

Introduction

Time management is the ability to plan and control how you spend the hours in your day to effectively accomplish your goals.

Broaden your view of what is important in your daily activities; use your time as a precious asset that cannot be replaced.

Anyone in a leadership role should keep the idea firmly at hand that you are not merely managing your time, but your time and those you lead. The use of time management is valued by Volunteer Organizations much the same manner as in Business and Government.

Volunteers need effective leadership that values the time they donate. In an organization such as the Sons of The American Legion, time management

is no less important than in it is business. To quote: "Time is Money," attributed to Benjamin Franklin, it is important to note that money can be replaced, but time cannot.

A basic time management program used with discipline is a good starting point for making every effort towards your goals (Squadron, Detachment and National) count.

Time Management is not entirely unlike that of Financial Management. Would you squander your Squadron's or Detachment's funds or use discipline and remain responsible to those who raised the funds? Time Management is the discipline to remain responsible to your fellow SAL members and not squander their volunteer hours.

Why The Book?

This book is designed with SAL Members at all levels. At all levels of the organization we find similar tasks, job titles, programs and projects. The major difference is the focus and size of the effort and distance between the participants, but the process remains the same.

We practice management skills at all levels, yet we are composed of a very diverse group of people from various backgrounds and occupations. The Four Pillars and service to the causes of the The American Legion binds us to form a unique and valued element of The American Legion Family.

This is a strength of our organization and our Country.

Not all members have had the opportunity of mentoring that leads to the skills required to manage and control activities of a group. Large or small, the process is the same and the success of the Sons of the American Legion rests on our ability to reach goals and grow.

This book is a tool for those who have not mastered time management and for those who have. It's design is specific to the needs of the organization at all levels.

Time Management — Why?

Time management shares many properties with finance management.

Time management is a discipline. You are responsible for NOT wasting time and being prudent in when and where it is spent.

Unlike financial management...you can try again to acquire money, but time is gone forever. You cannot get more time because once it passes it is truly gone.

If you are leading a team or are a key member of the team trying to accomplish a worthy goal, how you manage your own time will effect the team's overall performance. If not exercised with discipline, you can find yourself wasting your time and that of others.

Time management will give you opportunities to exercise delegation of the project and will utilize your volunteers' efforts to the team's overall success.

If there was ever a good reason to use time management, success of the team and the value your team members receive from their participation in that success would be a key factor on the same volunteers joining your next effort. This is where you find the talent to grow the capabilities of your Squadron,

Detachment and at National organizations.

Effective time management will prod you to do more planning and give you opportunities to achieve more with the same effort.

Time management remains a main starting point for leadership. Value your volunteers' efforts and make every contribution count; success will follow.

Failure is also an opportunity. If you fail, your next effort will have that thought pushing you to not repeat the failure. We learn from our mistakes.

Remember: A good leader pulls others to the cause... they are drawn to the possible success.

Poor leadership or lack of leadership finds itself pushing the project and pushing people. If they are volunteers, they may choose to leave altogether and where will your project be then? Sell the idea, paint a picture of what can be and map out how to get there. Time management and planning/project management is your road map to the destination.

Time management is the first step in knowing if you have the time and if the project is obtainable.

Time Management Skills: What do you get and Why?

Time management is the act or process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities. The intended result is to increase effectiveness and efficiency or productivity.

Skills and tools will aid time management and achieve those results and improve your management skills. Effective time management is a good habit that requires attention and discipline to integrate into daily activity and realize the intended outcome.

The major themes or intended outcomes will be:

- Creating an environment conducive to effectiveness
- Setting priorities
- Carrying out activity around those priorities
- Reducing time spent (or wasted) in achieving those results
- Incentives to modify behavior to ensure compliance with deadlines
- Open up more time for additional opportunities
- Reducing stress factors and adding new resources (volunteers) to the work effort (delegation)
- Setting realistic and achievable goals
- Make better decisions easier and sooner
- Building teams and leadership skills through success and delegation
- Achieving Family, Work, Volunteer & Recreation balance

Speaking of volunteers and mentoring:

Pass along what works for you in time management and team building/leadership. Grow your Squadron/Detachment/National talent pool and let them have their successes, too! More success shared equals

greater retention of membership. Too much workload placed on one individual leads to “burn-out” and loss of membership. Share success and divide the work.

Time Management Skills: Which one is for you? A Basic Method of Time Management

The following is a simple type of time management that may be employed to improve your effectiveness. In many cases, the best fit for you will be a blend

of methods that give you the best results and maximizes your time. For simplicity and getting started with time management, the most common method is Task List oriented applied to a calendar with priority assigned.

• ABC Analysis: ABC's of Task Lists:

Review and decide which makes more sense for your activities. Three issues to remember when using any of the methods individually or portions thereof:

- **Keep the Goals in mind** at all times. Use the process to get results. Where can you delegate?
- **Time is perishable.** When wasted, you can never get more...it is gone.
- **Procrastination** kills projects and time. Do not waste your time. **Start right now.** Procrastination can and will lose members when they realize how much time they lost waiting for you to get organized. Value your time and theirs.
- **KIS! KIS!** There is no Stupid in using time management methods. **Keep It Simple** applies here... spending too much time planning and not starting is **procrastination!** Find the balance for best results.

Start with the ABC's method first and integrate the elements into your daily and weekly planning.

ABC's has been used in business management for a long time, it is the categorization of large lists of actions/results separated into groups for easier management. The groups can be organized into projects and then placed in order of timing or urgency by labeling *each* action or result with the following:

- A** — Tasks that are important and urgent or critical. These are tasks that *have* to be done on time or have other tasks waiting for its completion before they may begin.
- B** — Tasks that are important but not urgent or critical. These are tasks that have to be done on time, but do not have other tasks dependent upon their outcomes.
- C** — Tasks that are neither urgent nor important and have time to be completed. No other task is associated with its completion or dependent, it stands alone with time to be completed.

No letter or a dash mark — The equivalent of “*may be done in spare time*” and is not overly difficult to complete and serves merely as a reminder.

The ABC,s or 123,s of getting started

- 1 Make a commitment to achieve your goals, make them worthy of your effort.
- 2 Create a plan that will achieve those goals and stick with the plan.

Monthly: Set aside enough time once or twice a month to review the next three to six months. Use this time to review and update your projects, travel, conference/conventions, healthcare needs, family activities (*seasonal*) and long term goals. Find your balance and limits for each area.

Weekly: Set aside time once a week for thirty minutes (or as much time as is needed) to review and update your planner. This is your weekly overview: is it a busy week? Are there items critical on the list that **MUST** be accomplished? Review your entire week and see what is most important or difficult and plan when and how to accomplish those issues first. If the issue is too large to accomplish off the one list, break it into smaller sections and list their priority, being mindful to consider their dependencies upon the outcome of other items related to or part of the project as a whole.

Daily: Set aside time each morning or evening to review and update your action lists, projects, phone calls and scheduled appointments.

- 3 **Keep everything in balance:** Family, Work, Health, Volunteering, Recreation, Relaxation and any other priorities you may have. What are your priorities and remember to schedule more time for the most important, less time for the remaining. There is only so much time in a day, make the most of it.
- 4 **Starting point A: Use a calendar.** Mark all important personal, work and optional activities on the calendar. This includes your work schedule, family activities, volunteer time, time for yourself and recreation/relaxation. This is not a wish list...be reasonable.
- 5 **What are your current commitments.** Are your commitments large in scope? If so, create an outline of the larger project and define key components in logical order they must occur for completion.
- 6 Smaller projects and actions required may be listed as one line with an A, B, or C to define it's importance. Rate each item by importance or need to accomplish sooner than later (keep your deadlines).
- 7 **Keep your calendar planner handy** throughout your day and week. Make notes on requests made of your time and review when, where or if you can combine the activity. If you don't want to do it, be honest and say this directly up front with the person making the request.

Later, either the following morning or on your one day a week for organizing what is needed of your time, see if you can work it in and give feedback to the person who requested your efforts and time.

- 8 **Record your activity and the results of the Month, Week and Day.** You may reference this item later in the year. Record the time consumed to address problems and completion of tasks.

Monthly: What did it cost in time and money. Who helped you achieve the end result? What was the end result, good, bad or expected? Did the outcome meet your expectations and goals for your projects, travel, conference/conventions, healthcare needs, family activities (*seasonal*) and long term goals?

Weekly: What did you remove from your list of actions, appointments and time spent this week? Is there follow-up action and appointments needed/required? Is it done?

Daily: What new commitments did you engage/accept today? Add them to your planner each day as you receive and accept responsibility for those outcomes.

- 9 At the end of the year, or when your planner runs out of space, save it for future reference.

The old planner at a later date can be used for the information it contains. Use it for training a replacement for your Committee, or for a fast start-up of a similar project or program. The planner is a tool for training and educating others who follow you within the organization. It is a body of knowledge to be shared.

The used planner can answer: Who, What, When, Where, How and Why posed by the person following in your footsteps. Keep it handy well after you have filled it up with your experiences and then share the experiences with your replacement.

- 10 Consolidated Squadron Reports are far more accurate when you use a daily planner. As a tool for time management, most will agree that it is the basic tool to achieve more. But what about reporting more on your contributions to the organization's efforts? Daily, weekly and monthly documentation is an excellent reference for completing a Consolidated Squadron Report accurately and lends itself to the legitimacy of the numbers and figures reported.
- 11 Start your replacement planner before the first date on the calendar within. A few minutes each week will have a new planner ready for use and you will acclimate to any changes in how the calendars and pages are assembled.
- 12 Share your experience with others and help them become more productive. They may have different needs in time management, but the process applies equally to many types of occupations and organizations. Share your knowledge and listen for helpful tips on what works for others trying to do more to reach their personal goals and the organization's overall needs.