



Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events (T.I.M.E.)

Topic: Time on your Side

Date: September 2004

Written and Published by Sue Tinnish, 847.394.9857, stinnish@ameritech.net

U. S. Library of Congress ISSN: 1539-1833

Welcome

Time is an elusive resource. Time cannot be recaptured or stored to use later. You have only one chance at every hour, every day.

Like time management as a life skill, meetings can benefit from the ideas and principles of time management. This issue to T.I.M.E. (no pun intended) discusses ways to make the best use of every minute -- before, during and after a meeting.

Sue

[Sue Tinnish](#)

Table of Contents

1. Pareto's Principle
2. Time Management Skills
3. More Skills Applied
4. Meeting with Timely Success
5. Timely Resources
6. Freebies
7. Future T.I.M.E.
8. T.I.M.E. Gone By

Pareto's Principle

The 80/20 rule, also known as the Pareto Principle, is one of the most useful concepts of time management. Vilfredo Pareto wrote of his observations that people seem to divide naturally into what he called the "vital few," the top 20 percent, and the "trivial many" the bottom 80 percent.

This observation, generally holds true whether you are talking about customers, activities or revenue. In general,

- 20 percent of your activities will account for 80 percent of your results
- 20 percent of your customers will account for 80 percent of your sales
- 20 percent of your products or services will account for 80 percent of your

- profits
- 20 percent of your tasks will account for 80 percent of the most important value of what you do

The Meeting Challenge

Using Pareto's Principle for meetings implies that you must determine what "vital few" agenda items will create the most value towards reaching your goals. If there are 10 agenda items, two will turn out to be worth as much, or more than the other eight items put together.

Time Management Skills

Building upon Pareto's Principle, consider these Time Management skills and their links to meetings:

Deciding Priorities

Time management experts urge us to plan our day to be sure to take care of the most important tasks and not waste time on the insignificant or unnecessary.

Further, they argue that it is imperative to focus on the important projects and tasks, and arrange your time so that there are few interruptions while working.

The spin for meetings is to place items on the agenda which add the greatest value. Don't clutter a meeting with filler activities or non-value driven items. Tell people what are the most important priorities of the meeting. Minimize distractions (meals, clearing/serving food, cell phones, etc.) during meetings.

Maintenance and Progress

In order to make the most of your time, you will need to be able to get the right balance between maintenance tasks and progress tasks.

A maintenance task is one which, once completed, will leave you in the same position as you were before, even if it is something you need to do to stay alive, like eating a meal.

A progress task is one which you believe will help you reach a position which is fundamentally better than the one you are in now.

If you get bogged down with the maintenance tasks, you won't find time for the progress tasks. If you know what your priorities are, this will help you to get the balance right.

Insure your meetings contain elements that help maintain and advance your organization. Meetings represent a gathering of the human capital of your organization. Use that talent wisely to focus on the future while preserving the status quo.

Scheduling Skills

People often become frustrated with schedules that are overly ambitious or unrealistic.

The same is true for meeting schedules. Be realistic. Don't set up a schedule that is too rigid and unrealistic. As you set up a meeting, keep in mind the goals and priorities of the meeting as well as the goals and priorities of your participants. Your participants need to be motivated to follow the schedule.

Balance

The most common time management mistake that people make is not allowing for a balanced life-style. Remember that one's overall health and wellness require attention to six important life areas.

- Physical (exercise, nutrition, sleep)
- Intellectual (cultural, aesthetic)
- Social (intimate and social relationships)
- Career (goal directed work)
- Emotional (expression of feelings, desires)
- Spiritual (quest for meaning)

Meetings should provide a bit of each element to achieve a balance that is fulfilling and enriching to the overall meeting experience.

Don't Exhaust your or their Attention Span

Attention spans vary considerably, and our ability to concentrate on one task can range from an hour and a half down to twenty minutes.

Plan your meeting to account for people's varying attention spans. Don't expect to garner people's full attention for 2 hours straight. Schedule breaks and rewards into your meetings. Promote interaction and movement to re-energize people and their attention spans.

Delegate

Understand that others can perform some of your duties as well or better than you can. Loosening the strings doesn't diminish your importance; it increases it. Fundamental to this time management strategy is the fact that with only so many hours in a day or week, you are limited by those hours.

In meeting settings, delegate parts of the agenda to the team. Start to practice hands-off management in running or executing the meeting. Assign members of the management team specific roles during meetings. Clone yourself by delegating.

Take Time to Consider

There are other lessons from Time Management that have implications for meetings. Here are a few more tidbits to consider:

Don't Dwell on the Past

You can only control and manage what is happening now. While it is important to learn from the past and celebrate accomplishments, don't allocate too much agenda time to the past. Meetings should contain a call to action that is relevant for the here and now.

Take Time to Lead and Teach

Sometimes it seems so much easier to complete a task yourself rather than explain and delegate the same task to someone else. This is a short-sighted view of time management that we can all fall into.

Meetings are the perfect opportunity to "teach a man to fish" rather than just give him a fish. Building an organization means marshalling your team to own the firm's success. More than delegating, this is an opportunity to create additional resources that will carry out the mission.

Make it Personal

You can manage the agenda of the meeting. It is also useful to ask the participants to practice good time management skills at the meeting.

Challenge your participants to create a plan to make the most of their time at a meeting before they attend the meeting. Who do they want to meet? What colleagues or associates do they want to spend time with? What is the #1 thing they will do with the knowledge or information gleaned from the meeting when they return?

Motivation

A look at your To Do List may leave you less than motivated. How is it that sometimes you just don't feel motivated to do the expected tasks. It might help to realize that for many people motivation isn't a prerequisite to action - it is a result of it!

As you consider your meeting agenda, don't expect people to be already motivated. Understand that the motivation may follow the action. If a meeting doesn't create progress or momentum, people may well feel de-motivated by the experience.

Concentrating on your strengths

The best time management strategies recognize your inherent talents and weaknesses. While a large meeting cannot take into account everyone's personal biorythms and preferences, you can consider the organization's culture and the overall strengths and weaknesses. Lead from your strengths. Work to minimize the importance of your weaknesses -- work around them rather than always seek to eliminate them.

For smaller meetings, you can check with people about their preferred style of working and time management to capitalize on the strengths of the group.

Multitasking

Recent studies show that this once-touted ability to juggle a multitude of responsibilities with ease may actually be detrimental to efficiency.

Here are some statistics worth paying attention to:

1. By concentrating single-mindedly on your most important task, you can reduce the time required to complete it by 50% or more.
2. It has been estimated that the tendency to start and stop a task, to pick it up, put it down, and come back to it, can increase the time necessary to complete the task by as much as 500%.

In meetings, request that people don't multi-task (check their email while listening in). Harness the energy to start and complete tasks. Set timeframe for completing so you can provide a single focus.

Meeting with Timely Success

I saw some great time management principles at work in this Customer Service Symposium. Paychex Inc., a Rochester, N.Y.-based provider of payroll, human resources and benefits outsourcing solutions, initiated an annual symposium for its client service supervisors (CSSs), the supervisors of its payroll specialists.

Before the symposium, CSSs are asked to solicit ideas from their peers and direct reports - specifically, three ideas that if implemented could increase client satisfaction, reduce client losses, enhance the work environment, reduce employee turnover or increase productivity.

Good use of time before the meeting! Pework gets others invested in the meeting. Allows the participants to understand the focus of the meeting. Creates a practical incentive to the meeting (answers the question "What's in it for me?").

The symposium gives CSSs an opportunity to share these ideas along with their experiences and challenges.

Practical information is shared. Single focus to the meeting. Balance between networking, information sharing and information receiving.

After the symposium, the company provides an update to participating CSSs on the progress of implementing some of the ideas.

People are more motivated when a meeting results in action and change and they have had a voice in the change. Focus on the resulting impact from the meeting.

And 90 days after the symposium, an audioconference is conducted with the symposium's participants and senior executives and operations managers.

The meeting has an impact beyond the agenda time, 3 months later, the reach of the meeting is still felt by participants. Continued focus by senior executives and other managers sends the message that this is an important priority to the company. Audioconference is a practical way to continue the effects of the face-to-face meeting.

Paychex has found that participating CSSs appreciate the recognition of their tenure as well as the opportunity to collaborate with peers.

Paychex Inc., ranked #25 in the 2004 Training Top 100, Training magazine's annual ranking of organizations that excel at human capital development. More information on the Top 100 is available at www.trainingmag.com/training/reports_analysis/top100/index.jsp.

Timely Resources

"No life ever grows great until it is focused, dedicated and disciplined." - Henry Emerson Fosdick

"The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot." - Michael Altshuler

"One worthwhile task carried to a successful conclusion is worth half-a-hundred half-finished tasks." - Malcolm S. Forbes

If these thoughts get you thinking about more ways to be more effective, let me suggest some books. I read Loehr's *The Power of Full Engagement* this summer. It focuses on managing your energy rather than time, and offered me several insights about myself and my life. I also reorganized my office and filing system after attending a Julie Morgenstern presentation. I read her book *Organizing from the Inside Out for Teens* (from my daughter's library) and loved her philosophy. Brian Tracy's book on procrastination spurred me on through several projects. I haven't yet read his new book, *Time Power: A Proven System for Getting More Done in Less Time Than You Ever Thought Possible*.

Use the following links to explore these resources:



The image shows a banner for Amazon.com Books. On the left is a white box with a red 'x' icon and the text 'Shop at Amazon.com'. The main banner has an orange background. At the top, there are three 'amazon.com' logos. Below them, the word 'Books' is written in large white letters. At the bottom, there are three yellow buttons, each with the text 'Click here' and 'Privacy Information' below it.



Freebies: Humor & Tips

FREEBIES: Humor

Efficiency expert Michael Fortino offers the following dismal scenario for the average person in the United States. In your lifetime you will spend

- seven years in the bathroom
- six years eating
- five years waiting in line
- three years in meetings
- two years playing telephone tag
- one year searching through desk clutter looking for misplaced objects
- eight months opening junk mail
- six months sitting at red lights

More FREEBIES Want to learn about other time related tricks and tips for meetings? Click here [Time Tips](#) or send an email to stinnish@ameritech.net.

And now I must go find the misplaced schedule for my daughter's School of Religion schedule. I did find last year's schedule but a week of searching still hasn't uncovered the elusive document...

Future T.I.M.E.

I will be speaking at the following conferences:

[Minneapolis Chapter of Meeting Professionals International, February 2005](#)

[South Florida Chapter of Meeting Professionals International, February 22, 2005](#)

I love to see familiar faces in the audience. Please come and see me!

I would really appreciate it if you would forward T.I.M.E. onto your colleagues, associates, and clients. Just press the forward button at the end of the newsletter.

T.I.M.E. Gone By

If you are interested in past issues, please e-mail us with the month and topic and we will send you a copy of that newsletter. Here's what is included in past issues [Back Issue Request](#):

May 2000: [Teambuilding](#) and (Freebie) New York Times Reprint On Teambuilding

June 2000: [Green Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Resource List Of Exercises

July 2000: [Values](#) and (Freebie) Meeting Analysis

August 2000: [Minimum/Minimal Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Web Winners

October 2000: [Evaluations](#) and (Freebie) Sample Evaluation Questions

November 2000: [Politics](#)

December 2000: [Toys](#) and (Freebie) Brainstorming Ideas

January 2001: [Sales, Award Presentations](#) and (Freebie) Sales Tips

February 2001: [Change](#) and Communicating Change and (Freebie) Change Bombs

March 2001: [Open Space Technology](#)

April 2001: [Adult Learning Styles](#) and (Freebie) Learning Style Questionnaire

May 2001: [Trade Shows](#) and (Freebie) Trade Show Timeline

June 2001: [Emotional Intelligence](#) and (Freebie) EI Quiz

July 2001: [Presentation Tips](#) and (Freebie) Speaker Introductions

August 2001: [Ice Breakers](#) and (Freebie) Resource List

September 2001: [Facilitation](#) and (Freebie) Problem Personalities In A Meeting

October 2001: [Humor](#) and (Freebie) The Benefits Of Laughter

November 2001: [Customer Care](#) and (Freebie) Complaints

December 2001: [Slack](#) and (Freebie) Quiet Time

January 2002: [Teambuilding Options](#) and (Freebie)

February 2002: [Promotional Products](#) and (Freebie) Case Study

March 2002: [Multicultural Communication](#) and (Freebie) Multicultural Meeting Tips

April 2002: [Outdoor Learning](#) and (Freebie) Justification Checklist

May 2002: [Budgets, June, June, and ROK](#) and (Freebie) Budgeting Beyond Excel

June 2002: [Creativity](#) and (Freebie) Building the Case for Creativity

July 2002: [High Touch Technology](#) and (Freebie) Personal Technology Tools

August 2002: [Economic and Business Cycles](#) and (Freebie) Investment Strategies for meetings

September 2002: [Successful Environmental Factors/Conference Centers](#) and (Freebie) Learning Environments

October 2002: [Return on Investment](#) and (Freebie) Balanced Scorecard

November 2002: [Incentive Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Forum Synopsis

December 2002: [Resource Recap](#) and (Freebie) Resource Lists

January 2003: [Everyday Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Meeting Quiz

February 2003: [Diversity](#) and (Freebie) Survey Results

March 2003: [Problem Solving](#) and (Freebie) Techniques Illustrated

April 2003: [Marketing: Pre- and Post- Event](#) and (Freebie) Blogs

May 2003: [Entertainment](#) and (Freebie) Storytelling

June 2003: [Balance in Meetings and child caret](#) with (Freebie) Child Care at Meetings Tips

July 2003: [Mobile Events](#) with (Freebie) Sponsorship

August 2003: [Last Minute Ideas](#) with (Freebie) Audience Participation

September 2003: [Training Meetings](#) with (Freebie) Kirkpatrick Challenge

October 2003: [Unique Venues](#) with (Freebie) Experiential Checklist
November 2003: [Data, Information and Number Crunching](#) with (Freebie) European Privacy
December 2003: [Deja View](#)

January 2004: [Branding](#) with (Freebie) Identity vs. Brand
February 2004: [Audio Visuals](#) with (Freebie) Speaker Guidelines
March 2004: [Networking](#) with (Freebie) Networking Ideas
April 2004: [Strategic Budgeting](#) with (Freebie) Budgeting Ideas
May 2004: [Sensory Meetings](#) with (Freebie) Music's Impact
June 2004: [Board Meetings](#) with (Freebie) Litmus Test
July 2004: [Leadership](#) with (Freebie) Best Meeting Leadership Behaviors
August 2004: [Barrier-free Meetings](#) with (Freebie) Avoiding the Digital Divide

This newsletter is designed to provide information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is distributed with the understanding that the publisher and author are not engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional services. If legal or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Copyright 2004, all rights reserved. You may copy or distribute T.I.M.E. by including this copyright notice and including full information on contacting the author, Sue Tinnish. Contact her at 847.394.9857 or [Email Sue](#)

We support a spam-free Internet. You may have received this issue based upon a recommendation from a colleague or associate. To unsubscribe, click [here](#) and your address will be immediately and permanently removed. [Unsubscribe](#)

SEAL Inc.
1415 N. Salem Blvd
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004-4545

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

