FIRST THINGS FIRST!

By Terence Mauri, Business speaker and Consultant at Leaders First

Did you know that an 8 hour day is only 480 minutes? In that time you have to complete tasks, meet deadlines, attend meetings, speak to clients, manage interruptions, write emails, handle voicemail and that's all before lunch! Speed is now king. You must now be effective at working, often under pressure where the art of prioritization, delegating and protecting your time are must-haves.

It's no surprise that according to a recent global survey by Accenture on management productivity, over 80% of respondents agreed that 'they often felt there weren't enough minutes in the day to achieve everything'. Can you relate to this? In Japan, this condition is known as Karoshi – death at your desk from stress. A fate to be avoided at all costs!

> *I am definitely going to take a course on time management… just as soon as I can work it into my schedule'.*
>
> *Anonymous*

The good news is there are some proven ways of managing your time and staying in control. If you use these skills well, then you will be able to function effectively, even under intense pressure.

At the heart of time management is an important shift in focus:

- Concentrate on **results**, not on being busy .
- The **80:20 Rule** - 80% of your outcomes come from 20% of your inputs.
- Write down your long-term goals. Use the **SMART** formula; make them Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic and Time-bound.
- Every day, divide your tasks into **A, B and C priorities**. Always start with a high priority "A" task, even if you can only accomplish a small part of it.
- Block off time for activities that are important. **Make an appointment with yourself**, and don't let anyone schedule anything for the time you've put aside.
- **Stop spending time on trivia.** Don't spend hours writing an email when a good conversation will suffice.
- Have the courage to say **no**. Don't try to please others all the time. Create personal boundaries that make it easy to say no and stick to your plan.
- Always start meetings **on time.** Don't punish those who show up on time and reward those who are late.
- **Slow down**. Productivity isn't about going fast. It's about doing the right things.
- **Avoid procrastination** by completing unpleasant tasks first.
- Don't be a **slave to email!**
- Create time for **balance** in your life. Plan for balance the way you plan for work.

> *The key is in not spending time, but in investing it'*
>
> *Stephen R. Covey*

REMEMBER!

Even if you haven't got a plan, it's still a plan. Use the above techniques to save time and get more done. Good Luck!

ABOUT TERENCE MAURI

Terence is a leading business speaker in leadership and management issues. Recent clients include NBK Capital, Mubadala, Barclays Capital and 10 Downing Street. His new book '***Management Excellence – What Managers Do***' is due to be published in the autumn.

Terence will be a regular contributor to The Box and providing us with his management insight. If you would like to ask Terence a question please email us on
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