

The Effective Time Manager - a diagnostic activity

Read the following statements describing specific time management competences, and answer as best you can, on the basis of how you think you rate as a manager of time.

Tick or cross each statement - tick = true of you, cross = not.

Tick/cross

1. I can concentrate on getting one thing done at a time, and avoid 'task-hopping'.
2. I know my most and least productive times of the day, scheduling work accordingly.
3. I respect others' time, meaning I am just a little more likely to get this back from them.
4. I am prepared to be firm with people when I need to, in order to protect my time.
5. I put effort into getting and staying and looking organised so I can focus on tasks.
6. I set specific deadlines for everything, and I take these seriously.
7. I clear my work space of everything other than that on which I am working at that time.
8. I am realistic about what I can get done, allowing myself the time I need for tasks.
9. I take breaks, without guilt, when I need them.
10. I prioritise effectively, being clear about which tasks need to be done ahead of others.
11. I delegate without hesitation, freeing up time, and ensuring I do only what I should.
12. I recognise when I am wasting time, or not using time well, and correct this.
13. I don't overload myself by setting myself more to do than is realistic.

14. I reflect often enough on my use of time to make improvements to this.
15. I deliberately observe and learn from others' management of time to improve my own.
16. I make sure I allow more time than is given to tasks than I feel they really should need.
17. I avoid absolute perfectionism whenever this leads to more time on a task than it needs.
18. I have developed a reputation for managing time positively.
19. I do not find it hard to say 'no' to anyone when I need, in order to protect my time.
20. I am familiar with the technology I have to hand, making the most of this to save time.
21. I am not a hoarder of paperwork or anything else that clutters my workspace.
22. I don't let drop in visitors, or distracting phone calls interfere with my focus on tasks.
23. I have put real thought into the layout of my workspace to help get me organised.
24. I know what an hour of my time is worth – within the nearest pound, including overheads.
25. I don't get overawed by the size or complexity of tasks – I know they all break-down.
26. I am very clear about where my time goes – and how much is spent on specific tasks.
27. I do not attend meetings that I feel are not a good use of my time.
28. I don't confuse activity with productivity, I know achievement counts more than *what* I do.
29. I am keen to learn more about managing time, and how to improve the way I do this.
30. I leave time within my busy day for the things that come up unexpectedly.
31. I do not put off tasks I find unpleasant, or know I will find difficult in favour of easier stuff.
32. I feel that time spent reflecting and planning is not dead or unproductive time.

33. I am always on time for appointments.
34. I can scan read complex documents to save time.
35. I make and return phone calls in batches, never one at a time.
36. I never allow anyone, whoever they are, to dump work on me they should do themselves.
37. I regularly review the way I spend time, looking for, and finding ways to improve.
38. I am assertive, meaning I can skilfully stand up for my rights without upsetting people.
39. I can generally distinguish the urgent tasks from the important.
40. I can find time and space away from distraction for when I really need to focus.
41. I am able to consciously control my body language so as not to prolong conversations.
42. I give myself sufficient credit when I manage time well – it's not all beating myself up!
43. I maintain a positive balance of work and home time – I don't do too much work at home.
44. I am prepared to seek advice on how better to manage time from those who do this well.
45. I am clear about my objectives, both long term and tactical, and focus on these.
46. I feel generally in control of my time.
47. I finish one task before I start the next.
48. I am finding it harder and harder to manage my time.
49. I have competent, supportive immediate colleagues, who take some time pressure off me.
50. I really can find more time if I put my mind to it.

What does this tell you about how you manage tasks within the time you have available?