# Time Management

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Apologies: Barnett Donna (Flu)

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What counts is not the hours you put in but what you put into the hours

Discussion revolved around the following handouts:

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|---|
| What Counts |
| The Time Management Matrix |
| Time and Administritis |
| Time Capsules |
| Four generations of time management tools |

The Time Management Matrix recognizes four Quadrants:

| | *URGENT* | *NOT URGENT* |
|---|---|---|
| *IMPORTANT* | **Quadrant 1** | **Quadrant 2** |
| *NOT IMPORTANT* | **Quadrant 3** | **Quadrant 4** |

Ideally, **if** you are well prepared, well planned, and exercise good time management **then** you will occupy the bliss of Quadrant 2 from where you will see what is coming and will not thus end up as a crisis manager in Quadrant 1. But life is rarely that simple:

- CED involves working with a wide range of volunteers who have their own time priorities and their own ideas of what is urgent and important. There is need to respond.
- Sometimes it is difficult to self motivate on boring tasks. Immediate deadlines (crises) can be a useful spur to action.

There was **general appreciation** that:

- some red tape (standard procedures and routines for recording and reporting) can be useful but we do not want it to cut into 'real work' time.
- it pays to take time to understand and master key skills at an early stage (e.g. touch typing, mail merging etc) as this can save a lot of time later. We should deliberately set

time aside for this.

- people sometimes need to hide away from interruptions (phone calls and drop-ins) so as to concentrate on major pieces of work
- setting aside time for 'reflection' can be very useful – especially in groups where people bring their different points of view. (e.g. our Friday lunchtime sessions)
- putting personal items and work items on the same calendar helps prevent work taking over life.

There were **mixed feelings** about the 'Logs' suggested on the handout on *Time Capsules*. They could be time consuming if carried to extremes but it might be useful to think about them sometimes to 'reality test' how we *actually* spend our time.

*"Outstanding entrepreneurs are frequently dropouts, and they may well be dyslexic ... Generally they are people with a great urge to achieve and lots of drive. They like challenge and don't work well in a very structured environment. They have limited attention span and are keen on action. They are generally disturbers of the established order."*

Meredith Belbin (2001) *Evolution and Entrepreneurship*; Ambassador (Jan/Feb 2001)

We **took issue with** the theory that professionals should delegate routine administrative tasks to clerical staff. Staff divisions are not always clear cut in CED. Volunteers may begin doing clerical work (stuffing envelops) but they should be encouraged to take on professional duties (dreaming dreams) as part of their personal development. Sometimes it is good for the professionals to stuff envelops because it is relaxing and allows the subconscious to mull over the big thoughts. Duncan and George also noted that it is good psychology for 'bosses' to engage in 'menial' work as it makes such work seem more important and makes the 'bosses' seem like nice guys. It was also noted that there is at least one CED organisation in Aberdeenshire where the 'Board" very clearly does not see its role as stuffing envelops – the organisation has no volunteers!

Most of us now have diaries in which we record what will and has happened. Donna will probably have the database ready some time next week so we can try transcribing into it using the codes. To goal is to have a useful recording/reporting system using a process that is as fast and painless as possible.

Volunteer time

Many volunteers who are able and willing do not recognize their limitations. They take too much on themselves and therefore a lot is left undone. We need to help such people recognize their limitations – perhaps by introducing them to time management theories!

Some CED tasks are large and time consuming. People can easily lose heart. So it is useful to carve up the task into a series of manageable bits. Then there can be a series of small successes which will motivate people to keep going.

How do you eat an elephant?

One mouthful at a time.

(Don't bite off more than you can chew!)

### 3. The role of paid staff in CED organisations

Projects change gear and character when they take on paid staff. Sometimes the staff are viewed

as envelop stuffers and sometimes as fund raisers or project managers. In whatever case their role tends to change over time. Many 'secretaries' and admin assistants quickly develop knowledge and skills which make them into project managers whose abilities can quickly exceed those of the Board. There is then a danger that the Board becomes a rubber stamp for whatever the paid staff decides. This is undesirable.

The idea is to help the various CED groups develop knowledge and skills so that they do not need (a) 'outsiders' or (b) paid staff to do their thinking for them. A group may well create jobs as part of its economic development strategy but, if it is to be sustainable, control and ownership must remain with the community group i.e. with the Board and the members of the CED organisation which set the ball in motion.

If the paid staff take control away from the community members this is like unelected civil servants taking power away from elected ministers (the *Yes Minister* syndrome) or Council Officials taking power away from elected Councilors. A large part of CED is about helping people take control of their own lives and destinies, of becoming self sufficient and self reliant. It is about making a life as well as a living.

### *Scottish Executive/ COSLA Agenda*

*www.communitylearning.org*

*VISION:*
*Building a learning, socially just and democratic Scotland where people are actively involved in determining change.*

*POLICY PRIORITIES:*

- *Lifelong Learning,*
- *Social Inclusion,*
- *Active Citizenship*

### *4. The future of PDL*

The information, training and support which PDL used to provide is now delivered through the Banffshire Partnership. It is thus time for PDL to rethink its mission. This point was raised at the last PDL monthly meeting.

PDL exists to serve and service the Sixvillages area and has four websites dedicated exclusively to this task.

| | |
|---|---|
| Sixvillages Community Web – includes local businesses and accommodation, and space for community council minutes | www.sixvillages.org.uk |
| PDL – its ground breaking history and current activities | www.sixvillages.org.uk/pdl |
| The Sixvillages Virtual Museum | www.banffshirehistory.co.uk |
| The Scottish Traditional Boat Festival | www.scottishtraditionalboatfestival.co.uk |

Other associated and geographically more limited websites include:

| | |
|---|---|
| The Quarterdeck Project | www.sixvillages.org.uk/mill |
| Portsoy Maritime Heritage | www.sixvillages.org.uk/project |
| Portsoy Community School | www.sixvillages.org.uk/pcs |
| Jimmy McBeath | www.sixvillages.org.uk/mcbeath |
| Foggieloan | www.foggieloan.co.uk |
| Whitehills Marina | www.whitehillsharbour.co.uk |

There are already several public access computer points in the area and there is thought of putting ICT training facilities into the Mill building as part of the Quarterdeck project.

Does this suggest an ICT enhanced and enhancing role for PDL in the sixvillages area?

Notes by George Clark 16 February 2001

## The Time Management Matrix

Tasks can be categorized as urgent/ not urgent or as important/ not important. Obviously these are sliding scales rather than black/ white categories but the following table maps the type-cases.

|  | **Urgent** | **Not urgent** |
|---|---|---|
| **Important** | **Quadrant 1**<br><br>• Crises<br>• Pressing problems<br>• Deadline-driven projects | **Quadrant 2**<br><br>• Prevention<br>• Relationship building<br>• Recognizing new opportunities<br>• Planning, recreation |
| **Not Important** | **Quadrant 3**<br><br>• Interruptions, some calls<br>• Some mail, some reports<br>• Some meetings<br>• Proximate, pressing matters<br>• Popular activities | **Quadrant 4**<br><br>• Trivia, busy work<br>• Some mail<br>• Some phone calls<br>• Time wasters<br>• Pleasant activities |

Different people tend to focus on the different quadrants with the following results:

|  | **Urgent** | **Not urgent** |
|---|---|---|
| **Important** | **Quadrant 1**<br><br>• Stress<br>• Burnout<br>• Crisis management<br>• Always putting out fires | **Quadrant 2**<br><br>• Vision, perspective<br>• Balance<br>• Discipline<br>• Control<br>• Few crises |
| **Not Important** | **Quadrant 3**<br><br>• Short-term focus<br>• Crisis management<br>• Reputation – chameleon character<br>• See goals and plans as worthless<br>• Feel victimized, out of control | **Quadrant 3 and 4**<br><br>• Total irresponsibility<br>• Fired from jobs<br>• Dependent on others or institutions for basics |

| | • Shallow or broken relationships | |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

Based on Covey S R (1989) *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*; Simon & Schuster

# Time and Administritis

Administritis is a disease of organisations characterized by severe inflammation of red tape and paperwork which prevents people from doing their real work.

The 1st law of Bureaucracy is that 'work expands to fill the time available' and that, therefore, if you want a job done quickly, give it to a busy person.

It is also said that procrastination is the petty thief of time but that bad administration is the mastermind behind all time theft.

**The Secondary Education Advisory Service**

| Primary Task | to improve the teaching/ learning process | Goal |
|---|---|---|
| **Secondary Tasks** | to plan how to do the work | Strategic Planning |
| | to organise that support is available | Action Planning |
| | to monitor and evaluate to ensure the 3Es | Development/ Evolution |
| | to report on progress | Accountability/ feedback/ call for resources |

The prime task of management/ administration is to reduce the time and effort required for Secondary Tasks such that they can be used for the Primary Task. This involves working smarter.

**How to Work Smarter:**

| | Theory | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | take time to make good decision rules so that actual decisions can be made quickly and easily | |
| 2 | develop standardized systems for routine tasks | |
| 3 | delegate routine administrative tasks to clerical staff so that professionals can use their time on professional tasks | |
| 4 | take time initially to understand and master key skills and routines so that time is not wasted later | |
| 5 | Study the concepts of time management (of self and others) and put them into practice - e.g. | |
| | - keep a diary with rolling 'to do' lists | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | - learn how to manage interruptions | |
| | - use meetings effectively | |
| 6 | make time for regular reflection sessions (self and group) to ensure that you are still heading in the correct direction | |

## Time Capsules

- Time is a paradox: you never seem to have enough time, yet you have all the time there is. The problem is not a shortage of time, but how you choose to use the time available.

- The way you *think* you spend your time and the way you *actually* spend your time are rarely the same. Don't guess, make sure you know.

- Time is more than just a work issue: it's also a life issue. The way you spend your time defines the life you lead.

- Put personal items and work items on the same calendar.

**Time Log**

| Time | | | activity | importance | urgency |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| begin | end | Total | | | |
| | | | | a b c | a b c |
| | | | | a b c | a b c |
| | | | | a b c | a b c |
| | | | | a b c | a b c |
| | | | | a b c | a b c |

a = very, b = some, c = not

**Interruption Record**

| T | V | Who | Topic | Time | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Begin | End | Total |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

T = telephone, V = drop-in visit

| Tasks I **can** delegate | Who I could delegate them to | Tasks I am **unsure** about delegating | Tasks I **cannot** delegate |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

- Forms can be useful because they lead you through a disciplined process of thinking

- To stay focused on results, ask yourself: "Will what I am doing right now help me achieve my goals?

- Keep a master list of all the things you need to take care of and put it in a prominent place.

- Know the difference between striving for excellence and perfection

- Everyone needs some quiet time to get important work done

- Time is basic; unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed (Drucker)

- Practice saying no till you get good at it.

- Calculate the cost of your time in pounds per minute.

Four things to do with paper – dump, delegate, do, delay

Based on Merrill Douglas (1998) ABC Time Tips; McGraw Hill ISBN 0 07 021995 8

See online at www.srds.ndirect.co.uk

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