



Unit: Time Management

Skill 9: Prioritizing Tasks

Activity A: Time Wasters and How To Avoid Them

Activity Skills:

Small group discussion.

Leadership Skills:

Understanding how to consider a project in terms of what needs to be done and how long the parts will take.

Suggested Level:

Beginning

Time:

20-30 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Sample projects.
- Pens or pencils to write.
- Paper or blank calendars to create timeline.

Do Ahead:

N/A

Source:

Developed by:
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UW Extension

Based on:

Develop and present project plan, scope and timeline by John Seaholtz, Seaholtz Consulting, Inc.

BACKGROUND:

What takes up your time each day? Do you spend your time and energy on the most important tasks, or do you get distracted? What can we do to control and contain all the “other” little things that seem to take up – and waste – our time?

Key time wasters:

- Indecision – not knowing just what to do
- Interruptions
- Procrastination – putting things off
- Unrealistic time estimates – not knowing how long tasks will take
- Disorganization – not knowing where things are
- Lack of delegation – not involving others; trying to do too much yourself
- Lack of priorities/policies/procedures – not knowing how to spend your time

WHAT TO DO:

This activity may be done in one large group if numbers are small, or in small groups of 3-5 people. Ask students to select a scenario for their small group. Have each group identify the players, define the project, and identify the tasks to complete it.

Have the groups review their project scenario, and ask the groups to consider what other players might be added to the team to achieve the end result. Could these other players be invited? Why or why not?

Does the project need any further definition? What details can you add? Next identify what the various tasks and individual parts of the project are. For example, if organizing a community event, there will have to be a way to let people in the neighborhood know about it; will you make flyers, put an add in the local paper, something else?

Go back to the list of players and consider the team members in terms of the tasks. Identify the role of each player on the team. Are there tasks or jobs to be done that need more expertise than is on your project team? List the gaps and any recommendations from your group as to how to handle these gaps.

Map the tasks, who is responsible and how long each tasks will take on your project timeline.

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Notes:

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- What was the biggest challenge in creating your project timeline?
- Did you find that more people would help or hinder the project getting done?
- Where would the interim deadlines be for various parts of the overall project?

Apply:

- Why do leaders need to be able to develop a project timeline?
- How might you use a project timeline for your own project?
- What happens if you have forgotten key tasks along the way?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Ask students to prepare a project timeline for their own project or event. Have them create a list of players and corresponding role/responsibilities.

Resources And Web Links:

<http://office.microsoft.com>