

“Better manage my time”

This is a common request for our training business, as managers are increasingly being asked to do more with less. We've trained a host of managers on this, from senior to junior in both large and small businesses. The key thing we always emphasise is that time is a resource like any other: it is subject to cost-benefit analysis and is also governed by rules of investment and return.

When people attend one of our time management courses we start by showing them the major functional areas of resource allocation: management, production, sales and support. We then show them the relationship of investment to return for each area, in particular the differing time to payback.

We get attendees to look at their current time allocation and how it relates to the major functions. At this point we really focus on where time should be spent relative to their level of seniority. Always of particular interest here is the balance of short-term and long-term work.

Next we ask the executives to share their experiences of time allocation: where they think they are wasting time and where they think they are using it well, always in the context of their level of management. We then help them to understand why they may be wasting time in particular areas, something that sometimes leads to an ongoing coaching requirement.

Finally we help participants reallocate their time according to what they should be doing. To support them in this reallocation we pay particular attention to how to limit the intrusion of low-value activity.

Key Learning: Allocate time to a task relative to its value.

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