

Clockstoppers

The Success Series: Managing Time More Effectively

By Stefan Swanepoel

Time is fleeting...frustration takes its toll. Time is one of the world's most abundant commodities, yet strangely enough also one of its scarcest. We all have it. We all use it. Yet we all waste it. In the end it is he, or she, who uses it wisely, wins. Everyone receives an estimated average of 25,550 days to use in their lifetime. Managing that time wisely is the name of the game. You must learn to plan, compartmentalize, prioritize, multi-task and above all be decisive. I will not profess to have a timeless solution, but hope that this 5-Point Action Plan, taken from The Success Series (www.iSucceed.com) will empower you to optimize yourself in the 24 x 7 world we live in today.

1. Plan

Success can not be recreated or managed if it is not planned. You must first have a statement of your goals. Break them up into long, intermediate and short term goals. Decide what it is that you enjoy doing and what it is that you are good at. Concentrate on your strengths. Draw up specific plans so that you can have a visual reminder, then do not forget and do not stray off course.

2. Compartmentalize

Confusion leads to chaos, and managing chaos is, on a good day, very complicated. Furthermore, confusion is a time-killer. When it comes to time management we must, in the midst of the fire, maintain excellent organizational and concentration skills. Consolidate what needs to be done by compartmentalizing and listing the tasks. Decide what's in and what's out.

3. Prioritize

Within each compartment you must now create stages so that you can monitor progress. Break larger tasks into smaller ones. Identify the difference between the tasks of lower importance and those of a higher value. Allow for off-time and less productive time. If we look at past failures, we often find it was our faulty "situation-appraisals" and resulting choices that ate up precious time and created stress. Accurate time management requires not only a good game plan but proper execution as well.

4. Multi-tasking

The most effective way to create "extra" time in your day is the ability to cause different tasks and events to occur simultaneously. Learn to focus on those projects that have a critical timeline, or cause bottlenecks, or may hold up other people or events and ensure that they receive preferential attention. Not more time, but rather more timely action should be your plan, so that any project that can take place concurrently with another is pipelined to do so.

5. Be Decisive

So much time is lost due to indecisiveness, vacillation, and duplication of effort. You have planned and prioritized the tasks. You know what must be done. Bring a positive attitude and thought to your judgment and action, and do what you have set out to do.

In Closing

'Dark Side of the Moon' was on the American TOP-200 for a record breaking 724 weeks – that's 14 years. In one of the songs on the album entitled "Time", the lyrics read "*and you run and you run to catch up with the sun, but it's sinking...every year is getting shorter, never seem to find the time.*" Don't let this be the message of your life. Take a stance. Make a decision. And in world famous words from the Nike slogan, "*Just do it!*"

Acknowledgement

This article is part of "*The Success Series*" by Stefan Swanepoel author of 11 books and whitepapers, and a celebrated speaker to more than 250,000 people on five continents. Stefan is CEO of The RealtyU® Group, the largest real estate education, training and career development company (www.RealtyU.com) in the US.