

Vritti Solutions Ltd's

The Time Management Treatise

Vol 1

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Productivity is the zeitgeist of our times. The concerted human effort to improvise and make effective utilization of one of the most valuable resource available to mankind i.e. time has led to the evolution of many ingenious perspectives on productivity improvements.

The concepts and techniques mentioned in this e-book have enabled both individuals as well as organizations make better decisions regarding managing this crucial resource. This is an attempt to view the concept of time management from a more comprehensive perspective entailing cultural concepts, science of interruption and moving on to techniques and an interesting automation tool which facilitated efficient time management.

1. CULTURAL CONCEPT OF TIME

Old friends pass away, new friends appear. It is just like the days. An old day passes, a new day arrives. The important thing is to make it meaningful: a meaningful friend or a meaningful day. Most often, when we are immersed in our own culture, it is difficult to understand how those from other societies distinguish our culture, customs, and way of life. In addition, some characteristics of our culture are so deep-rooted in our minds and so routine to us that we begin to feel they are universally accepted. Time is seen in a particularly different light by Eastern and Western cultures, and even within these groupings assumes quite dissimilar aspects from country to country.

In the Western Hemisphere, the United States and Mexico employ time in such diametrically opposing manners that it causes intense friction between the two people. In Western Europe, the Swiss attitude to time bears little relation to that of neighbouring Italy. They do not calculate the passing of time in the same way that the Japanese do. In Britain the future stretches out in front of you. In Madagascar it flows into the back of your head from behind. Time also has a huge effect on interpersonal relations within a society.

Most countries, cultures, or civilizations, can be related with a pace that can be described as either comparatively fast, or comparatively slow. There is a common tie-in between the faster-paced countries of the world. Often, what is found in these studies is that the more industrialized and economically developed a country is, the more fast-paced it will be. Less developed or developing countries tend to have slower paced lifestyles.

2. INTERRUPTION SCIENCE

You must be getting interrupted every day at work, isn't it? Being it a big crisis or a simple break, chances are you don't even realize how much time you're losing to those interruptions. Interruption science is the "study of the effect of disruptions on job performance". Many office workers face a number of interruptions due to e-mail, phone calls, and visits from co-workers, all of which may be annoying and may somehow affect their output. For professions such as pilots or nurses, interruptions could have major consequences, as they could lead to costly or even life-threatening errors.

Notifications have become a continuous occurrence in modern life. We receive notifications from various sources, whether there be a message from a friend or a phone call. In the office workplace, notifications may be disturbing. Research has been conducted to discover solutions for problems due to notifications, while also keeping in mind the various benefits they produce. According to Gloria Mark, a leader in interruption science, the average knowledge worker switches tasks every three minutes, and, once distracted, a worker takes nearly a half-hour to resume the original task"

Researchers encourage people to try to limit their e-mail use via dialogue boxes, sound alerts, and the frequency at which they are alerted about new e-mail.

3. GETTING THINGS DONE

Getting Things done is a time-management method, described in a book of the same title by productivity consultant David Allen. It is often referred to as GTD. The GTD method rests on the knowledge of moving planned tasks and projects out of the mind by recording them externally and then breaking them into actionable work items. This allows an individual to focus attention on taking action on tasks, instead of on recalling them. In time management, task priorities play a central role.

Allen's approach uses two key elements — control and perspective. He offers a workflow process to control all the tasks and promises that one needs or wants to get done. Unlike some concepts, which focus on top-down goal-setting, GTD works in the reverse direction. Allen claims that it is often difficult for individuals to emphasize on big picture goals if they cannot sufficiently control the day-to-day tasks that they frequently must face. By evolving a system that clarifies and defines the regular workday, an individual can free up mental space to begin moving up to the next level of focus. GTD is based on storing, tracking and retrieving the information related to the things that is essential to get done. Mental blocks we come across are caused by insufficient 'front-end' planning. This means thinking in advance, generates a series of actions which can later be undertaken without further planning.

The GTD workflow consists of five steps: collect, process, organize, plan, do. Once all the material is collected in an inbox, each item is managed and organized by answering "What is it?" questions as showed the black boxes in the logic tree diagram.

As a results, items end up in one of the eight oval end points in the diagram (trash, someday/maybe list, reference filing system, task to create a project plan, done in under two minutes, delegated "waiting for" list, a context-based single-step task list, or on the calendar). Next, project planning occurs. Multi-step projects are assigned a desired outcome and a single "next action." Lastly, the tasks on the suitable context-based task list are worked on unless the calendar dictates

otherwise.

4. POMODORO TECHNIQUE

The Pomodoro Technique is a time management technique established by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980's. The technique uses a timer to break down work into intervals traditionally 25 minutes in length, divided by short breaks. These breaks are known as "pomodori" which is the plural of the Italian word pomodoro which means "tomato". The technique is based on the knowledge that regular breaks can increase mental alertness. The "Pomodoro Technique" is named after the tomato-shaped kitchen timer that was first used by Cirillo when he was a university student.

Below are five simple stages to execute the technique:

- *Decide on the task to be done
- *Set the pomodoro timer to number of minutes (traditionally 25)
- *Work on the task until the timer rings.
- *Take a short break (3-5 minutes)
- *After four pomodori, take a longer break (15-30 minutes)

The stages of planning, tracking, recording, processing and visualizing are important to this technique. In the planning stage everyday jobs are arranged by recording them in a "To Do Today" list. This permits users to estimate the effort that the task requires.

After the task is completed, any time remaining in the pomodoro is dedicated to overlearning. Regular breaks are taken, aiding accommodation. A short (3-5 minute) rest splits consecutive pomodori. Four pomodori form a set and a longer (15-30 minute) rest is taken between sets. A vital aim of this technique is to decrease the effect of internal and external disturbances on focus and flow.

5. MoSCoW METHOD

MoSCoW Method is a useful method used in management, business analysis, and software development to reach a mutual understanding with stakeholders on the significance they place on the delivery of each requirement also known as MoSCoW prioritization or MoSCoW analysis. The MoSCoW categories are as follows:

'M' stands for "MUST". It describes a requirement that must be satisfied in the final solution for the solution to be considered a success.

'S' stands for "SHOULD". It represents a high-priority item that should be included in the solution if it is possible. This is often a critical requirement but one which can be satisfied in other ways if strictly necessary.

'C' stands for "COULD". It describes a requirement which is considered desirable but not necessary. This will be included if time and resources permit.

'W' stands for "WON'T". It represents a requirement that stakeholders have agreed and will not be implemented in a given release, but may be considered for the future.

The 'O's in MoSCoW are added simply to make the word pronounceable, and are often left lower case to indicate that they do not stand for anything. MOSCOW is an acceptable variant, with the Os in upper case.

MoSCoW is often used with time boxing, where a deadline is fixed so that the focus can be on the most significant requirements, and as such is seen as a core aspect of rapid application development (RAD) software development processes, such as Dynamic Systems Development Method (DSDM) and agile software development techniques.

6. MAESTRO CONCEPT

The Maestro concept is a time-management technique which is used in journalism in order to support the newsroom work in a project-based, teamwork-intensive manner by "thinking like a reader". The Maestro Concept has been created by Leland "Buck" Ryan who is now the director of the Citizen Kentucky Project of the Scripps Howard First Amendment Centre.

The Maestro concept arises with a "great story idea" that is generated through combined idea-group meetings to form stories before they are written and integrates writing, editing, photography, art, and design. The Maestro concept is not applied to all stories all the time. The concept applies only to those stories that are integrated with photographs, design elements, and infographics. It is a method designed to improve presentation of important stories through teamwork that gets the story to life and results in high effect and high readership. The Maestro concept was developed through an "approach to newsroom management, organization and operation that applies W. Edwards Deming's management principles used in manufacturing to the creative process".

High schools have progressively used the Maestro concept to introduce students on how a newsroom functions. The online High School Journalism Initiative has lesson plans devoted to introducing high school students to the concept. One lesson plan titled "conducting the orchestra: how to implement maestro" details how students can be taught to build small teams that are able to motivate, be productive and encourage quality throughout the school year. High schools have stated that subsequently the concept was introduced; students who have never earlier worked together find that they can coordinate fully reported stories and photos in one day. Besides meeting deadlines, students working together see that their story packages are of higher quality and often have a better page presence.

7. TIME BOXING

In time management, time boxing assigns a fixed time period, called a time box, to every planned activity. Quite a lot of project management approaches use time boxing. It is also used for individual use to address personal tasks in a smaller time frame. It normally includes having deliverables and deadlines, which will improve the output of the user.

Time boxing is used as a project scheduling technique. The schedule is divided into a number of distinct time periods (time boxes), with each part having its own deliverables, deadline and budget. Without time boxing, projects commonly work to a fixed range, such that when it is clear that some deliverables cannot be completed, either the deadline slips (to allow more time) or more people are involved (to do more in the same time). Usually both happen, delivery is late, costs go up, and frequently quality suffers.

With time boxing, the deadline is fixed, but the scope may be reduced. This focuses work on the most vital deliverables. Time boxes are used as a form of risk management, to clearly classify uncertain task/time relationships, i.e., work that may easily extend past its deadline. Time limitations are often a primary driver in planning and should not be altered without considering project or sub-project critical paths. That is, it's usually important to meet deadlines. Numerous successful software development projects use time boxing, particularly smaller ones. A lack of detailed specifications typically is the result of a lack of time, or the lack of information of the desired end result (solution). In many types of projects, and especially in software engineering, analysing and defining all requirements and specifications before the start of the realization phase is impossible. Timeboxing can be a favourable type of contracting for projects in which the deadline is the most critical aspect and when not all necessities are totally specified up front.

8. PRIORITY MATRIX

Priority Matrix is a task management software application that is supported on a number of platforms, including Microsoft Windows, Mac OS X, Android, and iOS. It is established on the Eisenhower Method of arranging tasks by urgency and significance in a 2x2 matrix. Priority Matrix brings to you a cloud-based synchronization of data, permitting for data management across multiple devices. The application is also loosely based on David Allen's Getting Things Done methodology of enlightening productivity.

Quadrants-based task prioritization- The 2x2 time management matrix, detailed in Stephen Covey's book, First Things First, is the common framework on which Priority Matrix is run. The quadrants establish tasks based on importance and urgency. In Priority Matrix, the four quadrants' default labels are: Critical and Immediate, Critical but not Immediate, Not Critical but Immediate, and Uncategorized.

Across the various platforms, Priority Matrix has over 90,000 paid customers and has been ranked among the 10 highest downloaded productivity apps in the Apple App Store. PC Magazine has ranked the iPad version of Priority Matrix among its 100 Best iPad Apps in 2011, 2012, and 2013.

9. JUGAAD

Where there is a will, there is a way' this inspiring English proverb has a one word Indian counterpart - JUGAAD. Jugaad is great a way to deal with things when there is no way that is working out. Jugaad can also be termed as the most inventive, cost-effective and quality method to achieve the desired task by unusual / unimaginable means and ways. The basic raw material required is pure determination, and results are usually innovative. The Jugaad concept can be compared with the Western concept of a hack or kludge. Although in its general meaning "hack" is very similar to "jugaad", a jugaad can be believed of more as a survival tactic whereas a hack is seen as an intellectual art form. Both theories express a need to do what needs to be done, without regard to what is conventionally supposed to be possible.

Jugaad is progressively accepted as a management technique and is recognised all over the world as an acceptable form of economical engineering at peak in India. Companies in India are implementing Jugaad as a practise to reduce research and development costs. Jugaad also applies to any kind of innovative and out of the box thinking or life hacking, which make the most of the resources for a company and its stakeholders. Believe it or not, Indian Jugaad is the most happening technology.

10. TIME MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE — VWORKBENCH

Time management is a specific area of an organisation. It is individual management of tasks and resources. It involves scheduling and arranging. When we are under stress we juggle with a lot of things to do and hence we need to sort our activities. Nevertheless, some people struggle in managing their time well. We are all embarrassed of wanting to 'put things off until tomorrow'.

If time is not managed effectively, individuals become unproductive and worried. People with hidden disabilities often leave things to the last moment and this can quicken a creative surge and some brilliant work may be achieved. But, from the point of view of day-to-day management in the office this may not be acceptable. Increased stress can have a very weakening effect on some people's performance. In education, late delivery or additional time is given allowance but these adjustments are rarely practical at work.

With the advancement in technology we now have a lot of softwares coming up. There are various time management softwares that are available in the stores and online for a very cheap price. Vworkbench is one such software that provides effective time management at affordable price. Get yourself updated with technology and get time management software and always be on time.