

Topic 2: Time Management

Topic Objectives

"Time is the stuff life is made of" - Ben Franklin

Everyone is aware that time is a limited resource. If you are an undergraduate student, you know that you will be attending classes at the University for at least two years if you are pursuing an associate degree or four years for a baccalaureate degree. University classes are rigorous, and professors can be very demanding. If you are working while attending college on a part-time basis, you must balance the demands of your job, your studies, and your family. Whatever we accomplish, we do so in the 168 hours we have available each week. So, how can we make best use of each minute of each day?

This topic is designed to familiarize you with research and practice in the area of time management. The lesson will offer tools and techniques that you can immediately use to improve the management of your time for coursework as well as social and work activities.

After reading this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the importance of time management
- Describe time management tools and tips

Planning for Life

Life presents us with two gifts:

- Time
- The ability to choose how to spend our time

Planning involves an essential process that allows us to choose from our many options for our career, our work, and our daily life. Here is one model for developing a personal roadmap:



In order for the planning pyramid to be optimally successful, you must commit to it and agree to record each element in writing.

Planning Pyramid Levels: Values



The planning model has governing values at its base as the highest priorities of personal or organizational life. When identified, these values provide guiding principles for personal vision, mission, and goal setting. Value statements help to clarify what is most important to you in life. Values may address personal health, the quality of relationships in your life, or the way you approach your work or studies.

Reflection

Ask yourself:

What is your personal value statement? How does it help you clarify what is most important to you in

life?

Here is how two IST Alumni responded to these questions...

"Treat each and every person with kindness and respect. It is a reminder that relationships are the most important thing in my life. It is important to remember that I need to be respecting and open to all and that I have something to learn from everyone." - Omkar

"My personal value statement at this point in my life is establishing my career. I value what my education has given me. I don't see myself just working any 9 to 5 job; I see an avenue that allows me to become better at what I do, and becoming better at what I do in my job will allow me to establish a basis for my future plans, such as starting a family. I may state my personal value statement being my career as a high priority; however, I will always choose family over career if it came down to it. " - Rich

Planning Pyramid Levels: Personal Mission and Vision Statement



A personal mission statement is an articulation of your "reason for being" or purpose in life. If carefully crafted, a personal mission statement will help you determine what not to do and keeps you from investing time and energy in activities that may be inconsistent with your stated mission. It can also help you communicate your philosophy and values to others, including prospective employers. A personal vision statement articulates where you want to be in the future, perhaps 5 -10 years from now. This vision statement may cover your career, your personal life, or your financial well-being.

Reflection

Ask yourself:

What is your personal vision statement? How does it articulate where you want to be in the future, perhaps 5 -10 years from now, specifically in the area of your career life?

Here is how two IST Alumni responded to these questions...

"I will continue to apply and grow in my leadership, interpersonal, and communication skills, and I hope to continue connecting with valuable people in all areas of my life. In my career, I hope to continue learning and growing throughout my life. I hope to build on my strengths and continue to

work on areas that don't come as naturally to me. I hope to collaborate with talented people and achieve great things with teamwork. I want to lead and I want to learn." - Omkar

"My personal vision statement is my preparation for what life holds in store for me 5-10 years down the road. I will have built a solid career, continued my education to establish a stronger skill set becoming a valuable asset to the employer I may be with, and will be raising a family. " - Rich

Planning Pyramid Levels: Establishing Goals



Goal setting represents the third stage of the productivity pyramid. Goals should be: supported by your personal values and mission, clearly written, specific, attainable, and measurable. Goals will define a future event and have a deadline. Goals can either be short-term (less than a year) or long-term (3-4 years). Short-term goals constitute your "roadmap," defining important milestones for your long-term goals, and ultimately your personal vision.

Reflection

Ask yourself:

What are your short-term goals? What are your long-term goals? Include how you will attain them and how they are measurable.

Here is how two IST Alumni responded to these questions...

"In the short-term I plan on gaining more client-facing experience. I plan on reaching out to my network and finding a project that allows me to grow and better apply my talents. I have begun the process of reaching out to members in my professional network and sharing my thoughts and plans with them and learning from their experiences. I hope to find an area within my organization where I can find a niche based on my goals and my talents. I will measure my success by my satisfaction on a day-to-day basis. In the long term, I am more aware of the values and qualities I want to apply rather than the specific job-roles. There are certain areas where I am truly talented - building trust, making people feel comfortable, and motivating teams, among others. I will measure my success based on how integral my true talents are to my career." - Omkar

"My most important short-term goal right now is finalizing my house. I am currently living out my dream of owning my own home. Many people find it funny that at 24 years old I am already building my own house. Having my own home is something I have wanted for many years now. My long-term goal I have is to get my MBA. I plan on pursuing an MBA because I feel that obtaining this will allow me to advance my career even further." - Rich

Planning Pyramid Levels: Daily Tasks - The Power in Today



We accomplish our tasks on a daily basis; it is our daily strategy that moves us toward our goals. Most organized people use, on a daily basis, several tools to help them "get organized." These include:

- A Calendar and Daily Planner
- A Daily "to do" list that is prioritized
- A Journal for Daily Class Notes and Personal Reflections
- A Contacts Book

Personal productivity software, such as Microsoft Outlook, integrates each of these tools into one package and allows synchronization with a personal digital assistant or handheld computer. It is important to have a paper or electronic system that works for you and that you are committed to use on an ongoing basis.

Reflection

Ask yourself:

What tool(s) do you use on a daily basis to get and stay organized? How has this tool helped you get and stay organized?

Here is how two IST Alumni responded to these questions...

"The most important tool in helping me stay organized is my Tungsten E Palm - I use it mostly for my contacts, to-do list, and calendar. In terms of email, I have three accounts that I use regularly - personal, client, and IBM. I flag emails with reminders, and categorize items by folders on when they are due. I enjoy using my Palm Pilot - which makes all the difference in the world. I can categorize items by subject and by importance. I also categorize my contacts, and I rely on my Calendar for scheduling all appointments. In the past I tried to remember everything, and even though I was quite successful with this strategy, it was much more stressful. Getting organized has been a process for me, and using a Palm Pilot that syncs up with my laptop is an extremely valuable tool." - Omkar

"To stay on task and organized I have two methods. 1. I am a big advocate of Microsoft Outlook. I use this email program religiously. It keeps me on task with meeting schedules and important dates while at my job. 2. I also carry with me a simple little daily planner. I do not like to use a Palm Pilot or

any other electronic organizer. I am a simple person who would rather pull out my daily planner, take my pen out from my shirt pocket and jot down something on page 3, instead of having to drill down into an electronic organizer just to enter something simple. Outlook has helped me stay organized because I can set reminders at anytime to remind me of upcoming dates or meetings I may have at work." - Rich

How to Schedule and Audit Your Time

Time Management Reset

DAY: Monday TIME LEFT: 8 hours

Task Name	Duration(hrs)	Method
✗ Review Planning Module	1.5	Choose... ▾
✗ Progress Reporting Forms	1.5	Choose... ▾
✗ Travel Arrangements	0.5	Choose... ▾
✗ Staff Meeting	1.5	Choose... ▾
✗ Update Timeline Forecast	2	Choose... ▾
✗ Code Backup	0.5	Choose... ▾
✗ Update Cost Forecast	1.5	Choose... ▾
✗ Unexpected Presentation	2	Choose... ▾
✗ Client Contact	1	Choose... ▾
✗ Diagnostic Questionnaire Idea	1	Choose... ▾

Detailed Task Description:

-- No Task Selected --

Instructions
Scenario

Finish Day

[1]

If you are like most people, you will have the world coming at you faster than you can keep up. Some

students suggest that college life is like taking a drink of water from a fire hose at full blast. There is much to learn and master - and of course, there are many experiences outside of the classroom that are important to our personal development and well-being.

One technique, for ensuring that you are using your time wisely and to help you get a better grasp on how you are actually spending your time, is to perform an audit of how you use your time each day for a period of one week. It is useful to do this audit some time during the first month of each semester.

First, create a list of your vital activities and the estimated time to complete each activity:

- Essential daily activities (e.g. sleep, eat, go to class, study, job, travel time)
- Essential periodic activities (e.g. appointments, study for an exam)

Second, use a planner to write out your schedule for the next week including all essential and unessential activities. Try to use your estimated time to figure out how long each activity will take. Don't forget to include sleeping, eating, and travel time.

Third, using a spreadsheet, record how you spend each day - in class, working part-time or full-time, in meetings, reading, sleeping, on the Internet, and in other activities. Write down how you actually spent your time for every 30 minute interval. At the end of the week, summarize the number of hours spent in academic work, fitness, and other categories of activity. Compare how you scheduled your time versus how you actually used your time. At the conclusion of your review, ask yourself if you are spending time in a way that is consistent with your values, goals, and mission statements.

Controlling Procrastination

Procrastinators are those individuals who put tasks off until the last possible minute. By procrastinating, we subject ourselves to unnecessary anxiety and stress. Procrastinating leads to poor work and study habits and eventually to unsuccessful careers. Why do we allow items that matter most to be at the mercy of items that matter least? We tend to avoid events that are unpleasant, complex, lengthy or uninteresting, regardless of their priority. Some essential activities in your college career and beyond are bound to fall in one of these categories. Those who are good at avoiding the procrastination problem can be high performers in college, work, and play.

Here are some tips to avoid procrastination:

- Write out your goals both long-term and short-term.
- Make and keep current a daily "To Do" list, weekly schedule, and monthly calendar.
- Avoid distractions when studying and divide your study time into a series of small blocks of time.
- Discipline yourself to do the most unpleasant part of an assignment first.
- Don't fall into the trap of telling yourself "One more day won't matter"; Set a deadline and stick to it!
- Build in a reward when you complete your task or assignment!

Checklist for Evaluating Your Time Management System

Whatever time management system you decide to use should be subject to a review and evaluation to make sure that it is working for you. Some experts advocate for a systematic weekly review of your calendar, task lists, and goals statements. Have you accomplished what you set out to do during the past week? What corrective steps do you need to take in the next week to stay on track? In addition, you might periodically review the following checklist:

Question	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Do you feel more prepared? More focused? On top of things?				
Are you making progress in achieving your goals?				
Can you make changes in your calendar to make progress on things you have not finished?				
Are you scheduling the right activities consistent with your goals?				

Resources

[Time Management](#) [2] - Resources from the Penn State - University Learning Center.

[Time Management Skills](#) [3] - Resources from Mind Tools.

[iStudy for Success Modules](#) [4] - Introduction to college-level learning, focusing on areas in which first-year students often need to build skills.

- Time Management
- Stress Management

Topic Wrap-Up

Everyone of us has 24 hours each day and 168 hours each week to eat, sleep, work, relax, exercise, attend class, and study. There is nothing magical about getting the most from these hours; it just takes planning and discipline. Tools for managing time are useless if one does not use them consistently. Unlike high school, college requires that students spend much more time studying outside of class. If a student has 15 hours of class each week, he/she should spend at least 30 hours studying each week. Going to school is a lot like having a job!

Now that you have completed this topic, you should be able to:

- Describe the importance of time management

- Describe time management tools and tips

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Links:

- [1] https://online.ist.psu.edu/sites/ist111s/files/images/302_s0324_m01.swf
- [2] <http://pennstatelearning.psu.edu/resources/study-tips/time-mgt>
- [3] http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm
- [4] <http://istudy.psu.edu/>