
Time Trap II

T r a i n i n g L e a d e r ' s G u i d e

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Time Trap II

P r e p a r a t i o n M a t e r i a l s

Introduction

Time Trap II

The American Media video, *Time Trap II*, and this Training Leader's Guide will assist you in presenting a training program that will help participants be more productive, less prone to stress, and more in control of their lives.

Most people don't have enough time in the day, despite all the talk about time management, computers, fax machines, voice mail, and all the other time savers we've adopted.

But the time crunch has nothing to do with time—it has to do with ourselves. The cause of our time-management problem can be traced back to powerful tendencies of human nature—tendencies to procrastinate, to let our attention shift from topic to topic, to think that only we can do things right, and to let ourselves be dominated by powerful old habits.

Overcoming human nature isn't easy. But Dr. R. Alec Mackenzie has developed practical, realistic solutions that work to help people conquer human nature and create personal action plans to change time-wasting behavior.

(This Training Leader's Guide is available on computer disk for your convenience. This disk will enable you to customize the training materials to your organization's needs.)

Icon Key



Flipchart



**Read or
Paraphrase**



Overhead



Worksheet



Video



Ask and Discuss

About

Dr. Alec Mackenzie

Alec Mackenzie, president of Alec Mackenzie & Associates, Inc., actively promotes the development of time management and self-management skills in employees at all organizational levels.

Dr. Mackenzie has published five books. Best known is *The Time Trap*, which has sold over 800,000 copies in twelve languages, and was revised to meet the time needs of a new decade. His book entitled *Time for Success: A Goal Getter's Strategy* (1989, McGraw-Hill) guides readers to achieve success by accomplishing their personal and professional goals.

He has written over 60 articles, including “The Management Process in 3-D”, which is widely acclaimed as the world’s most accepted model of management, and ranks in the top three all-time best sellers of *Harvard Business Review*. He has also presented his self-management principles on video and audio cassettes and in seminars in 40 countries throughout North and South America, Europe, and the Far East.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the video training program, participants will be able to:

- Utilize the principles of time and self management.
- Use a personal time log.
- Identify their top time wasters.
- Develop an action plan to eliminate time wasters.
- Gain two hours a day in increased productivity.
- Use the concept of the “Ideal Day” to implement an effective routine.

Time Trap II

T r a i n i n g M a t e r i a l s

Training Session Planning Considerations

TRAINER'S NOTE: The video, *Time Trap II*, and this Training Leader's Guide will serve as a strong foundation for your training session on time and self management. With additional preparation and planning, you can provide your participants with a valuable learning experience.

The following comments are planning considerations that you may find helpful in developing an effective and practical training session.

1. Know your audience. Pay special attention to the scheduling needs of each participant, and plan accordingly.
2. Develop specific objectives that focus on your organization's needs pertaining to time and self management. These objectives should be simple and focused, enabling you to keep your training session on target.
3. Preview the videotape twice prior to planning your session. Refer to the section in the Training Leader's Guide entitled **Time Challenges—Time Solutions**. Stop the video as needed to prepare your discussion for the training session. The more familiar you are with the material, the more comfortable you'll become in planning your training session.
4. Decide on an outline. A suggested outline has been placed in this guide. Feel free to use it in its entirety or add your own ideas.
5. Reproduce the following handouts for each participant:
 - a. One copy of **List of Top Time Wasters** (pages 16-17)
 - b. One copy of **Analyzing Your Daily Time Log**
 - c. Two copies of the **Personal Action Plan** for use in developing a rough and final draft
6. We recommend that you read at least one of the Mackenzie books on time management listed on the page entitled **Additional Resources**. *The Time Trap* is available through American Media Incorporated.
7. Think of time challenges you have experienced in the past. These examples will hit close to home and help generate interest in the topic when discussed in your session.
8. Reserve all equipment and materials, and make sure they are in excellent working condition.

Training Session Checklist

Location:

- Reserve the training room
- Create a relaxed environment
- Make sure that all seating has a good view of the visuals
- Make sure there is enough light to take notes when viewing the video
- Provide an adequate writing surface for participants
- Assure good acoustics
- Assure that your room is accessible and equipped for participants with disabilities

Video Equipment:

- Obtain proper format of videotape (VHS, BETA, 3/4" U-matic, 8 mm)
- Make sure the VCR is properly connected to the monitor
- Test run the VCR, and check monitor for proper picture, color and volume
- Make sure the tape is rewound and ready to play before beginning your session
- Check all other equipment for proper operation

Preparation:

- Review the Training Leader's Guide and design your session
- Read and review related materials concerning time management
- Notify participants of the date, place, and time of the training session
- Preview the video twice
- Prepare an outline of the session content; center your session around the aspects of time and self management that will affect your participants the most
- Prepare an introduction for your session that impresses upon your participants the importance of developing time and self management skills
- Copy enough handouts for all participants

Materials:

- Training Leader's Guide
- Videotape
- Handouts
- Paper and pencils
- Additional equipment

Training Session Outline

TRAINER'S NOTE: Our suggested format for achieving maximum benefit from this training is a course conducted in two training sessions, with a third follow-up session one to three months later.

Trainer's Instructions



Session I

1. Introduce and show the video *Time Trap II*. The video is packed with basic principles of time management which can be used by all employees with solutions to top time wasters.
2. Use the section entitled **Time Challenges—Time Solutions** to discuss the video.
3. Introduce and distribute time logs. Emphasize that these are for personal time analysis, not for evaluation by supervisors and managers. Clarify that the actual time logs will never leave the hands of the person who fills out the log.
4. Using the information from the Daily Time Log, emphasize the correct methods for successfully using a time log.
5. Have participants use the time log for a period of three to five days and bring the completed log to the next session.

ALTERNATIVE TRAINING OUTLINE: When more than one session is not possible, provide participants with copies of the **Daily Time Log** forms and instructions in advance of the seminar. Request that the time logs be carefully filled in for three days and brought to the seminar. To start this session, introduce and show the video *Time Trap II*. Proceed with the formats suggested for Sessions I and II, combining them into one session.

Training Session Outline

TRAINER'S NOTE: This session should be held approximately one week following Session I. This session will focus on the participants' use of the time logs, and emphasize the importance of making their time-management skills a routine. Try to maintain a truly voluntary atmosphere. Some participants prefer to keep their time logs and personal action plans private.

Trainer's Instructions



Session II

1. Show the video *Time Trap II* for review.
2. Review the **Learning Objectives** listed on page 8, and explain that each participant will leave the session with a personal action plan designed to achieve these objectives.
3. Hand out the following pages to participants: **List of Top Time Wasters** (pages 16-17), **Analyzing Your Daily Time Log**, and two copies of **Personal Action Plan with Follow-up**.
4. Give participants time to analyze their daily time logs by using the guidelines on **Analyzing Your Daily Time Log**. Then ask participants to list their top-ten time wasters and state probable causes on the first draft of their personal action plan.
5. Ask participants to share any surprises.
6. On a flip chart or overhead, compile the top time wasters of the group.
7. Beginning with the group's most common time waster, ask participants to share causes and solutions based on the video, past experience, and their recent experience using and analyzing their time logs.
8. Ask participants to record solutions to time wasters as they are developed during the discussion (pages 26-28).
9. Supplement these ideas by using the material in **Time Challenges—Time Solutions** to discuss Dr. Mackenzie's analyses of time wasters and their solutions.
10. Work through a sample personal action plan from a participant, or use one you prepared prior to your session.
11. Allow time for participants to work on their personal action plans.
12. Ask for participants to share their personal action plans.

Training Session Outline (Follow-Up Session)

TRAINER'S NOTE: A follow-up session should be held at the end of either the first or second month following Session II. Participants should be asked to bring all handouts, including their personal action plans. The mastery of time and self management is an ongoing process requiring continuous reinforcement, periodic follow-up with analysis of progress and pitfalls, and renewal of commitment.

Trainer's Instructions



Session III

Refer to Quiet Hour Discussion and hand out **Quiet Hour Signs** (found in the back of the Training Leader's Guide).

If you opted to show the video only at Session I, this is also an excellent opportunity to use it again as a memory refresher and a motivator.

As you guide participants through their progress analyses and through their revised personal action plans, the following may need to be done:

1. Include plans for eliminating the next three time wasters on their personal lists.
2. Provide plenty of positive reinforcements.
3. Reassure participants that they are not alone—it's human nature to experience frustration when achieving real self management.
4. Explain that this course was not designed as a quick review of time management. This training session was designed to emphasize personal action plans to make major, life-long changes so participants can:
 - Complete their jobs with greater ease and effectiveness, and less stress.
 - Pursue additional goals in their careers or personal lives.
 - Have more freedom, not less.
5. Recommend that participants complete another time log for three days at the end of the three-month period. This serves to focus attention on any lingering time-management problems. It also shows participants how far they have come in developing new habits when learning to manage themselves.

Time Challenges—Time Solutions (Trainer's Instructions)

TRAINER'S NOTE: Discussion of the video *Time Trap II* can provide an excellent introduction to the principles of time management and serves to emphasize the necessity for completing a personal time log.

Trainer's Instructions



Instructions:

1. Review the information below regarding the pre-video and post-video discussions called **Time Challenges—Time Solutions**.
2. Each discussion section is divided into two parts:
 - Identifying time challenges
 - Identifying time wasters and solutions
3. You may wish to discuss Dr. Mackenzie's top-ten time wasters. This will give participants examples of what to look for in the video.
 1. Interruptions: Telephone and drop-in visitors
 2. Crisis management/Shifting priorities
 3. Lack of goals, priorities, and planning
 4. Attempting too much, and an inability to say "No"
 5. Personal disorganization
 6. Lack of self-discipline
 7. Meetings
 8. Incomplete or delayed information
 9. Paperwork and red tape
 10. Confused responsibility and authority
4. Hand out **List of Top Time Wasters** (pages 16-17). Instruct participants to identify the personal time wasters that apply to their daily routine. This exercise will familiarize participants with the time wasters portrayed in the video.
5. Discuss each section with participants in the pre-video discussion to prepare them for their role during the video—identifying time wasters and solutions.
6. Hand out the **Time Challenges—Time Solutions Exercise** (pages 26-28). Participants should be instructed to identify time wasters and develop solutions to the time challenges shown in the video and outlined on their handout.
7. Show *Time Trap II* (23 minutes). Remember to allow participants enough light to write down time wasters and solutions to the time challenges shown in the video.



List of Top Time Wasters

Time wasters are a part of everyone's daily routine. The challenge is to overcome these time wasters and become more productive and effective in your personal and professional lives. Use this list to group your personal time wasters into the following three categories.

1. PLANNING

- _____ Lack of written goals with deadlines
- _____ Indecision—gathering information endlessly
- _____ Snap decisions—based on insufficient facts
- _____ Attempting too much—resistance to choosing
- _____ Failure to break your top priority into small, manageable parts
- _____ Lack specific plan of activities to meet goals selected
- _____ Lack daily priorities so you don't know what to do first, second, etc.
- _____ Shifting priorities, so you jump from one task to another
- _____ Crisis management, arising from failure to plan for what could go wrong
- _____ Lack of dated, written checkpoints to assess progress
- _____ Time estimates which are unrealistically low
- _____ Lack specific plan of how to use waiting time—for appointments, etc.
- _____ Lack specific plan of how to use travel time

List of Top Time Wasters (continued)

2. ORGANIZING AND MANAGING YOURSELF

- _____ Personal disorganization/cluttered desk
- _____ Time spent looking for items/poor filing system
- _____ Procrastination
- _____ Lack of self-discipline in staying with your top priority until you get it done
- _____ Leaving tasks unfinished
- _____ Socializing or pointless conversation which interferes with your top priority
- _____ Inability to say “No” to requests
- _____ Attempting too much by yourself—refusing to accept help or ask for help
- _____ Perfectionism or getting bogged down in details
- _____ Failure to listen or take notes
- _____ Indifference/lack of motivation
- _____ Tardiness/absenteeism
- _____ Haste/impatience

3. ORGANIZING AND MANAGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

- _____ Telephone interruptions
- _____ Drop-in visitors
- _____ Noise or visual distractions causing attention shift
- _____ Paperwork/red tape/too many memos
- _____ Meetings
- _____ Confused responsibility or authority
- _____ Duplication of effort
- _____ Multiple bosses
- _____ Incomplete, unclear, or delayed information—on instructions or feedback
- _____ Lack of training—time wasted because you don’t know how
- _____ Over control—unable to proceed when you know what to do
- _____ Inadequate equipment or facilities

Time Challenges—Time Solutions

Pre-Video Discussion

TRAINER'S NOTE: This discussion will prepare participants to identify the time wasters illustrated in the video *Time Trap II*. Participants should also try to identify solutions to each time challenge as they watch the video.

Instructions:

1. Explain to participants, *The video is filled with time challenges, time wasters and solutions; your role is to identify time wasters and develop solutions. Be prepared to discuss your work following the video.*

2. An example of a time challenge is:

Time Challenge:

Utilizing your time wisely.

3. Explain to participants, *We all tend to waste time in much the same way. Why? Because the same powerful forces of human nature pull at every one of us, no matter where we live in the world or what job we hold in our organization.*

As in most areas of life, we have some choice in the matter. Possible choices are:

- *We can go with the flow of human nature; after all, if it's natural, it must be right.*
- *We can take a hard, unflinching look squarely into the face of time to see what practical effects our time habits really have on our jobs and our lives. And we can decide if we want to make some changes by confronting the powerful pull of human nature.*

4. The following are some examples of **time solutions** to discuss with participants. Since each of us has the same amount of time, but never enough time, we need to:

1. **Recognize the importance of our time.** *As your time goes, so goes your life. Every action, every thought takes time. If you place a low value on your time, you place a low value on your life.*
2. **Set goals and establish priorities.** *If we haven't made choices, we tend to do the easy things first, and the easiest is not always the most important. That's why setting goals and carefully establishing priorities are crucial steps in achieving success.*
3. **Identify and eliminate personal time wasters.** *To actually accomplish this, complete and analyze a time log. Make a commitment to take control of your own human nature.*

Time Challenges—Time Solutions

Pre-Video Discussion (continued)

Trainer's Instructions

5. Another example of a time challenge is:

Time Challenge:

Taking control with self management.

6. The following are **time solutions** for this time challenge:

- **Control environmental time wasters**, such as the telephone, drop-in visitors, meetings or other interruptions.
- **Practice self management.** To manage ourselves, we need to:
 - a. Develop goals
 - b. Establish priorities
 - c. Conquer human nature

Dr. Mackenzie says: "Without goals, we have no way of determining whether our activities make any sense. The first question in time management or self management has to be, What do you want?" Once that question is answered, you have a basis for judging what you are doing at any given moment.

- **Prioritize your tasks.** Once you know what you want to get done, you can determine which actions you must carry out to reach your goals. Then, number them in order of priority.
- **Identify your #1 priority and get it done first!** Resist the temptation to get small, easy, unimportant things done first so you can cross them off your list. If you work on less important tasks, you will often find you have reached the end of the day without having even started on your most important priority. The result will be frustration and ineffectiveness.

Remember Peter Drucker's conclusion: "Efficient is doing the job well. Effective is doing the right job well."

7. Conclude this pre-video discussion by stating: *The entire system of time and self management can be summarized this way:*
- I. Choose goals and prioritize.
 - II. Write down actions with deadlines to achieve those goals.
 - III. Replace bad habits—or identify your top time wasters and correct them.



Show Video

Time Challenges—Time Solutions Exercise (Trainer's Copy)

Trainer's Instructions



TRAINER'S NOTE: Distribute the handout entitled **Time Challenges—Time Solutions Exercise**, and instruct participants to identify time wasters and solutions to the time challenges illustrated in the video. The time challenges below are introduced in the order in which they occur in the video.

Time Challenge:

Preventing environmental forces that seem beyond our control from pulling us in all directions.

Time Waster: Shifting Priorities.

Greg tells Nancy that his boss has moved the newsletter deadline up to Friday. Then his boss, Bob, hands Greg another time-consuming project and says he needs it by Friday.

Time Waster: Confused Authority or Responsibility.

As an afterthought, Greg's boss says, "Say Greg, maybe you should work with Human Resources on this."

Time Waster: Incomplete Information.

Greg's boss, Bob, says, "I've got to go. I'm late for a meeting." Greg is still confused as to whether he is responsible for the project or shares responsibility with Human Resources. Thinking he is at the mercy of his environment at work, Greg brings work home.

Time Solution: Both projects can't be the number one priority.

Either you have to choose, or your boss does. Otherwise, chance or proximity determines which of the two projects is number one.

Time Challenges—Time Solutions Exercise (continued)

Time Challenge:

Getting on top of the details and dealing with crisis situations.

Time Wasters: Drop-in Visitors, Personal Disorganization, Confused Authority or Responsibility.

The next day doesn't get any better. Greg's boss interrupts him to ask about CD players. Greg can't find the information he promised his coworker, and he's still not sure about his authority to carry out that project with Human Resources.

Time Waster: Lack of Planning.

In the next scene, Greg is finally getting at his #1 priority—the newsletter. But, he's making little progress. The pictures have to be reshot because Greg forgot that the new computers were needed in the picture.

Time Waster: Attempting Too Much.

Greg also insists on writing an article himself and reviewing all the newsletter material.

Time Waster: Lack Specific, Written Plan of Action.

He suddenly realizes he forgot to check a rough draft with printing yesterday.

Time Waster: Crisis Management, Lack of Planning.

At this point, Cindy walks in: "We're out of employee handbooks!"

Time Waster: Confused Responsibility/Authority, Delayed Information.

The secretary for Greg's boss reminds Greg that the boss wants the figures by Friday, but Greg still doesn't know how to proceed with Human Resources, and his boss is in a meeting for the rest of the day.

Time Solution: Learn how to delegate tasks.

Allow others to handle more responsibility on projects they're a part of. This will leave you more time to handle potential crisis situations, and be more effective in other areas of your job.

Time Challenges—Time Solutions Exercise (continued)

Time Challenge:

Using your time effectively.

Time Waster: Lack of Priorities.

Greg uses a time log to see how much time he actually wastes during the day due to procrastination and various interruptions. Then he learns how to prioritize each project.

Time Solution:

1. When you have goals and priorities, you know the job you're doing is the most important use of your time. At the beginning of each day, or the night before, look at your goals, then write down the five or six most important things you have to do for that day. Number them in order of importance.
2. Ask yourself, "What is the most effective use of my time right now?" If you're too busy to get your top priority done, and whatever you're doing is less important than your top priority, do your activities make sense?

Time Challenge:

Managing the paper flow every day.

Time Waster: Paperwork and Red Tape.

Greg's day starts as usual, behind a lot of paper.

Time Waster: Personal Disorganization/Cluttered Desk.

Greg shows a coworker how he organizes his desk for maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

Time Solution:

1. Face the human nature factor of wanting to feel important. Consider adding a sign to your office: "A cluttered desk is the sign of a cluttered mind. A clean desk is the sign of an effective person."
2. Minimize the materials on your desk. Allow only the following:
 - a. A list of your goals in plain sight.
 - b. Your daily plan with numbered priorities.
 - c. The project you're currently working on.
3. Whenever possible, handle paperwork only once.

Time Challenges—Time Solutions Exercise (continued)

Time Challenge:

Asking for help, and refusing to do everything yourself.

Time Waster: Crisis Management.

Nancy, under pressure from various deadlines, accepts the fact that she needs assistance with the editing of the customer service report.

Time Solution:

1. When others are willing to help and able to do a good job, let them. Sometimes they appreciate the chance to work on various tasks or practice new skills.
2. Don't insist on taking care of every detail yourself. Save your energy for tasks only you can do and that contribute to getting the top priority done.

Time Challenge:

Learn how to turn Murphy's Law around.
(Anything that can go wrong will.)

Time Waster: Crisis Management and Lack of Planning.

Greg has a problem with his newsletter. Two roles of film were lost and they need to reshoot the entire newsletter feature.

Time Solution:

1. Plan for the unexpected. How would you handle it?
2. Build a cushion into deadlines; in the long run, it may save time for everyone.
3. If a crisis occurs, analyze it afterward. How could you have handled it better? Now take steps to prevent it from happening again.

Time Challenges—Time Solutions *Exercise (continued)*

Time Challenge: Interruptions.

Time Wasters: Drop-in Visitors, Interruptions.

Greg and Nancy both have problems with frequent interruptions during the day.

Time Solutions:

1. The Quiet Hour is one of the most effective aids available to help you get your number one priority done. The Quiet Hour concept is covered near the end of this book and is followed by signs for your door.
2. An open door policy usually means that people are encouraged to be available, if needed—not that they can't close their doors to get work done. So, close your door.
3. Nancy points out that she finally realized that the famous line “Got a minute?” almost never means just one minute. Her solutions are:
 - a. “Can it wait until later? I’m fighting a deadline for my boss.”
 - b. Go to the other person’s desk, then you’ll be in control of how long you talk.
 - c. “I’m pressed for time. Could you jot down your ideas? Then we can get together later and discuss them?”
 - d. “How much time will you need?”
 - e. If it’s your boss, ask which priority she really wants you to work on.
 - f. If the interruption is truly urgent, ask how much time the person will need. Decide whether the goals and priorities on your desk are more important than the interruption. If your goals are more important, schedule a later time to work with the visitor.
 - g. Stand up when someone drops in. Remain standing throughout the conversation.

Time Challenges—Time Solutions Exercise (continued)

Time Challenge:

Make meetings *time invested*, not *time spent*.

Time Wasters: Interruptions and Lack of Planning.

Nancy and Greg meet for lunch and discuss ways to keep meetings on track and on time.

Time Solutions:

1. Think of meetings as result oriented, not activity oriented.
2. Start on time, and stay on the agenda.
3. If agenda topics aren't related to your area, check with your boss before the meeting as to whether you really need to be there.

Greg brings up another kind of interruption—the telephone—and Nancy offers the following solutions:

1. Have the materials you need and a list of points you want to make ready for each call.
2. Set the tone by getting right to the point.
3. Have someone screen your calls and take messages, or work out a trade-off system with someone.
4. Leave a message, so people have the information you need when they return your call. When technology like voice mail is in place, make use of it.
5. If the boss gets into a long phone conversation with someone else during a meeting with an employee, some people prefer to leave a note: *"I can see you're busy. Let me know when you're done. I can be here in five minutes."*

Time Challenges—Time Solutions

Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS: Identify the time wasters for the challenges highlighted in the video, and develop solutions to eliminate them. Use the space provided beneath each time challenge to list the time wasters and solutions pertaining to that challenge.

Time Challenge:

Preventing environmental forces that seem beyond our control from pulling us in all directions.

Time Challenge:

Getting on top of the details and dealing with crisis solutions.

Time Challenges—Time Solutions
Exercise (continued)

Time Challenge:

Using your time effectively.

Time Challenge:

Managing the paper flow every day.

Time Challenge:

Asking for help, and refusing to do everything yourself.

***Time Challenges—Time Solutions
Exercise (continued)***

Time Challenge:

Learn how to turn Murphy's Law around.
(Anything that can go wrong will.)

Time Challenge:

Interruptions.

Time Challenge:

Make meetings *time invested*, not *time spent*.

Time Trap II

P a r t i c i p a n t M a t e r i a l s

Daily Time Log

Before you start each day, brush up on these reminders for completing your personal time log.

1. Write daily goals with deadlines stated as specific times (11:00, 12:30, 2:00, 3:30, 4:30, etc.).
2. Log your time as you go. Record each activity as the day progresses. Every single time your attention shifts, record the new item.
3. Be very specific. If you note a ten-minute block as “phone calls,” you won’t be able to tell at the end of the day which were time-wasting interruptions and which were necessary.
4. Use signs and abbreviations, for example:
Phone call out _____ Phone call in _____
5. Record everything. Don’t skip daydreaming, socializing, and brief interruptions. One purpose of a time log is to determine how much of your total time is wasted away in such “minor” activities.
6. As you record each item, rank each activity with #1 representing the most important job accomplished and so on. At the end of the day, determine how much time was spent on top priority work.
7. Comment on each action with a view to future improvements. Try to note suggestions for making these improvements.
8. Do the time log all day. Don’t stop during the day or fail to record some attention shifts and then try to catch up at the end of the day.
9. Keep your personal time log for a minimum of three days, preferably five days.

Analyzing Your Daily Time Log

After completing your **Daily Time Log**, take a few moments to analyze your results. This analysis will give you a clear picture on how you spend your time and how you can improve.

1. Did you have a plan for each day with clear priorities in writing?

2. Were you doing the right job at the right time?

- What did you do that should not have been done at all?
- Could it have been done more effectively at another time?
- Could it have been delegated? To whom?

3. What could be done in a better way?

- Faster?
- More simply?
- In less detail?
- With better results?

4. Concerning interruptions:

- How are you interrupted (phone, visitors, meetings, crises, self, boss, clients)?
- How often?
- For how long?
- How important were the interruptions?
- How long does it take to recover—to get back on track?
- How many interrupted tasks were left unfinished at the end of the day?

5. Concerning contacts/communications with others:

- How important is time spent in accordance with your real priorities?
- Who (with the right person)?
- How often?
- How long?

6. To what extent did you reach your goals?

Personal Action Plan With Follow-Up

In order to eliminate the time wasters in your day, you need to act to change them. And in order to act on them, you need to plan. Below is a personal action plan, including an example, to help you identify and solve your daily time wasters.

TIME WASTER	CAUSE	SOLUTION	DATE TO START	DATE TO CHECK PROGRESS	FOLLOW-UP ACTION TAKEN
1 <i>EXAMPLE</i> <i>Interruptions</i>	<i>Visitors</i>	<i>Quiet Hour</i>	<i>Now</i>	<i>3 Weeks</i>	<i>Different Signs</i>
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

How To Say “NO”

Discussion

TRAINER’S NOTE: Saying “NO” is a crucial part of every person’s success in their jobs. Saying “NO” doesn’t have to sound impolite or unprofessional. Discuss with participants the fears of saying “NO” listed below. Hand out the page **Saying “NO!”** to participants to aid in this discussion and for their future use.

First analyze why you don’t say “No” when you really want to.

1. You don’t know how.
2. You don’t have the emotional fortitude or you suffer from an occasional case of timidity. (Remember that the tiny, two-letter word “no” is one of the strongest time-management tools in the world. If you don’t use this tool when you should, the results will always be the same: overload, overtime, and over-stress.)
3. You have a desire to please, to win approval. (Wanting to help those in need is a worthy trait. But wanting to please so badly that you lose sight of your own priorities will cause you to lose approval when you fail to complete your own tasks, or worse yet, when you fail to complete any of the tasks you’ve promised to do.)
4. You genuinely don’t wish to offend, or you actually fear offending people.
5. You lose sight of your own priorities. (Say yes to yourself first. Keep your priorities in sight. If you owe someone a favor, weigh the chance for a future favor against the present need to meet your top priorities.)
6. Your desire to feel needed, important, and valuable makes a request from someone else an ego trap. (But others won’t view your priorities as important unless you do.)

Saying “NO!”

Saying “NO” is a crucial part of your success on the job, and it doesn’t have to sound impolite or unprofessional. Below are four steps toward helping you say no to requests that you simply cannot handle.

Dr. Mackenzie’s Four Steps to Saying “No.”

1. Listen.

This lets the requesting person know you’re giving full attention to the request and lets *you* fully understand what is being asked.

2. Say “No” politely but firmly right away.

Don’t build false hopes with wishy-washy answers.

3. Give your reasons, if appropriate.

Your reasons may include your priorities, your schedule, etc. This reinforces your credibility.

4. Offer alternatives, if possible.

Demonstrate your good faith by suggesting other ways to meet the person’s need.

There are many ways to say “No” after listening to a request that you simply cannot handle.

Dr. Mackenzie offers a few:

- “I’m sorry, my other commitments just won’t permit me to take on another project right now.”
- “You know, on New Year’s Day I promised my family I wouldn’t take on anything else this year. I’ve been neglecting them too much.”
- “Thanks for the compliment, but I’m afraid I’ll have to decline. Maybe next year.”
- If a request catches you off-guard, don’t say anything until you count to ten first.

The Quiet Hour

The Quiet Hour is one of the most effective aids in helping you complete your priorities. This simple technique gives you an hour of absolute quality time every day. Various signs are provided as examples of what you can do in your own work environment.

The concept of the “quiet hour” is simple. It calls for identifying a time segment, ranging from one-half to two hours daily, during which only emergency interruptions are permitted.

Telephone messages are taken with callbacks scheduled or are handled through trade-offs with coworkers. Unexpected visitors are asked if an appointment can be arranged and no meetings are scheduled during this period. The “quiet hour” can be implemented organization-wide and should be scheduled at the time deemed most appropriate for the majority of persons participating.

Everyone, with few exceptions, is included. Everyone is expected to remain at his or her desk for a period of uninterrupted concentration. Thinking, goal setting, prioritizing, planning, organizing, and project completion are the most common uses made of this undisturbed time.

The following guidelines are suggested for making the “quiet hour” an effective tool throughout your organization:

1. The concept of time management in general, and the “quiet hour” in particular, should be implemented at every level of the organization.
2. Periodic reinforcement and monitoring of results is essential.
3. Exceptions to the “quiet hour” must be kept to a minimum. The switchboard operator would be an obvious exception.
4. Generally, the earlier in the morning the better, before calls and meetings proliferate.
5. All should observe the same quiet hour rather than each choosing his/her own.

The Ideal Day

The **ideal day** is an extremely powerful tool for managing your time and yourself. At first you may think your job is so filled with interruptions, crises, and unusual problems that you could never have an **ideal day** or even a typical day. The information below shows you how an **ideal day** is easier to obtain than you might think.

All of us have important tasks which must be done on a regular basis. And every day, there are less critical jobs and some things you decide whether to do at all.

Who decides when you do these things? You do. Imagine what your **ideal day** would be like at work and in your personal life—calmly being on top of things, carrying out your career goals, having time for yourself, your family, recreation, exercise, and sleep.

Walk yourself through the kind of **ideal day** you would *really* like to have. Imagine living your life with goals, daily priorities, and systematic reduction of your personal time wasters, so that you experience your **ideal day** on a regular basis. It's possible.

Next, add the idea of your personal energy cycle. As Dr. Mackenzie says, *"Most of us have certain times of the day when we're more energetic and mentally fresher—other times when we're less effective. Study yourself for a few days. Are you a slow starter, or do you do your best work first thing in the morning? When does your energy dip? When do you get a second wind?"*

Now use your **ideal day** and your personal energy cycle as a model for your daily plan. Schedule your most important tasks for your best working times and work on those tasks at the same time each day. Block in your "quiet hour" and your other activities.

Additional Resources

On Time Management

To fully understand the time and self management process, you may wish to review the suggested materials below.

Hobbs, Charles R. *Time Power*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.

Jaques, Elliot. *The Form of Time*. New York: Crane Russak, 1982.

Seiwert, Lothar J. *Time is Money: Save It*. Homewood, IL: Dow-Jones-Irwin, 1989.

Timpe, A. Dale, (ed.). *The Management of Time*. New York: Facts on File Publication, 1987.

The following are available from Alec Mackenzie & Associates, Box 130, Greenwich, N.Y., 12834:

Mackenzie, R. Alec. *The Time Trap*, 2nd rev. ed., NY: ANACOM, American Management Association, 1990.

Mackenzie, R. Alec. *Time For Success: A Goal-Getter's Strategy*. NY: McGraw-Hill, 1989.

Mackenzie, R. Alec. *Making Time Productive*, 12th ed., Greenwich, NY: Alec Mackenzie and Associates.

Mackenzie, R. Alec. *Alec Mackenzie on Time*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Mackenzie, R. Alec. *Mackenzie on Time: How to Save Two Hours a Day*. Audio cassette. NY: ANACOM, American Management Association.

Mackenzie, R. Alec. *Manage Your Time: Double Your Sales*. Audio cassette series. Chicago: Dartnell, 1988.

Mackenzie, R. Alec. *Time Tactics. A planner-organizer*: 8 1/2" x 11". *Time Tactics Traveler*: 5" x 8". Alec Mackenzie & Associates.

QUINT HOUR

**If your
question can
wait . . . my
project won't
be late.**

**What can I say?
I'm swamped
today!**

THANKS!

SEE YA'ALL

AT

BREAK!

**I'm working on
an important
deadline. I'll be
free at 3:15.**

Thank You!

GENIUS at work!

Notes