

MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

For all the people who waste time and wish they didn't
The no-nonsense guide to managing your time at home or in the office.

Learn how to cut paper work to a minimum
Concentrate on important matters
Delegate responsibility
Schedule your day
Make quick, effective decisions
Establish short term priorities and life — long goals.

I. MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES

The term "Management by Objectives" was coined in 1955. Since then the term has become part of the vocabulary of business leaders throughout the world.

MBO means thinking in terms of _____ rather than in terms of procedures and regulations. It encourages the asking of such questions as, "Exactly what are we trying to accomplish?" and "Why should we be doing this?" and, "Is there a better way?" instead of such questions as, "Is this in keeping with church policy?" or, "Is this what we were told to do?" or, "Will this enable our CBLT Center to hire more people and have more power?"

Setting specific goals and allocating time to those activities, which contribute most toward their realization, are the keys to effectiveness in any organization, large or small. Expert Laurence J. Peter's explains: "Lacking an adequate objective, a typical management response is to increase input—hire more people, upgrade qualifications, urge employees to work harder. Lacking an objective that defines what the process must do, individuals may increase input and become busily engaged in useless motions producing enormous activity to accomplish nothing."

Individuals as well as organizations easily become preoccupied with _____. The course coach who faithfully makes calls on last year's dropout student; The facilitator who grades a paper on its neatness instead of its content; the CBLT Center director who judges staff by how few waves they make rather than by how many ideas they have; and the administrator who requires voluminous written reports on a project instead of checking personally to find out how it's going -these are some of the people who squander their own time and that of others because they have lost sight of ultimate objectives. Instead they are thinking in terms of keeping people busy, maintaining a system, and putting up a good front.

"Management by Objectives isn't a bunch of reports, it isn't a set series of meetings. It's a new style, not a new process." MBO is the style used by those who want to get maximum results from the time they invest.

II. MEETINGS

There is no greater time-waster than poorly planned, poorly managed meetings.



If you are in a position to call meetings, keep that in mind. Ask yourself: is this meeting a substitute for action? Can I make the decision myself without involving others? Then why not do so?

If you do have to involve others, consider doing it by telephone, perhaps by conference call. Don't meet unless you need to, because every minute wasted is multiplied by the number of people in attendance.

But-assume the meeting *is* needed. First, invite people *in writing*, being specific about what you hope to _____ not just listing subjects you want to consider.

For example, if you invite several people to your office to “discuss” CBLT curriculum, you are, in effect, asking them to come and chat. Consider, instead, the effect of a memo like this:

To: CBLT Center Directors Sasha Borisovich, Pavel Alexandrovitch, Boris Vacilovitch Subject: CBLT courses:

I would like to have you attend a two-hour meeting in my office Tuesday at 3 P.M. to decide the following regarding CBLT courses:

1. Are our courses too complex for efficient church leadership training and starting new churches?
2. Would significant benefits result from decreasing the level and the size of the courses?
3. Would the churches still accept it as valid leadership training?
4. If we cut level and size of the courses, which ones should be first?

Those receiving such a memo will come to the meeting knowing exactly what information is expected and are likely to have done some thinking and some homework.

Start your meeting on time, stick with the agenda, and *try to reach some kind of decision on each item*, or assign responsibility for further action. Don't let the meeting drag on beyond the scheduled time.

But probably the most important point to remember is to restate, at the end of the meeting, the decisions reached and the assignments made. Too many meetings end with people unsure of exactly what was decided and who is supposed to do what by what date.

After the meeting—the same day, if possible—send a memo to the participants _____ what was decided, what responsibilities were assigned, and what deadlines were set for further action. Never omit this step. It clinches the assignments and establishes responsibility. And the mere act of writing such a memo will make you face up to the question of whether or not you accomplished your objectives.

So much for meetings you call. What about the meetings where someone else, such as your boss, is in charge and is wasting everyone's time by violating the suggestions outlined above?

Well, don't just sit there and let your time be wasted without trying to do something about it. If your boss doesn't prepare agendas before a meeting, suggest that this might be a good idea, “in order to keep us from getting off the track.” If meetings drag on forever, suggest privately that they be scheduled for 12:00 or 4:30 “to keep the more talkative people from getting carried away.” If your boss won't crystallize a decision on one subject before moving to another, volunteer to keep minutes of the meeting. This gives you a reason to interrupt and say, “Just a minute—before we go on to another subject I want to make sure my notes are accurate: what have we decided to do about the item we've been talking about?”

The reason you were invited to the meeting was because you supposedly could contribute something. Frequently the _____ contribution you can make is to help a weak chairman keep the meeting on track. So don't just sit there. Speak up!

III.OFFICE ARRANGEMENTS

Obsession with office furnishings is often a sign of losing sight of objectives and beginning to concentrate on status and appearances. Still, environment has a bearing on effectiveness, and attention must be given to those elements that affect time use.

For executives, a common problem is an arrangement where it is difficult or impossible for a secretary to screen visitors effectively. Keep your door closed for greater privacy and let her screen the visitors. If you must work in the main stream of traffic, reposition your desk so that your back is turned to those who most frequently interrupt.

Physical proximity is a very real factor in determining the frequency of communication. If you have inadequate personal communication with certain co-workers, consider the possibility of getting your desk located closer to theirs. If, on the other hand, you find certain people are wasting your time, coming to you with problems that they could handle as easily by themselves, consider changing the physical arrangement so that you are not as accessible.

The desk itself can be a factor in _____ time use. One system that many people find useful is to have a two-level arrangement—a regular desk at which they can sit, and an adjacent area at which they can work standing up. For example, John R. Beckett, head of Transamerica Corporation, has a stand-up desk in his office, and he finds he spends more time using that than his regular desk. Writers Thomas Wolfe and Ernest Hemingway found that they were able to write better standing up. Fletcher L. Byrom, chairman of Koppers Corporation, has a high desk, especially designed for him, at which he does most of his work. When he wants to sit down he uses a high stool. For a full-time office worker, the dual arrangement has the obvious advantage

of providing an opportunity to switch back and forth from a standing to a sitting position to relieve tedium and fatigue, thereby increasing the supply of "prime time."

The deskless office is an innovation some executives use to conserve time. The former chairman of the board of the American Management Association insists, "Most desks only bury decisions." He believes that those executives who are high enough in the organization to work primarily through other people are likely to be more effective if they have no desk on which papers can accumulate. For top management of large corporations this arrangement may be worth considering, but for most people a desk is a necessity, and there are other ways of keeping paper work moving.

Office arrangement does affect time use and is worth careful _____. Plan for a certain amount of privacy, but not so much that you become inaccessible. Try to arrange your physical surroundings so that you can do the job at hand with a minimum of distraction or fatigue.

IV. OVERSTAFFING

When she wanted help with the dishes my mother used to say, "Many hands make light work." But in an office it isn't necessarily so. Many hands make work, period.

Suppose you are a conscientious worker in an office where there isn't enough important work to keep everybody busy. What do you do? Because you want to feel useful, you begin looking for tasks that might have at least some marginal value. You could arrange a survey, prepare a questionnaire, update the policy manual, reorganize the filing system, change the standard personnel forms, generate some red tape, set up a committee, call a meeting, anything to hide from yourself and others the fact that you are not busy on something important.

Or, if you can't find something constructive to do, you might simply undertake a vendetta against some other CBLT Center department or person. After all, if you're in a nonessential slot you are vulnerable, and you'd better get your licks in first.

All of this turbulence and "_____ " work is a result of having too many people in the organization. In a lean organization people are too busy for trivia, so they don't have these problems.

Well, not to the same extent, anyway.

V. THE COST OF PAPER WORK

People who can't understand the importance of simplifying procedures in order to save time can sometimes see the picture better when it is put in terms of saving money.

Suppose that your CBLT Center must hire one additional person, at a salary of \$100 per month, to cope with unnecessary record keeping, filing, correspondence, and other paper work. That means that you must raise a lot of new support but you have no new students or larger ministry to show for it. What would your financial partners say?

To put it another way, remember that every reduction in cost is a 100 % addition of available cash. And elimination of time-consuming reports, filing procedures, excessive written communications and other unnecessary paper work is a good place to start. Too often cost-cutting efforts are limited to such obvious targets as cars, new equipment, advertising, travel, and turning out the lights, and too little attention is paid to ways of saving money by saving _____.

"Time is money," according to the old maxim. You'd better believe it.

Paper Work: The Marks & Spencer Experience



In 1956, Sir Simon Marks, multimillionaire chairman of Marks & Spencer, Britain's most prosperous retail chain, noticed the lights burning in one of his retail stores long after closing. He discovered that two employees were working overtime on stock cards. He investigated and learned that nearly a million such cards were filled out each year and sent to London to keep track of inventory. He ordered a study to determine whether the cards were really necessary. It turned out that they were not; a simpler way of keeping inventory was developed, involving spot checks and (horror of horrors!) even going so far as to let the stockroom clerk look at the shelves and simply reorder when supplies of certain items were getting low.

The success of this effort caused the company to launch the most massive war on paper work Britain had ever seen. Every form used by the company, every file, every paper-work-creating procedure was scrutinized, and the staff was told to ask, "Would our entire business collapse if we dispensed with this?" The motto was "If in doubt, throw it out"

Within a year, 26 million cards and sheets of paper, weighing 120 tons, had been eliminated. Time cards, for example, were abolished, a million of them a year. Supervisors were trusted to know who was putting in a good day's work and who wasn't.

Effective use of time through _____ and elimination of paper work has been the guiding principle of the Marks & Spencer firm ever since, and it has worked. Between 1956 and 1973 sales increased 361 percent, profits increased 600 percent, and store area was doubled. Yet the staff decreased during that period from 26,700 to 26,600. Paper-work savings, and the increase in morale attributable to the paperwork decrease, is given much of the credit for that record.

Essential to the Marks & Spencer type of operation is a realization that people can be trusted, that managers will manage better if given freedom within general guidelines instead of being required through reports and manuals to comply with detailed instructions. Another cornerstone of the philosophy is the idea of "sensible approximation," which means that getting figures close enough for all practical purposes is more efficient than striving after perfection for its own sake.

Companies in the United States and elsewhere have studied and profited by the Marks & Spencer experience. CBS, for example, undertook a thorough housecleaning of its record-keeping system several years ago and was able to eliminate 15 million pieces of filed paper. One major oil company managed to eliminate two-fifths of its records and cut expenditures for new file cabinets from \$20,000 to \$5,000 a year.

Examine the paper work in your own office and see if every report, every multiple copy, ever questionnaire, every file, really _____ the time and energy it requires. Then apply Mark & Spencer's rule: if in doubt, throw it out!

VI. PAPER-WORK QUIZ

The old saying "A place for everything and everything in its place" applies particularly to paper work, because having a well-established routine makes it possible to concentrate on the content of the message instead of worrying about how you will keep track of it

The purpose of this quiz is not to help you come up with a right answer, because there are no *right* answers. One person might give a certain paper to a secretary, another might put it in a desk file, and both are "right" if they act out of habit, having set up a system, instead of having to agonize over the decision. So answer these questions quickly, indicating not what you *should* do, but what you probably *would* do. If you have to think about it for a while, or if you probably would set the item aside and come back to it later, put a question mark. More than two or three question marks suggests that you need to set up a better system for handling paper work.

Where *would* you put this paper?

1. Bills for materials you have purchased.
2. Church journals. Appears to have articles worth reading, but you don't have time to read them now.
3. Memos from your pastor and others asking you to attend a meeting next Monday.
4. Questionnaire from a seminary asking your opinion on personnel practices.
5. Material from a staff member that you will use in preparing your next monthly report of activities.
6. Letter requiring a prompt answer, but you are going to have to make some phone calls before you can answer it.
7. Form letter from a person you call frequently, giving new address and phone number.

8. Memo from another CBLT Center asking for copies of a report prepared by your administrator.
9. Brochure from a company selling office equipment. You think you may need some of the equipment, but you are not sure.
10. Letter of complaint from a pastor.
11. Memo from a course coach concerning procedure for student evaluation.
12. Note you have written to yourself as a reminder to start sooner next year on your fall schedule preparation.

Although there are no right answers to the questions in the foregoing quiz, some discussion is in order, because there are some wrong answers that clearly violate principles of effective time use:

1. If you don't have a firm routine for handling bills, you really have problems (and so do your creditors). The main thing is to get the bill off your desk by paying it, or by giving it to someone else for prompt payment, or by getting it into a "Future" file for payment at a later date.
2. Whatever you do, don't leave the magazine sitting on your desk where it will tempt you away from higher-priority tasks. Have a separate place, on a side table or in a drawer, for reading material.
3. If this memo lists only the time and date of the meeting, the information should be noted on your desk calendar (or pocket calendar) and the memo should be thrown away. Otherwise it clutters up files and wastes filing time. On the other hand, if it includes a detailed agenda, or is attached to material to be discussed, you will want to take it to the meeting, in which case it should go into your "Future" ("Tickler") file.
4. Decide now (not later) whether or not you will answer the questionnaire. If not, it goes into the wastebasket. If you plan to answer it, do so immediately and place it in your "Out" basket in keeping with the principle of handling each piece of paper only once.
5. This might be put into a "Future" file for the date on which the report is to be prepared, or into a "Subject" file that will be brought out on that date. In the meantime it should be kept out of sight.
6. Leave the letter in the middle of your desk while you make those calls so that you can dictate your answer and complete the action before going on to something else. Of course, if you have to hold the letter for callbacks you should have a "Pending" file or drawer where it can be put out of sight.
7. Enter the new information in your personal phone directory and throw away the original. Or, if the information concerns others in the organization, circulate the notice to them.
8. Send the reports immediately with a memo or greeting (or jot a note on the original). The thing to avoid on routine matters like this is dictating a formal transmittal memo, creating additional paper work.
9. If you are not sure, drop it in the wastebasket or pass it along to someone who may be in a better position to judge its value. Don't let it float on your desk because of indecision.
10. You should dictate your reply immediately. Another possibility, and one well worth considering, is to avoid a written reply and answer by phone, noting the conversation on the letter itself and then file it.
11. If it is really worth keeping, it should immediately be given to the person who does the filing. But if it is something of a trivial or general nature, make a mental note of the contents and throw it away, keeping in mind that should you need the info someday you could obtain it from the sender. In other words, "If in doubt, throw it out."
12. You should have a system that routinely will bring to your attention those things you want to consider at future times. It should be on a calendar basis rather than by subject, so that you won't have to remember to find the file. Either an accordion file with dates or dated file folders will accomplish this.

In addition to analyzing paper work in terms of whether or not a dear routine exists, it is important to analyze it in relation to the principle of delegation. For example, several of the items in the quiz clearly should be handled by a secretary or an assistant, if you have one. When going over your answers, consider whether you are the logical person to handle each item.

VII. PARETO PRINCIPLE

The Pareto Principle named after an Italian economist states that the significant items in a given group normally constitute a relatively small portion of the total items in the group. Sometimes it is referred to as the concept of the “vital few” and the “trivial many,” or the ____/____ rule.

Thus, in any CBLT Center, about 20 percent of the course coaches usually will start about 80 percent of the new groups. In a discussion group, 20 percent of the participants usually will make 80 percent of the comments. In a mission, about 20 percent of the employees will account for about 80 percent of the absenteeism. In a classroom, 20 percent of the students will take up 80 percent of the teacher's time. In a church region about 20 percent of the pastors will start about 80 percent of the new churches. This law has countless applications in every phase of living.

The Pareto Principle can be of great help in coping with a long list of tasks to be accomplished. The mind boggles at such a list, which is often impossible to complete, and most people become discouraged before they start. Or they begin with the easiest, leaving the most difficult for the last, and never quite get around to them. It helps to know that most of the benefit to be derived from doing what is on the list probably is related to just _____ or _____ items. *Select those two or three, allocate a block of time to work on each of them, and concentrate on getting them done!* Don't feel guilty about not finishing the list, because

if your priorities are valid most of the benefits are related to those two or three items you selected.

So whenever you are faced with the difficult task of choosing from among a number of alternatives, keep the Pareto Principle in mind. By asking yourself which items are the really significant ones, you avoid getting side-tracked on secondary activities.

CONCLUSION

Here are a few Time — Saving Tips from GETTING THINGS DONE

Indecision is nearly always the worst mistake you can make.

The pursuit of excellence is gratifying and healthy. The pursuit of perfection is frustrating, neurotic and a terrible waste of time.

If your office is typical, roughly three quarters of the items in your files should have been placed in the wastebasket.

There's a common belief that tension is bad, that quiet and tranquility are goals for which we should strive. Nonsense. Without tension nothing gets done.

Of all the time-saving techniques ever developed, perhaps the most effective of all is frequent use of the word “no.”

In the beginning God created. Then He rested and sanctified the 7th day to make it holy. Jesus came in the fullness of time. And at the end of the 1st century the whole world had heard that Christ is Lord. The book of Daniel states that in time His kingdom will grow until it encompasses everything. Yes God has a plan and He is a time manager. He has a detailed plan of love for and wishes to make you successful. Let us pray about these things and be doers practicing these principles. May the Lord's rich favor rest upon you. Amen.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

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