

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 1 TELEPHONE INTERRUPTIONS

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

INTERNAL

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Unaware of seriousness. | Take time log of phone calls.
Evaluate origin, extent, and causes. |
| 2. No plan for handling. | Develop plan to screen/delegate. |
| 3. Enjoy socializing. | Do it elsewhere. Stick to priorities. |
| 4. Ego. Feeling of importance. | Don't overestimate the importance of
your availability to others. |
| 5. Desire to be available. | Distinguish between being available for
business and socializing. |
| 6. No plans for unavailability. | Quiet hour; screening; set periods for
taking calls/screening email. |
| 7. Desire to keep informed. | Keep to your schedule/plans.
Recognize that your team members will
naturally want to keep you informed of
everything they are doing, rather than
simply the essentials. |
| 8. Desire to be involved. | Recognize danger of too much involve-
ment. Divorce yourself from routine
matters and calls. |
| 9. Taking and placing one's own calls. | Delegate. |
| 10. Lack of delegation. | Delegate more. Direct questions to
persons responsible. |
| 11. No planning calls. | List topics to be discussed. Plan. |
| 12. Overdependent staff. | Don't make their decisions. Encourage
initiative. Allow mistakes. |
| 13. Lack self-discipline. | Develop plan, implement, monitor
progress. Assign responsibility to
secretary or assistant—whom you train. |

14. Inability to terminate conversation.

Learn and practice techniques:

Preset time limit ("Yes, Tom, I can talk to you a few minutes.")

Foreshadow ending ("Kim, before we hand up ... ")

Be candid ("Sorry, Pat, I've got to go.")

15. Unrealistic time estimate for call.

Train secretary to interrupt with reminder of urgent item demanding your attention. Or, use a 3 minute egg timer in front of your phone. Realize how much longer a call can take than is necessary.

16. Fear of offending.

Don't be oversensitive. Concentrate on your priorities.

EXTERNAL

17. Ineffective screening.

Analyze the problem and develop a plan. Discuss with staff to avoid surprise and offense and ensure their understanding. Implement and support.

18. No secretary.

If you need a full or part-time secretary, do a study to demonstrate need. Develop techniques to have messages taken at certain times. Plan around the available technology you have.

19. Misdirected calls.

List of persons and numbers available to you and staff. Use available technology to avoid wrong numbers.

20. Confused responsibilities.

Clarify. Train and work with your staff.



TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 2 DROP-IN VISITORS

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

INTERNAL

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Unaware of seriousness. | Take time log of visits (business and personal; scheduled and unscheduled). Evaluate extent and causes. |
| 2. No plan for handling. | Develop plan to screen. Arrange appointments. |
| 3. Ego. Feeling of importance. | Recognize. Don't overestimate the importance of your availability to others. Plan visits at coffee and lunch breaks. |
| 4. Enjoy socializing. | Do it at other times (coffee, lunch). Stick to priorities. |
| 5. Desire to be available. | Distinguish between available for business and socializing. |
| 6. No plans for unavailability. | Modified "open door"; have a "quiet hour"; use effective screening. |
| 7. Desire to keep informed. | Do it on a planned and more certain basis. |
| 8. Fear of offending. | Plan several dialogues to explain your lack of time to visit. |
| 9. Lack of delegation. | Delegate more. Direct inquiries to persons responsible. |
| 10. Expecting staff to check with you excessively. | Expect information only on the deviations from your plan. |

- | | |
|--|---|
| 11. Inability to terminate visits. | Go to their offices. Meet outside your office. Stand up and keep standing. Preset time limit for visit. Foreshadow end ("Is there anything else before I need to leave?") Secretary reminds you of urgent matters. Be candid. ("I'm sorry, I have to get back to something urgent now.") Stand up and walk to door. |
| 12. Expecting staff to check with you excessively. | Expect information from them concerning only deviations from plan. |
| 13. Inability to terminate visits. | Go to their office instead. Meet outside your office. Foreshadow end ("Is there anything else before I have to leave?") Staff interrupts to remind you of urgent matter. Or, be candid ("I'm sorry, but I really must get back to other matters now.") Stand up and walk to door. |
| 14. Unrealistic time estimates. | Take time log of all visits in 1-2 days. Recognize difficulty of estimating time requirements in socializing. |

EXTERNAL

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 15. Open door policy. | Recognize "open door policy does not mean physically open, but rather open to those who need assistance. Modify your open door by closing it regularly for periods of concentration. |
| 16. Ineffective screening. | Train staff to screen all visitors without offending. Locate staff desk in a strategic position to make screening easy. |
| 17. No staff. | If you think you need full or part-time staff, do a study to demonstrate need. Use a time log for this. Or, you should concentrate on developing some of the other techniques above. |
| 18. Misdirected visitors. | Train receptionist. Advise others, and discuss the problem. |
| 19. Confused responsibilities. | Clarify everyone's responsibilities. Publish and circulate. |

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 3 MEETINGS

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

BEFORE

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Lack of purpose. | No meeting without a purpose, in writing if possible. |
| 2. Lack of agenda. | No meeting without an agenda. Written agenda for scheduled meeting; email or verbalize agenda if meeting is unscheduled to ensure that people come prepared. |
| 3. Wrong people, too many or few. | Only those needed should be present. |
| 4. Wrong time. | Ensure opportune time. |
| 5. Wrong place. | Select location consistent with objectives of avoiding interruptions, having physical equipment if necessary, minimizing travel for people. |
| 6. No planning. | Allow for and schedule appropriate planning for a more effective meeting. |
| 7. Too many meetings. | Test need for “regular” meeting. Occasionally don’t hold—see what happens. Or cut time allowed in half for meetings lasting a long time. |
| 8. Inadequate notice. | Provide written notice/email with all essentials including expected contribution to meeting and materials necessary for preparation. |
| 9. Too few meetings. | Assess need for participation, information, and coordination. Schedule accordingly. |
| 10. Not starting on time. | Start on time. By delaying for late arrivals, leader penalizes those arriving on time! |

DURING

- | | |
|--|---|
| 11. Socializing. | Get down to business. Socialize later. Ask people to turn off cell phones. |
| 12. Allowing interruptions. | Set policy and let everyone know. Whenever possible, allow no interruptions except for clearcut need. Hold messages for delivery at coffee break and lunch times. |
| 13. Wandering from agenda. | Expect and demand adherence to agenda. Resist "hidden agenda" ploys. |
| 14. Failure to set ending time. | Time-limit the meeting and each item on the agenda. Place discussion time in accordance with importance. Of subject. |
| 15. Keeping people too long. | Have people leave after expected contribution is made if they are no longer needed. |
| 16. Indecision. | Keep objective in mind and move toward it. |
| 17. Deciding without adequate information. | Summarize conclusions to ensure agreement and remind participants of assignments. |
| 18. Failure to end meeting on time. | End on time. Otherwise, no one can plan for the time immediately following. |
| 19. Failure to summarize conclusions. | Summarize conclusions to ensure agreement and remind participants of assignment. Follow up with email/other reminder. |



TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 4 CRISIS MANAGEMENT

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

INTERNAL

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Unaware of importance. | Take time log of crises. Analyze source, causes, seriousness, controllable factors. |
| 2. Lack of planning. | Categorize crises and causes. Assess probability of occurrence. Develop plan for contingencies to ensure more effective handling. |
| 3. Failure to anticipate. | Expect the unexpected! (Remember: if anything can go wrong, it will). Anticipatory action is generally far more effective than remedial action. |
| 4. Overplanning. | Attempting too much, so plan less. Leave 20% of the day unplanned, thus allowing time to handle crises. |
| 5. Overreacting. | Not all problems are crises. Limit your response by a) ignoring problems that can be ignored; b) delegating all the remaining ones which others can handle; c) handling only the problems that you alone can handle. |
| 6. Fire fighting. | Recognize that it is more important to <i>prevent</i> new fires from developing than to spend all your time putting out old fires. Preventive action is preferable to remedial. |
| 7. Procrastination. | Recognize inherent danger in putting off key actions leading to deadline pressures and often to impaired judgment under stress. |
| 8. Overlooking possible negative consequences of a decision. | Analyze what could go wrong. Set up contingency plan. |

EXTERNAL

- | | |
|---|---|
| 9. Unrealistic time estimates. | Recognize that everything takes longer than you think. Analyze characteristic under-estimates, then add appropriate cushion to all critical estimates – e.g. 20%. |
| 10. Switching priorities. | Switching priorities means leaving tasks unfinished and damaging morale if done excessively. Calculate cost, discuss with boss, and make suggestions for reducing frequency of switches. |
| 11. Human error/equipment failure. | Anticipate. Organize resources (human and others) for rapid adjustment to compensated most effectively. Have organized plan for phone/computer/copy machine failure that includes contact list of people to deal with it. |
| 12. Slow reporting of bad news. | Develop philosophy of accepting mistakes by staff—it's part of the learning process. Emphasize to staff that fast reporting of bad news may avert crises. |
| 13. Overlooking possible negative consequences of a decision. | Analyze what could go wrong. Set up contingency plan. |



TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 5 LACK OF OBJECTIVES, PRIORITIES, DAILY PLAN

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

INTERNAL

1. Unaware of importance.

Recognize the importance!

2. Lack system.

Develop these: Plan Sheet, Daily Objectives, Priorities, and Deadlines.

3. Lack time to plan.

Take time. Put first things first. Recognize that planning takes time initially, but it saves 3-4 times as much time in the end—and leads to better results.

4. Crisis-oriented.

This assumes crises are unavoidable. Not true. Most crises are relatively predictable. Allow more planning time and plan ahead for contingencies.

5. Successful with it. ??

Recognize success may be in spite of, not because of, your actions. Planned results are predictably more successful than chance results.

6. Lack self-discipline.

Impose deadlines on yourself. Try objectives, priorities, and daily plan for one month. Enlist aid of staff. Monitor progress. Evaluate.

7. Action-oriented.

If you'd rather be moving than thinking, recognize that most problems result from action without thought. Those who know what to do succeed once. Those who know *why* succeed again and again. So, take time to think it through. Then act.

8. Fear of commitment.

Recognize that while objectives mean commitment, they also mean knowing when you have succeeded.

9. Trouble setting priorities.

Learn. One of most productive managerial tasks.

10. Think plan won't work.

Emergencies may disrupt. Damage is less if planned day meant most vital tasks done.

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 6

CLUTTERED DESK, PERSONAL DISORGANIZATION

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

INTERNAL

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Unaware of importance. | Recognize overflowing desk as major interruptor and loser of documents (retrieval time). Use time log to assess retrieval time. |
| 2. Lack of system. | Plan Sheet for recording things you want to remember so documents can be filed away. |
| 3. Ego | Recognize that a cluttered work area may also symbolize disorganization, indecision, inability to meet deadlines etc. rather than being a symbol of busyness and indispensability. |
| 4. Fear loss of control. | Recognize that the Plan Sheet and other worksheets will provide better control than keeping all files on a cluttered desk. Using something like Microsoft Outlook planning can also help. |
| 5. Fear of forgetting. | Same as above. |
| 6. Failure to delegate. | Do nothing that you can delegate. You not only overload yourself with other people's work but also deny them the experience. |
| 7. Allowing interruptions. | Screen. Set aside "time banks" for planned unavailability to complete your work. |
| 8. Leaving tasks unfinished. | Allowing diversions from tasks and not going back to finish them destroys effectiveness and cuts real results drastically. Practice task completion, require completed staff work, resist interruptions—and finish the task before putting it down. |

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 9. Procrastination/indecision. | Tackle toughest or highest priority tasks <u>first</u> . Self-impose deadlines and then reward yourself. 80% of the tasks coming to your desk can be handled at once. Do it now. Keep the paper moving, and handle it just once. |
| 10. Slow reader. | Screen and select with discrimination. Take a speed-reading course. |
| 11. Lack objectives/priorities. | You probably also lack a daily plan. Recognize that poor planning causes switching priorities, leaving some tasks unfinished and decisions not made. Plan your work! Work your plan. |
| 12. Poor scheduling of tasks. | Schedule by priority and use realistic time estimates. |

EXTERNAL

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 13. Ineffective secretary. | Train and authorize secretary to keep your desk clear. Information retrieval is his/her responsibility, not yours. Label files not to be removed from desk. Keep files to minimum. Also have secretary trained to retrieve files from computer. |
| 14. Failure to screen. | Secretary screens out junk mail and refers requests others can handle, then types responses for your signature or email distribution. |
| 15. No secretary. | Minimize paperwork, whether on paper or computer. Respond on the original. Simplify filing system of papers/computer documents. Keep only essentials. |
| 16. Understaffed. | Identify problem. Do study to show that additional staff will pay off. |
| 17. Paper blockade, memos etc. | Overcommunication with emails, papers, memos etc. causes cluttering of desk and computers. Minimize communications, emphasizing brevity in both written and verbal communications. |

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 7 INEFFECTIVE DELEGATION

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

INTERNAL

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Insecurity – fear of failure. | Recognize. Accept risk and inherent. Allow mistakes. Learn from them. |
| 2. Lack confidence in staff. | Train staff, develop, and then trust them. |
| 3. Too involved in detail and routine. | Do nothing that you can delegate. Divorce yourself from detail. |
| 4. Delegating without authority. | Always delegate commensurate authority along with responsibility. |
| 5. Giving unclear instructions. | Ensure clear, complete, unambiguous instructions. Ask staff to restate to ensure he/she understands. |
| 6. Envy of staff person's ability. | Laugh at yourself. Then give full credit where it is due. Develop your own replacement. |
| 7. Can do work better and faster. | Lower standards to what is "acceptable," not your own level of performance. Avoid perfectionism. |
| 8. Happier doing than managing. | Recognize staff needs experience. Work at your management skills. Comfort will come with control, and more work gets done. |
| 9. Expect staff to "know all details". | Recognize that this should not be expected of someone who has delegated responsibility for handling. The one delegated will know details. |
| 10. Failure to establish best controls. | Establish plans, schedules with details, progress reports, monitoring. |
| 11. Overcontrol. | Relax. Emphasize goal-accomplishment methods and procedures. Measure results, not activity. |
| 12. Failure to follow up. | Always check progress in time to take corrective action—without checking too often. |

EXTERNAL

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 13. Understaffed, overworked staff. | Limit expectations and reduce accepted responsibilities. |
| 14. Inadequate, untrained staff. | Train! Reassign, rehire if necessary. |
| 15. Upward delegation. | Refuse to make decisions for staff. If they need assistance, ask the right question(s). |
| 16. Problem not clear. | Be candid. Ask staff to help figure out the problem and keep you informed. |



TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 8 ATTEMPTING TOO MUCH AT ONCE

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

INTERNAL

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Lack of planning. | Set objectives, priorities, deadlines daily. Plan strategy to achieve them. |
| 2. Unrealistic time estimates. | Recognize that everything takes longer than you think (Murphy's 2 nd Law). Analyze characteristic underestimates, then add appropriate cushion to all critical estimates—e.g. 20%. |
| 3. Starting late. | Plan ahead. Start early. Have project plan and allow more time. |
| 4. Responding to the urgent. | Distinguish “urgent” from the “important”. Be more discriminating in sorting priorities. Maintain perspective in balancing short-term demands against long-term objectives. |
| 5. Overreponse. | Limit your response to the urgent and important demands. Learn to say “No” when necessary. Delegate. |
| 6. Sense of achievement. | Ask yourself what you are trying to prove. Be realistic. Keep perspective. Lower standards if you cannot realistically achieve them. |
| 7. Insecurity. | If over your head, cut back or switch to realistic assignments/schedules. |
| 8. Desire to impress boss. | Take a second look at what boss really wants—to be impressed in the short run, or to succeed in the long run? |
| 9. Problem in determining priorities. | Be discriminating. Check your priorities with boss periodically. Vitally important that you be on same wavelength regarding priorities. |
| 10. Overambition. | Recognize. Trim back to realistic proportions. |

11. Action-oriented. Don't confuse motion with progress or activity with results. Work smarter, not harder. Slow down, think it through so you'll get there faster. You'll have effective progress.
12. Ego. Overconfidence. Beware. Control. Consider your place and responsibilities in the organization and plan accordingly.

EXTERNAL

13. Understaffed. A common excuse for overwork. Why should the boss hire an assistant if you get it all done without complaint? If even if you do complain a bit? Do a cost-benefit study. Show how more staff is economically justified and will produce better results. Say "No" at appropriate times. If situation is hopeless, look for another job.
14. Overdemanding job or boss. Same as above.



TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 9 **LACK OF *or* UNCLEAR COMMUNICATION**

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

INTERNAL

1. Unaware of importance.

Recognize the importance!

2. Lack of time.

Take the time. Prioritize clear and effective communication.

3. Not listening/inattention.

Develop and practice listening skills.
Concentrate. Summarize important points after a conversation.

4. Purpose not clear.

Clarify. Ask if others have understood.

5. Use of wrong medium.

Select appropriate medium such as email, letter, phone, memo, conference.

6. Poor time choice.

Select an appropriate time.

7. Poor articulation.

Check with others—work to improve if you're often not clear with wording. Summarize at end. Realize importance of wording clearly.

8. Insufficient communication.

Assess legitimate needs for information.
Provide through staff meetings, emails, memos, clarifying conversation. Get feedback from others!

EXTERNAL

10. Lack procedures, policies.

Ensure effective communication by developing procedures all staff know and understand.

11. Lack of receptivity.

Test with, "Would you like to talk about ... ?"

12. Meaning of words.

Recognize words mean different things to different people. Choose them well. Be ready to clarify.

13. Differing value systems.

Recognize that experience, training, and environment create different backgrounds for interpreting communications.

14. Language barrier.

Access and adjust to accommodate.

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 10 INADEQUATE, INACCURATE, DELAYED INFORMATION

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

INTERNAL

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Unaware of problem. | Recognize and assign priority to it. |
| 2. Lack system. | Determine what information is needed for planning, decisions, and feedback on results. Then ensure its availability, reliability, and timelines—and use best medium (email?). |
| 3. Hard to know what information is needed. | Discuss with staff and decide. |
| 4. Failure to test its reliability. | Make no assumptions. Reliability is critical. Test periodically. |
| 5. Providing unneeded information. | Avoid unnecessary communication. Stick to essentials. Avoid overkill. |
| 6. Failure to assess priority of info. | Make assessment and allocate time accordingly. Standardize priority of information classifications. |
| 7. No uniform method of screening priority and urgency of requests for information. | Develop a method. |
| 8. Probable delays in getting info. | Expect delays. Plan accordingly. |

EXTERNAL

- | | |
|--|---|
| 9. Lack of authority to require the Information needed. | Clarify authority. Use response deadlines. |
| 10. Indecision or delay of others providing information. | Contact others and establish deadlines. Be sure agreement is reached. |

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 11 INDECISION AND PROCRASTINATION

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

INTERNAL

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Unaware of importance. | Recognize importance and act accordingly. |
| 2. Lack techniques to improve. | Set deadlines on all objectives and priorities, use reminders (emails, phone reminders, etc.), have assistant check on progress, reward yourself when finished (e.g. coffee break). |
| 3. Lack self-imposed deadlines. | Set deadlines on everything—put into schedule. |
| 4. Lack progress monitoring. | Have checklist. Use reminder feature on computer (e.g. Outlook). Have associate or assistant check in with you. |
| 5. Uncertain of priorities. | Ascertain daily. Check with staff. |
| 6. Shifting priorities. | Calculate cost; discuss with staff; discourage. |
| 7. Fear of mistakes. | Avoid fixing blame; ask what's been learned and how repetition of errors can be avoided. |
| 8. Attempting too much. | More realistic goals and expectations. |
| 9. Unrealistic time estimates. | Recognize everything takes longer than you think. Allow more time. Leave 20% of the day unplanned. |
| 10. Habit. | Break it! Develop better habits. |
| 11. Doing what you like, postponing the unpleasant. | Do the unpleasant first. Then, the rest of the day is "downhill". |
| 12. Doing the easy or trivial, postponing the harder tasks. | Do No. 1 in priority first, then other important tasks. What doesn't get done at the end of the day won't be the most important items. |

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 12 CONFUSED RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

INTERNAL

1. Failure to clarify precise responsibilities with boss.
2. Lack of job description.
3. Job description overlaps others.

Discuss with boss.

Write one. Discuss with boss. Get approved.

Identify where they overlap. Eliminate duplication.

EXTERNAL

4. Usurping of authority by others.
5. Responsibility without authority.
6. Ambiguous, confused communication or instruction.
7. Nondescriptive titles.
8. Confused or no organizational chart.
9. Staff unwilling to accept
10. Weak promotion practices.

Identify. Discuss with box. Clarify. Insist that if authority is in doubt, then responsibility must be limited to match.

Insist on commensurate authority equal with responsibility you have. It is critical that one have the power to carry out duty (responsibility).

Insist on clarity of communication or instruction. Request it in writing if verbal instructions are used inappropriately.

Titles convey apparent authority to the world in which the manager works. Titles must be descriptive of real authority to avoid confusion.

Organizational charts provide the skeleton for authority relationships and are therefore essential to clarify understanding of responsibility and authority within the organization. Clarify.

Select staff carefully. Train well. Reward.

Identify potential. Improve selection for promotion. Use career development program.

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 13 INABILITY TO SAY "NO"

CAUSES

1. Unaware of importance.
2. Real desire to help others.
3. Desire to win approval and acceptance ("nice guy").
4. Fear of offending.
5. Being a very capable person.
6. Belief that being agreeable enhances chances for promotion.
7. False sense of obligation.
8. Overdeveloped sense of sympathy, understanding, or impulsive generosity.
9. Insecurity or low self-esteem.

SOLUTIONS

Recognize as seldom identified, but of major importance in wasting time.

Don't overdo it. It will often be taken for granted.

Recognize possible trap ... if desired results are not achieved, you may lose instead of gaining respect and feel resentful.

True friends are not offended by honest explanation. Develop techniques of saying "no" without offending, e.g. "Thanks for the compliment, but I have to decline." "I'm sorry, I can't. But let me offer a suggestion ... "

Recognize this asset makes ability to say "no" even more important. Refuse to spread yourself too thin. Concentrate your efforts!

Don't confuse continual asset with teamwork.

Recognize prevalence of this cause. Examine reasons for this feeling. Discuss with family, friends, associates. Control

Recognize this in yourself. Be more realistic.

Know that always saying "yes" may betray feelings of insecurity and low self-worth. Resist this urge. Say "no." Perhaps offer an alternative proposal.

10. Guilt feelings.	Recognize. Know you are a good person. Assess whether your failures are real or imagined.
11. Not assessing consequences.	Take time log recording all “yes” responses that could have been “no.” Assess time wasted.
12. Easier to say “yes.”	Assess consequences. Plan techniques on how to say “no.” Be confident in your choices.
13. Not knowing how.	Recognize that mastering the art of saying “no” would likely enhance your success considerably. Develop those techniques.
14. Timid approach.	Don’t be gradual with refusal with offering excuses first—there are answers for those excuses. Say “no” first before too many hopes are raised. <i>Then</i> explain.
15. Lack excuses/reasons.	Think of acceptable reasons/excuses ahead of time. Sometimes, though, no excuse is better than a poor one.
16. Fear that excuses may not	Don’t feel every “no” has to be justified. Simply say, “I’m sorry, but I have to say no this time.”
17. No time to think of answer.	Count to 10 before saying anything. Then say “no.” Give yourself time. Delay response.
18. Fear of retaliation.	If such fear is justified, recognize the shaky foundation that relationship is built on. Try to improve it.
19. Losing sight of own priorities.	Remember, the best excuse is prior commitment to your own priorities.
20. Lack of objectives and priorities.	Others will determine priorities for those who don’t have their own. Set objectives/priorities.
21. Ambition or desire to be productive.	Better to do less well than do more poorly.
22. Autocratic manager.	Balance the trade-offs -- what you are learning versus what you are losing.
23. Tradition of organization.	Again, balance the trade-offs.

24. Refusal of others to assume

Identify this and refuse to become its victim.
(Note relation to false sense of obligation # 7).

25. Thoughtless assumption by
Others that you will say "yes."

Recognize that you have probably encouraged this assumption by rarely saying "no." Learn to say "no", especially to inappropriate or thoughtless requests—or those that will make you feel bad if you assent.

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS

TIMEWASTER ANALYSIS 14 LACK OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

CAUSES

SOLUTIONS

INTERNAL

1. Lack of planning.

Recognize that planning encourages disciplined action. Lack of planning encourages *undisciplined* action. Plan your work, then work your plan.

2. Lack objectives/standards.

Set objectives in key result areas, both personal and organizational. Develop standards (conditions that will exist when the job is well done) for routine tasks.

3. Lack of priorities.

Set priorities in order to focus effort on most productive areas. This ensures that what gets done will be most important—and what doesn't get done is least important.

4. Not setting deadlines.

Impose realistic but firm deadlines on yourself. Expect the same of others.

5. Putting second things first.

Recognize this universal tendency. Question every action

6. Postponing unpleasant items.

Schedule the unpleasant or difficult tasks *first*. Then the rest of the day is easier.

7. Responding to the urgent--
(postponing the important).

Resist the tyranny of the urgent by limiting your response: 1) ignore problems that will go away by themselves; 2) delegate those which others can handle; 3) respond yourself to those that only you can handle.

8. Not following up.

Recognize that people do what you *inspect*, not what you *expect*—and the same goes for you. Check your results against your plan. Are you progressing according to schedule?

- | | |
|--|--|
| | Have your assistant/secretary help monitor your progress. |
| 9. Not using available tools and techniques. | Evaluate and use such aids as "To Do" list, whether on paper, computer etc. Divide tasks into Must, Should, If Time. Use Daily Plan. |
| 10. Unrealistic time estimates. | Recognize that pursuit of unrealistic deadlines will lead to frustration and eventually destroy self-discipline. Be realistic in your own deadlines and be candid in resisting unrealistic ones. Be fair in imposing them on others. |
| 11. Lazy. | Recognize. Determine to overcome (See #22). |
| 12. Unaware of this timewaster. | Recognize you can be more successful with discipline. |
| 13. Lack of interest. | Re-examine attitude toward job. Recognize that indifference makes self-discipline harder. |
| 14. Inability to say "No." | Quit trying to be a "nice guy." Say "no" firmly and without offending. |
| 15. Drifting into trivia. | Avoid nonessentials. Divorce yourself from detail. Concentrate on the critical priorities. |
| 16. Cluttered desk. | Recognize this as an impediment to an orderly mind. Use weekly Plan Sheet to record those things you do not want to forget— doing so on computer and print out. Clear your desk. Be systematic in procedures for routine matters. |
| 17. Leaving tasks unfinished. | Recognize wasted effort in stopping and restarting tasks. Economy of effort dictates completing tasks before putting them down. Handle them once! Get them done the first time. |
| 18. Carelessness. | Get it right the first time. If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?? |
| 19. Daydreaming. | Learn the art of concentration and practice it. Avoid distractions and self-interruptions. |
| 20. Fatigue. | Practice health fitness, exercise, recreation, and time management. |

21. Procrastination.

Identify tasks and decisions you're like to put off. Set realistic deadlines—and tell others and use them to help you monitor results. Reward yourself when successful.

22. Bad habits.

Make automatic and habitual as many useful actions as you can. This frees the mind for more productive work. To acquire a new habit, launch the practice as strongly as possible—tell others to avoid backsliding.

EXTERNAL

23. Undisciplined boss/organization.

If you can't work where self-discipline is respected and encouraged, work around the poor situation as best you can. Standards of behavior tend to gravitate to the lower levels of the group rather than the highest level of it. Strategize to be as effective as you can under the circumstances and encourage others.

24. Switching priorities.

When a manager switches priorities of his/her team, that decision makes self-discipline difficult to practice. Take time log to record frequency, assess costs (in morale and production), discuss with manager to seek ways of reducing problem.



Self Discipline Works for You!