

EA Insights



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Dear Friend,

Welcome to *EA Insights*, the monthly newsletter of Executive Advantage, LLC. In each edition, you will find brief articles showcasing best practices in leadership, management, process improvement, professional and personal growth, and other areas critical to your success and that of your organization. Thank you for your readership.

Enjoy your newsletter!

Sincerely,

June Melvin Mickens

Executive Advantage, LLC

Highly Effective Time Management

By changing how you think about your tasks, you can create a better return on investment for your time. Do you have more 'to-dos' than time in your day? Is lack of time preventing you from reaching more of your goals? If you had more time, what would it mean to your business, your finances, your family -- your life? No one is given more than 24 hours a day. How, then, do some people accomplish so much while others drown in incomplete 'to-do' lists, missed deadlines, and unmet objectives?

Effective time management is the process of ensuring that all of your time is spent on activities that move you closer to your goals. *What* you do is far more important than how quickly you do it.

The bottom line is that *how* you spend your time determines your success. The most successful business leaders and entrepreneurs invest their time very carefully.

Those who develop effective habits for time management create a competitive advantage. The secret is understanding where time is best invested and developing systems, processes, behaviors, and habits for effective use of time



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Quotes

Few things help an individual more than to place responsibility upon him, and to let him know that you trust him.
~ Booker T. Washington

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.
~ Theodore Roosevelt

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.
~ John Quincy Adams



and priority management.

Change Your Attitude

To change results, it is necessary to change behavior. Significant behavior change requires a change in perspective or attitude; in other words, how you think. Effective time habits require effective time attitudes. Think about your time as a limited resource to be *invested* rather than spent.

Know What You Want

Make a list of your top priorities, both personal and professional. This process helps clarify where to focus your energy and speeds decision-making when events arise that are not top priorities. Daily, weekly, monthly, and annual prioritization is a powerful time management habit.

Establish Your Personal 80/20 Rule

Typically, 80 percent of success comes from 20 percent of your effort. Determine what your most profitable 20 percent is, and spend the majority of your time in those activities.

Eliminate Unproductive Activity

One of the most practical exercises for better time use is a personal time study. Track activities in 15-minute increments for 3-5 days. Look for opportunities to eliminate unproductive behaviors that do not pertain to top priorities. Often the greatest gains in productivity are the result of eliminating bad habits and non-value added activity.

Automate

Use technology to your advantage. Automation is a great way to multiply your efforts. Review your time study for opportunities to memorize transactions, create automatic activity series, sort e-mail, auto-complete fields, etc. While it takes time to set up, it is always a wise investment.

Delegate

If the return on your time investment is less than the cost, yet the task is too important to eliminate and cannot be automated, consider delegating it. Opportunities abound to use staff, a virtual assistant, contract professionals, temporary help, family members, etc. Eliminate dependency on specific individuals by creating checklists and procedures for each delegated task. This helps bridge the gap if you have to do the task again *and* improves training effectiveness with new people.

Simplify

Look for every opportunity to simplify processes, decision-making, communication, proposals, customer tracking, etc.

Leverage

This concept refers to multiplying the return you get from every effort. Perhaps creative work can be re-purposed or meetings can serve multiple functions. Look for every place to consolidate your efforts and get greater return on your time investment.

Vision

Take time to create a clear, succinct vision for both yourself and your organization. Don't stop at the words; create pictures of what it will look like once you accomplish your vision. Imagine what it will feel like once you get there. The more emotionally tied you are to your vision; the easier it is to remember the success habits you are trying to create.

Time Blocking

Complete similar types of work all at the same time. Opportunities for blocking include client visits, telephone work, computer work, writing, e-mail correspondence, and completing personal tasks. This strategy maximizes your time investment far better than moving from one unrelated task to another throughout the day.

Analyze

Keep track of what's working really well, personally and for the business. Also, track opportunities for improvement. Review your list regularly, and implement new habits, processes, and systems at every opportunity.



Delegation

Test how well you delegate authority to your employees by asking yourself these questions:

- **How often** do I say: "I should have taken care of that myself"?
- **What is** the turnover rate among my employees?
- **Are my** employees frequently absent when they're not sick?
- **How many** people that I have directly supervised still work with me?
- **How many** of my employees would follow me if I took a new job at another company?

Source: *Streetwise Managing People*, by Bob Adams et al., Adams Media Corp., Holbrook, MA02343

Great Managers Remove Obstacles

Managing is the art of getting things done through and with people in formally organized groups. It is the art of creating an environment in which people can perform as individuals and yet cooperate towards the attainment of group goals. It is the art of removing blocks to such

Successful [people] create highly effective habits. If time management is actually effective priority management, then creating habits for better self-management is critical to your success. Think about the impact that one or two new time habits and/or attitudes could have on your business over the next year.

Perhaps your best time investment right now is creating your personal action plan for highly effective time habits.

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Structure + Analysis = Hiring Success

Just like anything else, the key to an effective hiring process is to identify the steps that contribute most directly to achieving success and then to implement and practice those steps, continuing to make improvements along the way.

First and foremost is the creation of a **standardized hiring process**. Through the creation of such a process, you can better identify the things that work best for you and your company . . . and the things that don't work at all. That's not to say that some steps in the process should not be eliminated altogether, just that some should be weighted more than others, in accordance with what's most effective. Below are the basic steps that any hiring process should include:



- Criteria-based screening of candidates
- A standard background check
- Assessments and/or tests
- Structured interviews, both over the phone and in person

Remember, these are just the basics. Depending upon the position being filled, you can add steps or elaborate and build upon existing ones.

The other half of the equation . . .

A **thorough analysis of the open position** will further help you to fill it with the best candidate possible. Unfortunately, many companies overlook this aspect of the hiring process, instead focusing their attention on the candidates that they're screening and interviewing. Those candidates represent only one-half of the equation.

After all, you have to know exactly what you're looking for before you can know that you've found it.

That's why, after you've established a standardized and structured hiring process, the next step is to thoroughly analyze the open position and the job description associated with it. This should be done **before** interviews are scheduled and conducted. In addition, the position should be analyzed in regards to the three main areas below:

- **Knowledge** - Although this is often considered the most obvious qualifier, it must be examined in an exhaustive fashion, since a miscalculation could be costly if not caught before a bad hire is made.
- **Skills/abilities** - This refers to the application of knowledge needed to perform the tasks required by the position, whatever forms that application might take.
- **Personality/attitude** - This one is often overlooked, since it pertains to the "soft skills" necessary for the job, as opposed to the "hard skills."

As you can see, achieving hiring success starts before the process itself even begins. Through the combination of a standardized process and an extensive job analysis, you can dramatically increase the chances that the next person you hire... is the best person for the position.

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performance.

About Executive Advantage

At Executive Advantage, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with organizations and professionals to manage strategic change, innovation, process improvement and cost reduction, performance, cultural transitions, and goal achievement. We use proven processes, and we tailor our approach to meet the specific needs of each client.

To learn more about Executive Advantage, contact us at inquiries@execadvantagellc.com.

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