



Time Management

FOR ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR PEOPLE

“There is no time management, only choice management.”

- Kevin Eikenberry

So many parts of HR’s mission are designed to enable effective time management, from the most mundane transactions to the most strategic decisions. HR’s decisions determine whether or not your organization’s employees can focus on what is essential for your organization’s success.

Can employees focus if they’re thinking about a missing paycheck? What happens to their workflow if it takes half an hour to calculate their time-off balance and go to HR with a vacation request? Our employees expect us to handle the basics, to say nothing about preventing the more serious distractions that come from discrimination, harassment, or workplace safety issues.

How HR Enables Time Management:

- Effective and consistent payroll
- Clear policies and procedures (such as time off)
- Protection from discrimination and harassment
- Workplace safety

There are two parts to enabling effective time management - one part is teaching each of our employees to use their time effectively. The other part is helping our organization ***make decisions at the leadership level to set the stage for the most effective use of our time.*** The leadership team is responsible for decisions that have a ripple effect throughout the organization, and these decisions can either ***advance your teams toward their goals or get in the way.***

Effective time management at the organizational level takes more coordination and communication than just asking if employees are showing up, punching their time cards, and sitting at their desks for eight hours. It takes more than just planning more things at the same time.

It takes planning out what’s most important and respecting the reality of what it takes to use time effectively.

01

ALIGNING VALUES TO PRACTICES

TIME MANAGEMENT FOR ORGANIZATIONS
AND THEIR PEOPLE



It's a trap that can leave employees burned out and disengaged

To help your organization and employees make the best choices with how to use time, you have to determine values as a guide for what's most important.

The process of creating organizational values looks something like this:

- 1 | Examine your purpose as an organization.
- 2 | Develop a vision for what you want to accomplish.
- 3 | Set concrete goals to make that vision a reality.
- 4 | Evaluate the actions and attributes that led to goals being successful, and create values from those.

Many executives understand this process. But there are real human limits to each of these steps, and failing to recognize these limits can lead to an overall strategy that expects more from its employees than they have time to give.

When leadership teams overreach on their mission, vision, and goals, they often do so because they don't want to limit the organization's potential. They focus on getting ahead and don't stop to ask, "Should we do this?"

Then, at the same time, the employees don't want to disappoint the leadership team by missing their expectations, so they hesitate to give honest feedback about their time constraints for fear that it will come across as complaining.

It's a trap that can leave employees burned out and disengaged, all while the organization only achieves a portion of the results it listed in its vision statement.

Without values that actively address overwork, it can be all too easy to create a stressful cycle of expectation and peer pressure that sweeps up everyone in your organization.

That's why your organization's values need to be the most important part of your leadership decision-making process. The most effective values define how you're going to accomplish your goal by outlining your aspirations for your company, describing the reality of your organization's culture, and setting important limits.

When your values align with your employees' real experience, they become more than just pretty posters on the wall. As you make decisions that are consistent with these values, your employees know what they can expect.

So, if we're going to align our organizations with our employees' reality, we need to recognize the challenges that they face in managing their time to meet our expectations. Then we need to do what it takes to train our employees on time management at the individual level while facilitating time management at the organizational level.

02

OVERCOMING COMMON TIME MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

AND THEIR PEOPLE TIME MANAGEMENT FOR ORGANIZATIONS



Plan Ahead

Some people are self-proclaimed planners, while others prefer to “go with the flow.” While someone’s proclivity to plan can fall anywhere on a wide spectrum, it’s important for everyone to understand the benefits of being prepared and know how to manage work through planning beforehand.

In her book, *How to Control Your Day in an Uncontrollable Workplace*, author Laura Stack lists these benefits of planning ahead:

- You have a sense of what to expect tomorrow.
- You sleep better without thinking about work.
- It helps you to compartmentalize work and home.
- You wake with a purpose, a sense of the day. You are less reactive.
- You will know if you made realistic plans for the day.
- You avoid the decision dilemma. These are the time gaps when you ask yourself, “What should I do next?”

- You have a clear focus, which reduces your stress level.
- You enjoy family time more. You are present and focused.

One of the biggest places you’ll see a benefit in planning ahead is for your meetings. When you start more than ten minutes beforehand, you can incorporate some strategies to help everyone stay attentive.

Coordinate Meetings

Unfortunately, most of us can think of more than one meeting we’ve attended that was unproductive, or even entirely unnecessary. Planning is crucial to ensuring everyone’s time isn’t wasted.

Meetings should have a clear purpose and a set agenda. This doesn’t mean that there can’t be room for improvisation or brainstorming; if the organizer already knew everything, there wouldn’t need to be a meeting.

Every meeting needs someone who is accountable for **keeping the meeting on track and on time**. Training your managers in effective meeting techniques can give their teams a resource to use if their meetings keep getting off track. You might have to give feedback about the length of someone’s inspiring stories, or put an outright ban on stories if the meeting has a lot of content to get through in a short time.

Before your next meeting, keep these tips in mind to ensure it’s an effective use of time:

- Provide physical space and calendar space.
- Communicate a clear purpose.
- Set an agenda.
- Designate someone to keep things on track.
- Plan time for spoken communication.
- Ask for and implement feedback.

Tame Your Inbox

Email can be either a useful tool or a cruel weapon.

Every message that comes into our inbox, unless it's marked as urgent, looks the same. Everybody's message has the same weight. We have to take time to read every subject line before we make a decision of whether to open it and do something with it, flag it for later, or discard it and move on.

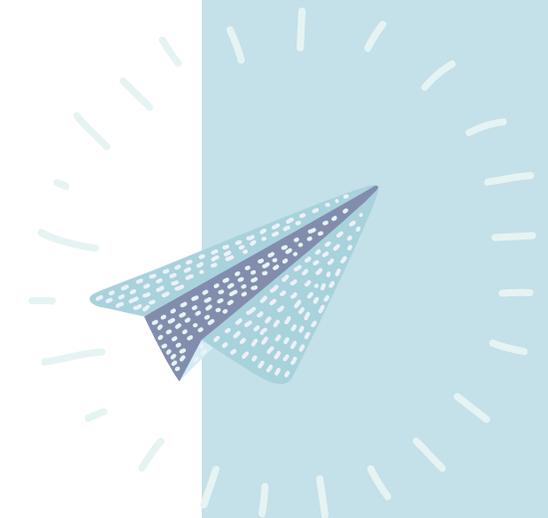
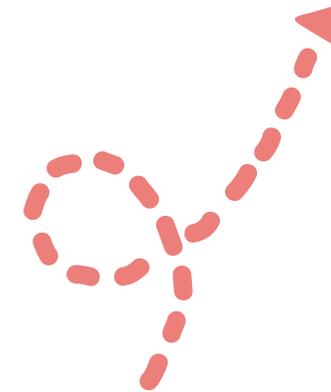
To keep your inbox from getting the better of you, try these tips for managing email:

- Schedule designated times when you check your email, rather than having it open all day.
- Transition periods (home to work, work to lunch, work to home) are great times to check your inbox.
- Close your email program and disable notifications when you need to focus on other things.
- When reading emails, if it will take longer than a couple minutes to deal with, add it to your To Do list in priority order with other tasks.

Mass emails can be an efficient way to send a message, but if our teams aren't all on the same page with how to be courteous and respectful of others' time reading email, it can be a big source of frustration.

Here are some guidelines to encourage your team to think about before sending or responding to mass emails:

- Respond directly and privately to mass emailers.
- Comments on announcements can lead to repeated distractions for everyone.
- Encourage use of proper channels, such as IM or a Community forum, instead of email.



03

BALANCING YOUR TIME



AND THEIR PEOPLE TIME MANAGEMENT FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Effective time management is going to factor in all of your goals, both those related to work and those that are more personal. The two certainly influence each other, but trying to do too much in one area leads to doing less in the other.

Have you heard of the acronym FOMO? It stands for **Fear of Missing Out**, and it's one of the driving forces behind **the pressure to do more**.

The only way to defeat FOMO is to establish boundaries, then honor them. Decide what is most important for you in every aspect of your life, do your best, and then let go of the "what ifs."

There are many types of boundaries that are essential to establish for your life. These include boundaries for how you physically experience your workday, mental limits on how you focus, and digital guards that help keep distractions at bay.

Setting boundaries includes taking both mental and physical breaks. We're not really wired to stay focused on one task for hours and hours on end. So, when you're involved in a project, or you're writing something, or you're trying to really unravel a difficult problem, build in some time to get up and get away from it for a little while.

Staying within your boundaries becomes much easier when you have well-defined goals. Instead of focusing on an event that you've already missed, you can focus on the results of your actual life and track your progress. It's much more satisfying and productive than chasing every possibility and never reaching your goal.

The benefits of focused goals aren't limited to individuals. Organizations can get FOMO too, and it often leads to similar results: abandoned projects, changes in direction, and the sense that there isn't enough – enough time, enough manpower, enough innovation. A commonly held notion starts to develop that you have to "do more with less."

Here's the question: Why? Why do you need to do more with less? Why give in to strategic FOMO and overextend your resources?

Maybe a competitor has a shiny new idea that is bringing in all sorts of investor capital and media attention, while your strategy is still in development. But does that mean that your current goal is any less worthy of attention?

Preparation and persistence over time can turn into incredible results. It's time management at the macro level, on the scale of months and years.

What does this process look like? Four words:

1 | Choose

2 | Focus

3 | Finish

4 | Repeat

Really, these four words sum up time management as a whole. You make a choice of what to do. You then focus on that choice, blocking out other distractions. You then keep at that choice until you finish it. And when you've finished it, then you can move on to the next possibility.

You might not have access to the inner deliberations of the C-suite. But you have the responsibility to deliver an accurate picture of how your organization manages its time so that your **leadership can make well-informed decisions on what your people are capable of doing**.

04

FIXING STRATEGIC FOMO



TIME MANAGEMENT FOR ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR PEOPLE

How does HR coordinate this process of choosing, focusing, finishing, and repeating the things that align with your organization's values?

First, it takes **teaching time management principles** throughout your organization. Hopefully the tips outlined in this ebook serve as a good first step for presenting these principles.

Once managers and employees understand principles of time management, help them **develop a process for setting, tracking, and reporting goals**.

We recommend software to help with this process for a few reasons. Software helps keep individual long-term goals from getting buried in all the daily tasks. Then when it's time to report on the results of these goals, you don't have to schedule meetings with each manager and have them make an off-the-cuff assessment of how they think their employees might feel.

You'll have the full spectrum of goal results and reactions from employees and managers in each department. Software makes the whole process more accessible, letting you get the information your organization needs while respecting everyone's time.

Finally, when you have the results, you can **see where your organization needs to expand or cut back**.

That's the remedy for strategic FOMO: **accurate information about your organization's progress**. When your performance analysis turns up areas where your organization can improve, you can direct resources where they're needed.

The best thing about getting an accurate analysis of how you're spending time, whether at the organizational or individual level, is that it lets you know where you can choose to do more, even with the smallest amounts of time. And that's certainly true as you make plans to **help your employees learn and grow**.

"Work is learning and learning is the work."
- Harold Jarche

Stop and think about skills and job roles in your organization that are critical for the success of your company today, that did not exist five years ago. There are a LOT of them. That means **if we stop learning, we stop working and moving our organizations forward**.

There are so many organizations that struggle with employee learning and development and say, "we just don't have time to take employees off the job to train," or "people struggle with finding time to take classes or do online training."

Considering how crucial it is for an organization's success to develop employees' skills, it's really not a matter of having no time, it's making the choice not to prioritize it.

There's an enormous number of learning solutions that make learning easily accessible and available on any device. Training today doesn't have to be delivered in classrooms; it can be delivered anywhere, through short and effective videos. To make our organizations more successful and better places to work, we have to look for strategies that make work become learning and learning become the work.

So, whether you're choosing the direction of your afternoon, your organization, or your life in general, developing effective time management skills makes all the difference in the outcome. Start with aligning values - then you can get into the nitty-gritty details of taking back your time to accomplish more of your goals, no matter how big or small they may be.

05

ABOUT US

TIME MANAGEMENT FOR ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR TEAMS



BambooHR is the No. 1 online HR software for small and medium-sized businesses that have outgrown using spreadsheets to manage their employee information. BambooHR's intuitive interface, streamlined implementation process and responsive support team ensure a failsafe transition from spreadsheets to our flexible Human Resource Information System (HRIS) that adapts to your changing needs. Clients make time for meaningful work by using BambooHR's Applicant Tracking System (ATS) and HRIS to manage the employee lifecycle. A winner of the 2013 Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Excellence in Workplace Effectiveness and Flexibility, BambooHR serves hundreds of thousands of employees in 70 countries worldwide. For more information or a free trial, [visit us](#).



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