

MIKE HENNING'S



“ALL IN THE FAMILY” COLUMN

Putting People First is Good Time Management

According to several recent studies, the average worker in America is productive about 54% of the time. That means most of us are working at less than our full potential. With the emphasis on teams and proper computer use in the workplace, the issue of how our time habits impact each other takes on even more importance. It's no longer enough to ask about the best use of your time. The bigger question concerns the best use of our time.

The **Time Mastery Profile** can be a tremendous tool to help improve the way we work with each other. The Time Mastery Profile helps people discover and capitalize on their time management strengths. It also helps discover weaknesses that prevent top performance. As we improve our time habits, we get more done together.

In essence, when you use the **Time Mastery Profile**, it's like benchmarking yourself against the best practices we've seen. You will quickly see where you're doing well, and where you could improve. It will help you devise a personal strategy for becoming a top time master. When you use the Time Mastery Profile, you develop a graph that shows the relative strength of your habit patterns across 12 aspects of time management. To show how this can help, let's consider an example of a male worker's Time Mastery Profile Graph (shown below) and several of the 12 aspects of time management.

| Your Time Mastery Profile Graph | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|----|---|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Category\ Level | I | | II | | III | | | IV | | V | | | | | | |
| A. Attitudes | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| B. Goals | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| C. Priorities | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| D. Analyzing | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| E. Planning | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| F. Scheduling | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| G. Interruptions | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| H. Meetings | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| I. Paperwork | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| J. Delegation | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| K. Procrastination | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| L. Time Teamwork | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |

Analyzing

A score of 7, on the graph, indicates that this person doesn't analyze time habits much. Habits are key to behavior, yet habitual activities are initiated at the subconscious level. The primary purpose of analyzing is to discover what is largely unrealized at the conscious level. Not analyzing means this person could easily have a negative impact on other people without realizing it.

Daily time records will provide information on a daily and weekly basis to discover the impact of his work habits on other people. If he is over-committed and constantly behind from trying to do too much at once, he is also impairing the performance of others. People depend on him to complete his work punctually. By capitalizing on what he discovers from his analysis, he can become part of the solution, not just a problem.

Procrastination

A score of 5 means that this person would probably put off applying for an annual procrastinator's award, even if he might win it, hands down! Procrastination is avoidance behavior, and avoidance behavior is habit driven. Other people depend on his timely completion of the unpleasant tasks and the "big time block" jobs he constantly procrastinates. He can make progress if he discovers the cause of his procrastination. The Time Mastery Profile documentation may help him admit his problem, and that's the first step to a solution.

Planning

Planning is thinking about the future in some systematic way so you're ready for good results to happen. Failing to plan means facing your tasks in a disorganized manner. Among other things, it is impossible to allow time in your plans for unexpected things when there aren't even any plans for the expected ones. Few of us get good results by accident. Strong team performance requires good planning, combined with coordination and follow-up.

Scheduling

Scheduling shows the same low score as Planning. This is not unusual, since the two are closely related. It is difficult to schedule work, keeping other people in mind, when there are few, if any planned activities to schedule.

Without a schedule, it is not unusual that he jumps from one activity to another. Good schedules are based on the importance of activities, proper sequencing of the activities, and understanding the estimated time requirements. If he really wants to "put people first," a good starting point would be to plan and schedule the important parts of his job.

Interruptions

A score of 6 for Interruptions reveals a two-way problem. He has problems with interruptions, and he creates interruption problems for others.

Other people would likely prefer that he bunch topics he needs to discuss with them, rather than phone, email or visit them often. Keeping a good record of all interruptions is the first step. However, he must record the interruptions he initiates, as well as those caused by others. He will discover whose time he is wasting and who is wasting his time. As he models more productive interaction techniques, others can observe and imitate these behaviors.

Time Team Work

The Time Mastery score of 7 forces attention on two areas for improvement. First, is the need to focus on the importance of being punctual when involved in team work. Symptomatic of this problem are his arriving late for meetings and not completing team commitments on time.

Second, his responses show little concern for the impact his approach to work has on team members. He can begin looking for ways to save time for team members, and ask team members how he could work with them to prevent wasting their time.

Whenever low scores are encountered on the Time Mastery Profile, the Profile itself gives you guidance for improvement. The Profile can help point out how improving your time habits will help increase personal performance and enhance team performance at the same time. Use the Time Mastery Profile in your own teams and see how it can help everyone win by helping you “put other people first.”

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This article appeared in Mike Henning's Family Firm Advisor newsletter, for more information about receiving one free copy of our newsletter, visit us at our web site: www.mikehenning.com, e-mail: hfbc@mikehenning.com, or call -- 217-342-3728. Mike Henning is a nationally and internationally respected consultant and speaker on family business issues.