

Improve your time management

The one resource at your disposal that is totally fixed is the time you have available to do your job. There is nothing you can do to make the day any longer. Therefore, it is vital to save time wherever possible, to enable you to have time to do the important things you need to do. So how do you go about it? The only way is to achieve an improvement in the way you use your time is to spend some time to work out how, in the longer term, you can make better use of the time you have.

Overall, you need to:

- Analyse how you spend your time.
- Set yourself goals, so that you know what you have to achieve.
- Develop plans to enable you to achieve those goals.
- Reduce the pressures on your time.
- Remove those activities that are time wasters.
- Use delegation to save some of your time.
- Re-allocate the time you have to provide more effectiveness.
- Use time to think creatively.

Your work style

One of the key factors that affect the way you manage yourself and your time is your work style. People can be broadly categorised into two types of personality. The categorisation stems from research into the relationship between behaviour and heart disease.

Some people indulge in the cut and thrust of life, are always action driven and are aggressive in their approach to achieving more in less time. These are called type "A". Conversely, there are those that are much calmer, take things more methodically and never seem to struggle with achieving too much in too short a time. These are called type "B".

In reality, most people are a mix of the two types but generally have a leaning towards one or the other types. The research found a clear link between type 'A' people and an increased likelihood of heart disease. The problems that each type may experience are:

Type "A"

- Have difficulty in controlling the amount of work they handle.
- Are quick to say yes and slow to say no.
- Have difficulty in delegating work and when they do tend to be imprecise in the setting of the task and undisciplined in following up.
- Have problems prioritising work.
- Tend to be poor at planning their work.
- Are more concerned with quantity rather than quality of output.
- Can be poor communicators and poor listeners.
- Manage their work according to the deadlines.

Type “B”

- Tend to under-achieve.
- Can become complacent about their own performance.
- Plan poorly because they are not under pressure to plan their work.
- Have difficulty in prioritising their work.
- Tend to assess their work by high standards rather than quantity.
- Can be imprecise in delegation being rather vague in their briefing.
- May have poor control over their work team, being reluctant to discipline.

Action points

Once you've identified your personality traits from the list above and can broadly place yourself into one of the two categories, there are things you can do to improve your work performance.

If you are a type “A” person:

- Set yourself performance goals. Make sure the standards you set are right and measure your output against the targets.
- Decide what you are going to do, and do it.
- Be prepared nicely to say ‘No’ when others keep making demands of you.
- Be rigorous in planning your work.
- Delegate more and stop trying to do it all yourself.
- Learn to relax more.

If you are a type “B” person:

- Set yourself stretching goals and aim to achieve more. You will probably need to ensure your standards are realistic. You do not always have to strive for perfection.
- Concentrate on the work you have to do.
- Plan your work and use of time more effectively.
- Plan to accomplish more at the right standard.

REMEMBER!!

Keep a record of the changes you make and monitor the success of those changes. Make one change at a time and measure it before moving onto the next one or you will be unable to identify what works and what doesn't. Ultimately, success should result in more being done in the same time.