

THE TIME MANAGEMENT POCKETBOOK

6th Edition

By Ian Fleming

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

“This splendid little book respects our intelligence and time. It also puts to shame all the gimmicks to which we have been subjected of late.”

Abdulla Ali Uqba, Chief Executive, Al Atheer, Development & Management Consultancy, Dubai

“More than just a guide to better managing your time - it’s a collection of simple, yet effective, tips and reminders to help keep you on track.”

Linda Harlow, Director, Brook Street plc

“Contains a wealth of practical tips to help busy managers manage their time better.”

Viv Clements, Training Officer, Aylesbury Vale District Council

CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION

5



MANAGING WHAT YOU DO

11

Job clarification, procrastination, setting priorities, estimating time, planning



MANAGING WHERE YOU WORK

31

Dealing with paper, filing, tips for the regular traveller/working on the move



MANAGING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

41

Listening, handling the phone, email, reading, writing, meetings, chairing meetings



MANAGING TO WORK WITH OTHERS

81

Working with your boss, being part of a team, handling interruptions, assertion, saying 'No', asking for help



MANAGING EVERY DAY

101

Prime time, taking control, problem solving, mind mapping, making decisions, stress

MANAGING WHAT YOU DO

WHAT TO DO FIRST?

SETTING PRIORITIES



Most of us have too much to do. How then do you decide what you should do and in what order? Typically we:

- Do things that we like doing – not what we need to do
- Usually start with the easy jobs that create a sense of satisfaction
- Think that we have to give priority to every job we are faced with
- Only realise the true priorities (*what's really important*) in life when we have a real problem to face

Ask yourself: ***Is the job so important as to be a priority – should I do it?*** If so:

- In which order should the jobs be handled?
- How much time should you give to each?
- When are you going to start?

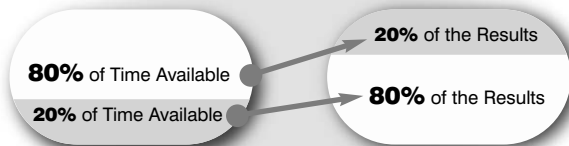


MANAGING WHAT YOU DO

PARETO (80/20 RULE)



If you have several jobs to do and are not sure where to start, the Pareto (80:20) concept could help you decide.



It suggests that a relatively small number of causes results in a large percentage of effects. In other words, some jobs are more productive than others. The secret is to know which ones they are and focus on them.

It could be that 20% of what you've got to do produces 80% of your results. These tasks give you a high return for your efforts.

On the other hand you may be spending 80% of your time on activities that only produce 20% of your results, not a good use of time!



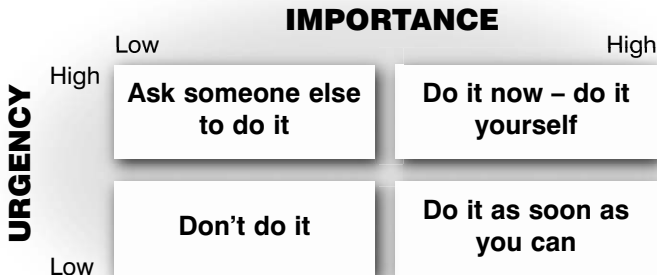
Concentrate on high payoff activities.

MANAGING WHAT YOU DO

DEALING WITH THE UNEXPECTED



- Unexpected events happen throughout the day and will affect what you plan to do
- Urgent jobs don't always have the highest payoff yet get priority over important ones
- Important jobs are the ones on which you should focus to be effective
- Use the model below to help prioritise when the unexpected crops up



MANAGING WHAT YOU DO

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SYSTEM



- Think of a system as a discipline – a routine – that you get into
- Most successful people have a system for managing their time
- People who are good at multi-tasking are usually highly organised, in their own minds, though they may not use any manual system
- So what's the secret? Answer ... there is none!

People who make good use of their time:

- Have worked out and developed a system that works for *them*
- Rarely – if at all – rely *exclusively* on any of the products that claim to be essential to time management (eg: a time method or the latest technological gadget)
- Use a system that *combines* their own ideas and those they have learned from others

MANAGING WHAT YOU DO

DIARIES



A good diary can be an important part of any system you adopt. It provides practical benefits, such as:

- A record of what you plan to do and what has been achieved
- A source of information and reference
- A way of keeping control over your activities and life
- A prompt for those with poor memories

Many forms of diary system are readily available, from hand-held electronic devices and laptops to paper versions if you prefer to physically write down information. Choose what works for you.

Whatever you use, remember that it is an **aid** to managing time – do not let it rule your life. You still need the skills outlined in this book.



MANAGING WHAT YOU DO

ESTIMATING TIME



The hardest time management skill to master is estimating the time a task will take. Why?

- You do not always know how long an activity will take until you get into it
- Interruptions (see pages 92-93 on dealing with them) break your concentration
- People, on whom you are relying, let you down
- Your available time is dictated by others, eg: customers who make their own demands

Underestimating can have implications for both you and others. Improve your chances by:

- Being realistic in your estimates (What does experience tell you? Will some jobs take longer than you expect?)
- Taking account of other demands in your work and in your life
- Asking 'What could go wrong?' (and never assuming that things will go to plan)



As far as possible, always overestimate how long jobs will take.

MANAGING WHAT YOU DO

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING



If you want to achieve your goals, make good decisions or avoid pitfalls then planning is the key.

- Use job clarification to agree objectives and priorities for both jobs and projects
- Break large tasks into manageable chunks, each with their own timescale
- Work on turning these into actions by making detailed plans
- Identify what needs to be done, by whom and by when
- Use planning systems that are available, don't do everything in your head or as you go along
- Don't forget that plans can always be changed; however ...

***IF YOU
FAIL TO PLAN
THEN PLAN TO FAIL***

MANAGING WHAT YOU DO

THE DANGERS OF LISTS!



Often on time management courses you are encouraged to compile a daily *To Do* list.

In theory such a list helps you to:

- Convert bigger plans into smaller tasks
- Focus on what needs to be done thereby improving your productivity
- Gain a sense of achievement through the completion of a series of smaller tasks

In reality you could end up:

- With a list that's far too long – and varied – to ever achieve
- Having to transfer jobs from one day to the next
- Thoroughly demoralised at achieving very little on your list

Only write a list if it is linked to a specific task that you have to do (eg: organising a meeting, introducing a new procedure). This will act as a useful reminder. Don't, though, list every planned activity.

MANAGING WHAT YOU DO

HOW TO ORGANISE YOURSELF



Everybody has their own way of working – what works for some doesn't work for others. Whatever you do:

- Be clear about what you are doing and why (Should you be doing it in the first place?)
- Try to arrange your work into manageable chunks or tasks to help you concentrate your mind and efforts
- Create a weekly or daily plan to give yourself:
 - sufficient lead-in time for major tasks
 - an overall picture, in case you need to change what you do (in response to those days when you achieve nothing!)
- Be realistic – you can only do so much in a day
- Review your plan throughout the day
- If the pressure is on consider what you can drop



Put your efforts into key tasks every day - focus on payoff instead of urgency.

About the Author

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