

LESSON 8: Business Performance

Time Management

No matter how much wealth you have accumulated, there is always someone who has more. One area, however, in which you have equal footing is the amount of time you have available.

Every single person has 1,440 minutes available to them each day—no more and no less. It becomes your choice as to how much of that time you will invest wisely versus how much you will squander.

The downside is that your time does have limitations. Once you squander time, it is gone and never to be recovered. Managing your time and your team's time wisely is critical to maximizing your business' profitability and efficiency. Unfortunately, there is usually more to do in business than the time we have available.

Kathy was previously a registered nurse. She loved that when her shift was over, she was done for the day. Later, she went to work for an organization where the to-do list seemed endless. As a task oriented and driven person, Kathy found herself, without success, working until one or two in the morning to finish her to-do list.

Finally, her boss explained that business is different than nursing. She would always have a to-do list, and there would always be more to do. He shared with Kathy that the best approach is to set her priorities and goals for the day and be as efficient as possible. The remainder of the list would be waiting for her in the morning. In fact, it was more prudent for her to go home and rest so she was fresh for the next workday.

PRIORITIES

Pastor Andy Stanley, in his book *Choosing to Cheat*, points out that there will always be a tension between your work and your family. Since you can always do more at work, *and* you can always do more for your family, it is important to realize that you will always feel like you are cheating someone. By placing priorities in your life, you can better navigate how best to

allocate your limited time. The challenge is learning how to not feel guilty about cheating someone out of the time *they* wished you would give to them.

Time is a limited and valuable resource. While family members and people in your workplace have their own opinion as to how you should best allocate your time, you are the only one who can and should make those decisions.

How does God want you to allocate your limited time? In which roles should you invest your time and in which roles should you eliminate? These are challenging questions. It's important to remember that for every new role you take on it will either limit time you currently are investing in another role, or it will require that you eliminate an existing role.

EMBRACING REST

It's not surprising that people shortchange rest to make more time available for other activities. In fact, research reveals that 69% of Americans get less sleep on weekdays than they say they need—sleeping only 6 hours, 31 minutes on an average weekday. Yet, they indicate a need of an average 7 hours, 13 minutes of sleep to function at their best. Actual average weekend sleep weighs in at 7 hours, 22 minutes.

Although each person has some degree of variance, in adults, cognitive performance reaches a peak at **7 hours of sleep** before starting to decline (data provided by the Journal *Frontier in Human Neuroscience*).

Another form of rest that is often shortchanged is what the Bible calls Sabbath rest. One of the Ten Commandments was dedicated to instructing us to set aside the Sabbath as a day of rest. God explains it further in Exodus 23 where it says, "Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and so that the slave born in your household and the foreigner living among you may be refreshed."

Our bodies were designed by God to need rest and a time to worship God. Taking one day a week for you and your staff to leave work behind will not only provide you with needed rest but, upon your return to work, will also rejuvenate your thinking and creativity.

Just like God provided enough manna to the Israelites for their day off, God will provide for your business if you take time away from the workplace to rest and worship.

Finally, many business owners find it challenging to get away for just a few days of vacation time, let alone weeks at a time. If we look to God's ways, He provided the Israelites seasons of longer rest with three annual festivals. These were weeklong celebrations with feasting and a break from work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How many hours, on average, do you sleep each week night? _____

Do you feel this is adequate? If not, what would you need to change to accommodate the proper amount of sleep?

2. When was your last vacation? How many days did you spend away from your work?

- a. While away, how frequently did you check your emails and/or check in with the office?

- b. Considering the next 12 months, how much time are you *committed* to set aside for vacation?

MAKING TIME MANAGEMENT PERSONAL

Effective time management requires us to allocate our time to the duties that only we can do well. If we leave the remaining duties to be delegated to others who are more skilled in those areas, we will have maximized our time.

To manage our time in a way that produces maximum effectiveness, it is helpful to periodically log how we spend our time for a week period. The following exercises will help us: (1) examine our time as it is currently being spent, (2) set goals for our preferred time allotment, and (3) develop action plans to achieve the desired result.

Practical Exercise A

1. Estimate how many hours each week you currently spend on the following categories and write them in the "Actual Hours" column. Considering your ideal priority for each category, revise hourly goals for each category and write them in the "Hourly Goal" column.

Category	Actual Hours	Hourly Goal
Worship/God		
Spouse		
Family		
Other		
Work:		
Sales/Business Development		
Customer Service		
Administrative/Financial		
Staff Development		
Other		

2. Examine the gaps between your actual time spent and your preferred time. Write 3 to 5 action steps you can take this month to bring your actual time spent in better alignment with your desired allocation.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

3. For one week (*during this next month*) keep a log of your personal and professional time. Determine how many hours you spend in each of the listed categories. At the end of the week tally the number of hours by categories. Compare these results with your goals and adjust your next weeks' time accordingly.

Category	Total	M	T	W	Th	F	Sat	Sun
Worship/God								
Spouse								
Family								
Other								
Work:								
Sales/Business Development								
Customer Service								
Administrative/Financial								
Staff Development								
Other								

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Managing time well is very important; however, some can become so task focused that they overlook the value in developing relationships. Developing people can produce faster results than any efficiency exercises. People who have a clear understanding of their calling and purpose, and the purpose of the organization, can be motivated and trained to be far more effective. Don't overlook the importance of pausing and investing time in your people.

While companies strive to maximize efficiency and time used, we don't want to overlook research that reveals the importance of how to best use our time throughout the day. Our body has rhythms that can be used to our benefit. For example, many do their most productive work mid-morning. In contrast, mid-afternoon brings the highest number of mistakes, when our bodies are becoming tired. Allocating our work load and the type of work we perform to match our body's rhythms will help to maximize effectiveness.

Business owners wear so many hats that multi-tasking is common place and can seem unavoidable, but research also reveals that focusing on one task at a time until complete is far more effective. Assess your company's optimum "speed" to ensure a healthy workplace rhythm.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you believe are your biggest time-wasting traps? What new habits would help you overcome these traps?

2. Think of a time when you felt like most of your day was wasted. What do you believe caused you to feel that way? What could have been done to prevent that feeling?

3. As you ponder how you can improve your time management, what is your biggest take away from this lesson? What lessons can be applied to helping your staff better manage their time?
