



THE SUPERVISOR/HR NEWSLETTER

Public Employee Benefits Alliance

HELPFUL RESOURCES FROM YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SEPT
18

September Online Seminar

Creating a Personal Development Plan

Participate in this session to understand effective goal setting and identify potential obstacles that can create barriers to reaching your goals.

Available on-demand starting September 18th at www.deeroakseap.com

2018 Supervisor Excellence Webinar Series & Leadership Certificate Program

Managers/supervisors who attend 5 of the 6 webinars will receive the Deer Oaks 2018 Leadership Certificate. Attendance is captured when viewing each recording. There is no other registration needed.

Session Recording Links

Preparing to Lead Effectively

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/8571220193555391745?assets=true>

Relationship Excellence for Managers

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/8528081955655269121>

How to Motivate Employees from Different Generations

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/6833217767937705729>

How to Effectively Delegate Tasks & Responsibilities

Recording: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/460889278988855810>

Helpline: 866-327-2400
Web: www.deeroakseap.com
Email: eap@deeroaks.com

Prioritizing Your Time

Time is a unique resource of which everyone is given an equal amount—a gift of 24 hours each day. How you invest that gift is a major factor in how you feel about your life.

Think of time as one of the tools that you have available to reach your goals. As with many tools, if you want to use time effectively, it may require some training (or retraining), determination and practice.

Even though the term time management is used a great deal, there really is no such thing as time management. Using time effectively is actually a matter of your own personal management.

Time goes by at the same rate no matter what you do. You can't speed it up or slow it down. Unlike the other resources that you manage, there is no way to control time. The best you can do is take charge of yourself in the framework of time and invest yourself in those things that matter most in your life.

Defining Priorities

List five aspects of your life that are meaningful to you. These are your basic priorities.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Efficiency or Effectiveness

Do not confuse efficiency with effectiveness when it comes to developing your time use skills. Efficiency relates to doing a job right in as little time and with as little effort as possible. Effectiveness, on the other hand, relates to doing the correct job right. Being effective with your time means you are investing your time in the most important tasks. Efficiency implies that you are able to accomplish a great quantity of work. You evaluate efficiency by how much you have gotten done. Effectiveness, on the other hand, implies that you know how to set priorities and are able to focus your efforts on what really needs your attention. You evaluate your effectiveness by whether what you got done was what really needed doing.

Learning to Set Priorities

Setting priorities is a matter of deciding what is really important. In this case important means important to you. What activities and roles give your life meaning? These are the parts of your life where you most want to succeed.

Everything in your life cannot be a priority. Lots of important things will compete for attention over your lifetime, but there are not enough hours in anyone's lifetime to give attention to everything that is good and worthwhile.

Deciding on your basic priorities is a key exercise in moving toward more effective use of your time. Your basic priorities provide a means for making time choices, helping you decide where it is important to invest yourself and where you can let go.

On a daily basis you also have to learn to set task priorities. Prioritizing tasks includes two steps:

1. Determining what needs to be done.
2. Deciding on the order in which to do the tasks.

How do you decide what work needs to be done? For the most part, it relates back to your basic priorities. To be effective in your time use, you have to weed out the work that does not fit with your basic priorities.

Learn to say no to tasks that look interesting and may even provide a strong sense of achievement but do not fit with your basic priorities.

You also have to be able to separate out the tasks that need doing from the busywork that tends to eat away at your time. Many tasks that fill your day may not really need doing at all or could be done less frequently.

Take note of the difference between tasks you need to do and those you want to do. Deciding the order in which to do tasks means you start with the needs list first and then move to the wants list.

Task prioritizing means working on the most important tasks first no matter how tempted you are to get a lot of less essential tasks out of the way.

Set yourself as a priority.

You need to be one of the priorities you set for yourself. This can feel unnatural for many women who are used to thinking of the needs of others. Think of meeting your own personal needs as taking care of a valuable piece of equipment.

You need routine maintenance—the care and attention you often direct at others also needs to be directed toward yourself. Think of taking time for yourself as comparable to changing the oil in an automobile. Over the long haul it is an important investment.

Insisting on time to relax and pursue some of your own, personal interests is not selfish. Rather it is like changing the filters on your furnace. It will keep you operating more effectively in the other areas of your life. One of the resources you bring to your life is attitude.

The right attitude can make any task much easier, any problem more solvable. It is difficult to have a positive attitude when you never seem to have time to do things you enjoy. Investing some time in yourself is like refilling the ice trays—there will be something there the next time you need it.

Critical Skills for Effective Time Use

Certain skills help in using time effectively. Most of these skills are mental. While it is not necessary to develop all of the skills, each makes a contribution to your ability to direct time usage.

Time sense is the skill of estimating how long a task will take to accomplish. A good sense of time will help you be more realistic in planning your activities. It helps prevent the frustration of never having quite enough time to accomplish tasks.

To increase your time sense, begin by making mental notes of how long it actually takes to do certain routine tasks like getting ready in the morning, running a load of laundry or delivering your child across town to baseball practice.

Goal setting is the skill of deciding where you want to be at the end of a specific time period. Goal setting gives direction to your morning, your day, your week and your lifetime. The exercise on deciding your lifetime priorities is a form of goal setting. Learn to write down your goals.

If you are like most people, goals are just wishes until you write them down. Keep your goals specific, as in “weed the flower beds in front of the house” rather than “work on the yard.” Keep your goals realistic or you will continually be frustrated by a sense of failure.

Standard shifting is adjusting your standards as circumstances change. Your standards are what you use to judge whether something is good enough, clean enough, pretty enough, done well enough.

Perfectionists have very high, rigid standards, and they have trouble adjusting to the changing demands or circumstances of their life. Develop the ability to shift standards so you can be satisfied with less than perfect when your time demands are high, instead of feeling as if you are somehow falling short.

Time planning is outlining ahead of time the work you need to get done in a specific time frame. Sometimes time planning is as simple as writing out a To Do list to ease your mind from holding on to too much detail.

At particularly stressful times the To Do list may expand to include a more specific calendar of when tasks will be done. While a detailed time schedule can be too confining to use all of the time, it is a good way to take the pressure off at exceptionally demanding times.

Recognizing procrastination is a skill in itself because procrastinators can do an incredible job of hiding their procrastination from themselves. Procrastination is needlessly postponing decisions or actions.

You might disguise the procrastination response with an excuse like waiting for inspiration, or needing a large block of time to concentrate with your full attention, or needing more information before tackling a project.

It takes skill to differentiate between procrastination excuses and legitimate reasons for delaying a decision or action. Without the ability to recognize when you are procrastinating there is little chance of overcoming this immobilizing habit.

Source: Prather, C.G. (n.d.). Challenges & choices—Time effectiveness: Prioritizing your time (GH-6653). Retrieved August 17, 2016, from the University of Missouri Extension Web site: <http://extension.missouri.edu4>

Ask Your EAP!

The following are answers to common questions supervisors have regarding employee issues and making EAP referrals. As always, if you have specific questions about referring an employee or managing a workgroup issue, feel free to make a confidential call to the EAP for a management consultation.

Q. I recently read that anxiety is common among workers of all ages, especially younger workers. What performance or workplace symptoms would indicate an employee suffers with an anxiety disorder?

A. Looking for mental health symptoms is not an efficient way of identifying troubled employees from a management perspective. Focusing on performance standards you want improved and then considering a referral to the EAP when they do not get better is the way to go. Are you puzzled by an employee who turned down a promotion for the third time? What about an employee who always avoids the annual holiday party? These employees may be exhibiting symptoms of two quite different forms of anxiety—or they may not be symptoms of anxiety at all. There is a wide spectrum of anxiety disorders. Everyone experiences some anxiety from time to time, but many with severe forms of anxiety may perform in a superior fashion.

Q. After making a formal supervisor referral to the EAP, why is further communication about participation and cooperation necessary from the EAP? My concern is change or improved job performance. I either see it or I don't.

A. Communicating with the supervisor following a formal referral for performance problems represents best practice for EAPs in managing troubled workers. It recognizes that employees are motivated, in part, to follow through because of concern over their job security. Eliminating this dynamic reduces accountability and invites a loss of urgency on the part of the EAP client. An EAP does not equate to a counseling service. It is a programmatic approach to managing troubled workers whose performance issues may be caused by personal problems. The two approaches are radically different helping systems. The former is entirely apart from the workplace or any other system. An EAP, on the other hand, exists because of its primary business purpose, which is helping the workforce remain happy, healthy, and productive. Part of this must be motivating the most difficult and most troubled workers to follow through with its recommendations.

Q. Is there a way to not just motivate employees to do their job but also have them really go to the next level and become excited and proactive about their role and the company's mission? Or is it just pure luck if you get an employee who can motivate him- or herself like this?

A. Some employees do motivate themselves because they know the value of being energized. They've learned that love of the job comes by engaging the organization, understanding their role and its importance, and seeing all the possibilities before them. Other employees must be inspired and shown what lies over the mountaintop. Your ability to inspire this latter group is a critical skill that can reduce turnover and attitude problems and boost productivity. To inspire employees, spend time with them and demonstrate your own enthusiasm so they can see it. They will be compelled to model it. Help them get clear about their role and your performance expectations. (A common complaint heard by EAPs from employees is a lack of understanding of what the supervisor wants from them.) Help employees understand the company's strategic plan and direction, their role in it, and the value of their work product or services. Always let employees have some say in what they would like to accomplish, and set goals, evaluate, and give feedback toward that end during the year.

Copyright © DFA Publishing, LLC

Information contained in this newsletter is for general information purposes only and is not intended to be specific guidance for any particular supervisor or human resource management concern. Some of it might not apply to your particular company policies and available programs. This information is proprietary and intended only for eligible EAP members. For specific guidance on handling individual employee problems, consult with Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

