeness and assertiveness)
 - Understand how to work with your team dynamic – some teams will work better than others
- Be positive and focus on good relationships
 - Remind team they are valued
- Focus on issues not the individual (i.e., separate people from problem)
 - Focus on what need to do to get the project done
 - Try not to get emotionally charged – it's a non-emotional thing
- Listen to all viewpoints/positions
 - Understanding other perspectives makes team stronger
- Discuss options – search for resolutions as a team
- Negotiate the best solution



Thank You!

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