

Winning The Time Management Game

Written by: Coach David R Meyer & Laurie Valaer
ECI Learning Systems, LLC.

We don't know of a single topic that creates more headaches for managers and leaders than the topic of time management. Everyone agrees that time management is a problem and many people can even identify their top time management challenges. But this is a topic that most people feel they have no control over. Even though their time is their own to manage, most people feel like others control their time for them.

And it is not hard to see why. If you work for a large company, your calendar may be "published" for anyone to view. That means the two hours you had set aside Thursday morning to work on the big project for your boss might be usurped by the meaningless meeting scheduled by "Bob in Accounting" who has blocked off those two hours on YOUR calendar.

Or, maybe the time you had set aside to talk about Goals and Objectives with your key staff is suddenly pushed aside by the email from "Sally in Customer Service" who insists that she must have an answer by today at noon.

The simple fact is that if you let others control your time, they will. If you allow them to schedule your time for you, you will not have any time for the things that are really important. When you allow your time to be controlled by someone other than yourself, you essentially become a victim and your masters are the puppet masters who are pulling your strings.

Time is a very limited resource. There are only so many hours in the day, and so many days in the week. In reality, you do not "manage your time." Instead, you decide "how you will spend your time."

Spending your time effectively really means taking control of your schedule from all of the "time vampires" who want to suck you dry. It means making hard decisions about what meetings you will attend and which ones you will not. It means that YOU will decide which customer problems to work on and which you will delegate; not "Sally in Customer Service". It means blocking out your schedule to work on key projects and not allowing others to decide your schedule for you.

Here's the way to get started:

1. Set aside time each Friday afternoon to set up your schedule for the following week. Block this time out on your calendar (1 hour should do it) and block it out for EVERY week.
2. Use that hour to identify what you know needs your attention the following week. Then, block those times out on your calendar as well. Once you have blocked time off to work on these projects, stick to it. Don't let someone else's "urgent problem" turn into your time waster.
3. Take a hard look at the meetings you have been invited to. Does each meeting really require YOUR attendance, or can someone else attend for you? It may well be that you and one of your key employees are both to attend the same meeting. Ask yourself if you both need to attend.
4. Don't let your email dictate your day for you. Unless you are receiving customer orders that need to be filled immediately, there is not a good reason to check your email constantly. You can easily fill a whole day just answering indiscriminate email. Email has become the number 1 way to get something off one person's desk and on to another's. Don't be the victim of this game.

Choosing how to best spend your time can be hard work, but it can be done. Especially once you begin to see the benefits from taking control over your own schedule.

An engaged and energized workforce leads to higher productivity, reduced costs, improved customer service, and increased profitability. Employee engagement happens when your Corporate Culture, Leadership Style, and Employee Expectations are in synch.

The Fusion Program from ECI Learning Systems is designed to align these 3 concepts in your organization – engaging your employees and creating positive energy that will propel your company to new heights.

For more information contact:

Coach David R Meyer
ECI Learning Systems, LLC
<http://www.ECILearning.com>
Dave@ECILearning.com
303-681-8982

Copyright 2012 © ECI Learning Systems, LLC.

All rights in all media reserved.

The content of this article may be forwarded in full without special permission provided it is used for nonprofit purposes and full attribution and copyright notice are given. For other purposes, please contact ECI Learning Systems, LLC.