

Perceptions of Time

People with a **present perspective** of time have a tendency to believe that the actions in the present do not significantly affect the future. That is, these people do not think that an action taken place in the present will increase the probability of a future outcome. People with this perspective tend to use the term "why do today what can be done tomorrow?" Individuals with personality characteristics of present time perspective tend to think that it is unnecessary to make future plans. These individuals also tend to take risks and act impulsively.

People with **future perspective** tend to believe that an action taken place in the present increases the probability of a future outcome. These people are very goal-oriented, with high capacity to infer future results, usually prepare task lists, use a calendar, and tend to wear a watch. When a team is assembled from the majority of future time perspective people, the team tends to be more "flexible" and tends to make more changes in strategic thinking than teams with more present time perception individuals. Such an individual will delay his or her performances to the very last moment, which can at times lead to inability to meet deadlines. When such a person belongs to a work team, he/she makes the team less focused strategically, being late in submitting tasks and acting impulsively.

Time urgency relates to the need for quick response or action, to achieve a particular goal (or non-existence of this feeling). It can be described as an axis ranging from high to low.

Future Focus	VISIONERS	ORGANISERS
Present Focus	RELATORS	CRAMMERS
	Low Urgency	High Urgency

Organisers have high time urgency and future time perspective and are characterised by high awareness of time, scheduling tasks and activities and high achievement striving.

Crammers have high time urgency and present time perspective and are characterised by high awareness of time, needing to exert control over deadlines, competitiveness, high achievement striving and impatience.

Relators have low time urgency and present time perspective and are characterised by attending little to deadlines or passage of time, taking risks, acting impulsively, focusing on present tasks and focusing on relations with others.

Visioners have low time urgency and future time perspective and are characterised by attending little to deadlines or passage of time, taking risks, acting impulsively and focusing on future goals.

SMARTER GOALS

An example of this could be the goal to become professionally qualified.

S to become qualified in Project Management (Diploma)

M to pass with a merit

A to obtain the funding and create the time

R is it something I can actually pass?

T within one year

E working from home on evenings and Saturday morning

R explore how things are working after 3 months

Now think about one of your professional goals and try to set SMARTER objectives.

Specific:

Measurable:

Achievable:

Realistic:

Time-bound:

Environment:

Review:

Ask yourself the following questions:

- 1 Do you really want it?
- 2 Do you believe you can get it?
- 3 Can you see yourself doing it?
- 4 Are you willing to put in the time and effort to get it?
- 5 Are you going to hurt anyone to achieve it?

“Procrastination is the thief of time” (Charles Dickens)

What is it you really want from life? Really go deep inside yourself and think about how much you want it and to what extent you are prepared to go to achieve that goal?

Select two areas and break them into long, medium and short-term objectives.

1st Key Goal

Long Term

Medium Term

Short Term

2nd Key Goal

Long Term

Medium Term

Short Term

YOUR 'TO DO' LIST

Please use the table below to:

- Produce a 'to do' list of the tasks that you will have to tackle immediately after you have worked your way through this self-study programme
- Divide the tasks into active and reactive categories
- Rate each task for importance and urgency on a scale of 1 to 3 (1=most; 3=least)

'To do' list				
Tasks	Active	Reactive	Important (1 to 3)	Urgent (1 to 3)

PRIORITISATION MATRIX

Having created a to-do list, we can prioritise tasks using a Priority Matrix. Look at each task to be achieved, and decide which of the following four quadrants describes it best:

High Importance	Dairy or Start it (Goals)	Do it Now! (Critical)
Low Importance	Delete or do in deadtime (Distractions)	Decide & do quickly, do say no or not now, delegate (interruptions)
	Low Urgency	High Urgency

Important Tasks will always be linked to the company's objectives and will involve moving the team forward or fulfilling the fundamental purpose of your role.

When deciding what the important tasks are, the question "What am I here for?" should always be at the front of your mind.

Urgent Tasks depend on the time period you have in order to achieve the goal or objective.

1. Urgent/Important Tasks are ones that must be completed during the course of a day and also ones which must be managed well. In practice this means blocking out diary time, cancelling or delaying non-important tasks and setting deadlines.

2. Non Urgent/Important Tasks are undoubtedly priorities but do not necessarily need to be completed by a deadline in any set day. However, procrastination and failure to act may mean that they become urgent and important. Invest time in thinking through a plan and begin a task that might later hold up the activity if not started soon.

3. Urgent/Non Important Tasks are deemed urgent, probably due to a tight deadline but will require the re-scheduling of some of the important tasks in the short term. As such they must be completed, but the time spent upon them should be kept in proportion to its importance.

4. Non Urgent/Non Important Tasks are non essential activities that really have little effect on corporate strategic objectives or your role in particular. These tasks can usually be delegated or disregarded.

EMAILS

Like it or not, emails are here to stay. Most business people manage their daily workflow based purely on the amount of emails they receive. Emails were meant to allow people to work less and have more leisure time. Almost everyone has found the opposite.

Think about how many times per day you use email

If you check your email:

Once a day

Good for you! But you are either highly efficient or completely unaware of how to use a computer. Although great business leaders (such as Richard Branson) never use email, they much prefer the telephone or face to face interactions.

Four to Five times a day

This is the best place to be – having enough time to get on with your work and not being a slave to your inbox. You have also probably turned off your ‘new mail notification’ to stop distracting you when you are busy doing other tasks. You probably have the ability to ‘lump’ tasks together to improve your efficiency.

Six to Fifteen times a day

Most people live in this category. Checking your emails regularly can prove a bit distracting and could lead to inefficiency. If you find yourself in this category, think about turning off your ‘new mail notification’. Also, think about being a bit stricter with your email regime – if a message is really important or urgent, they will call you.

Over fifteen times a day

Time to seek help- possibly even therapy! You probably keep checking ‘just in case’. Be aware that your incessant checking may be creating more work for yourself. You are a slave to email and it might be helpful to start cutting back your usage. Instead of an email, call someone or pop by their desk to have a quick chat.

TIME LOGS

Another useful weapon in the time management armoury is the time log. Put simply, this involves logging everything you do and at what time, in order to study exactly where your time goes. By doing this, you can analyse where time is being wasted on essentially non important tasks.

In the diagram below, attempt to create a time log for what you do on a weekly basis.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM					
PM					

Remember:

Pareto's 80:20 rule and only plan for routine tasks 20% of your week

EMAIL TIPS

If you insist on using emails all the time, it can be helpful to be aware of the following tips:

1. Remember the telephone. Unless a written record is required, the telephone can give a personal touch which can have greater impact.
2. Be brief. Sum up your emails in two sentences. If you need to add more information, attach a report.
3. Summarise. Precede a long email with a short summary.
4. If it is urgent, say so. Write URGENT in the subject line.
5. Match the formality or style of the sender to avoid offence.
6. USE CAPS LOCKS SPARINGLY.
7. Apply the 'three times' reply rule.
8. Place key information in the subject line.
9. Respond promptly. Don't leave email unread for more than two days. If the email is long and you do not have time to respond to the entire email, send a brief email acknowledging its receipt and your intent to reply in more detail.
10. Spelling and grammatical errors are unprofessional. Proof read everything before sending.
11. Never send 'flame mail' – use another communication tool.
12. If you love to 'cc' or 'bcc' people – you have a problem.
13. Remove yourself from newsletters you don't need or use.

6 Types of Assertive behaviour

Basic Assertion –

I want/ I would like.....(asking)

Empathic Assertion–

I understand that you feel/want.....however, I.....(feelings)

Negative Feeling Assertion –

When.....happens/you do, I feel..... (impact)

Consequence Assertion –

If.....then.....& I would prefer that not to happen.
(use usually as last resort)

Discrepancy Assertion-

You say....., however it is.....

Responsive Assertion –

What is it.....that makes you think that? (more information)

In many cases a blend of the above styles of assertion will
provide the best results.

Broken Record

When a record gets stuck it plays the same thing over and over again. So in broken record all you have to do is repeat yourself again and again until the person gives in to your demands.

Children are masters at *broken record* but somehow during adolescence we lose the skill. Most people give in after you repeat yourself three times.

Broken record is particularly useful when:

- Dealing with those in authority, or when you feel the other person has more expertise than you
- You think you are not getting what you are entitled to
- You are dealing with people brighter and more fluent than you
- The other person is likely to use put – downs or attack you verbally

Because you just have to repeat yourself, broken record is really easy to use.

EXAMPLE

YOU: *'The programme was not up to standard, and we do not cover all the elements promised in the brochure so I want a refund.'*

REPLY: *'Other people have not complained, in fact some of the evaluations are excellent.'*

YOU: *'They might be, but I want a refund because the work was not up to standard.'*

REPLY: *'In my opinion as a course tutor the course was up to standard.'*

YOU: *'I can appreciate that is your opinion but I want a refund.'*

REPLY: *'It is not our policy to give refunds.'*

YOU: *'That may be your policy but I want a refund'*

NOTES