

MANAGING TIME AT WORK

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Abstract: This research has attempted to demonstrate the time using orientations of Turkish managers. The sample group of 100 managers were drawn from various sectors (in both public and private). Data were collected by two kinds of methods: A questionnaire and with face to face interviews.

As a conclusion of the research it si determined that most of the managers can cope with time traps and use time effectively. However, their dilemma, complaining from time pressure in some cases, creates an interesting fact and determines that Turkish managers of the sample group must try to improve the way they use time.

"A work exponds to fill the time available for its completion"

Parkinson's First Law

INTRODUCTION

The backbone of a manager's personal productivity is her/his ability to use time effectively. Using time effectively requires discipline which can be developed by practice and training.

Time management topic started to become important long ago in many countries and in Turkey as well.

Time management issue, when we review the historical back-ground, had started to emphasize its importance in years 1970 and as an example in 1975 "Time Manager" seminars became the most popular seminars and work-shops of the year in Denmark.

This issue was also announced in Turkey with some seminars. However the importance of the issue was recognized in 1987 and work-shops and seminars were intensively prepared for middle level and senior managers. From the beginning up to this date, it's still taken as an important tool for managers who complain about lack of time and the pressure and stress as a result.

Therefore, this research attempted to demonstrate the orientations of Turkish managers towards time management and their problems in using time and the time traps. It is recognized by Turkish managers that it is important to manage time in order to cope with the rapid rhythm of our age and good management of time must be accepted and adopted as a living style. Better management of your time pays off in three ways. First, your work results in quality products, second, your productivity will increase and third, you will be able to do your work with the regularly scheduled hours of the day. (Lauchland 1989) Poor management of time eliminates the need for these extra hours and makes them available for recreation, relaxation and other uses you might want to make them. Time is a major resource at the disposal of any manager. A manager's time has always been scarce; Today, it seems to have become more scarce. Time is also the scarcest of all managerial resources and deserves of particular attention.

Time can not be created. Therefore, managers now in Turkey has understood that it should be budgeted as closely as any financial allocation. TIME costs MONEY. It is spent like money in that its use in one direction denies the opportunity to use other ways.

As it is known time is a source a very important, precious and a vital source. We can not change time, we can not create time and we can not reverse time: (Mc Kenzie 1987). Time is known to be a very important, precious and vital source. We can neither charge, nor

We have to use it, it is inevitable, we want it or not, that we can not

help. We also, can not bring it back. As Chaplin Tyles says; "Time is the most rigid element".

While we individuals do have limited life-spans we have to utilize time effectively and efficiently.

When we have interviewed with the managers of the sample group they also had complaints that they feel they don't have enough time...

Perhaps, the greater time waster of all is personal disorganization, no daily objectives, no logically prioritized tasks. The solution comes to plan your time. Therefore work-shops and seminars for time management are always valid in Turkey and can always find applicants suffering from disorganized time using.

We frequently see time as a constraint. "I don't have enough time", "I wish I had more time" are typical examples of this kind of thinking. However, in reality time is a resource not a constraint. Time is also not an obstacle to overcome. Like other resources we have to utilize it sensibly and have worthwhile pay offs.

How do managers waste time? When time is not used effectively we can not avoid time traps. Particularly most of the managers do fail in using time because of "unplanned actions. When we ask the managers their constraints in using time, they start to complain about telephone calls, meetings, unexpected and expected visitors, etc... However the main obstacle is unprogrammed and unplanned time management.

In the midst of these pressures and while valuable time ticks away, managers can become caught in the schizophrenic dance between information overload, the multitude of the options it indicates and the fear of entrusting outcomes to the actions of others; thus they progress nowhere. Alternatively they become resigned to a helplessness, hopeless paralysis and inactivity. (Robertson, 1992).

Thus, with this survey it is also attempted to find out the time traps the managers can become caught.

It is aimed to investigate how do managers waste time? -How do they stick to priorities?... How do they delegate? How does the use of their time af-

fects others?... How do they control telephone calls? Do they take work home because they don't have enough time.

METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

This research has aimed to demonstrate how effectively Turkish managers use time and their orientation towards time management.

The sample of 100 managers were drawn from various sectors (in both public and private) in İstanbul where the industry is concentrated. Age of the managers differs between 25 to 60 and out of 100 managers (respondants) who stated their sex, 20 were female and 80 were male.

Data was collected by two kinds of methods: a questionnaire and face to face interviews.

The "Time Management Questionnaire" included 25 items (questions).

Schlogram Analysis was used to evaluate the scores which differed from 1 to 3 and to assess the choices of Yes-No-Sometime.

During the field studies, no rigid sectoral segregation was made for the groups of managers, however in order to obtain the homogeneity and to avoid accumulation, the sectoral distribution convenience was taken into consideration. Items related with sex and age shows no significance in time using orientations.

Sample population number was determined under the assumption of infinite main population, although the main population number is finite because it is hard to determine the real value. During the evaluation, the sample group could only be 10% more than the real main population requested 95% (reliability) confidence margin determined the minimum sample group as 100 units.

In order to obtain reliable results from the survey, data was also controlled with face to face interviews.

While the scores differ from 1 to 3, the total maximum score of the questionnaire comes out as 75 and the minimum score as 25.

The survey (Questionnaire) was designed as to focus on the time traps to be caught and managers time using orientations.

RESULTS

Data evaluation:

Score evaluation (from the effective time using aspect) is as follows:

Less than 35 -very poor

36-45 poor

46-55 fair

56-65 good

66-75 very good

As a conclusion, scores lower than 35 determines very poor time using and scores higher than 65 determines quite effective time using.

The data collected from the survey shows an accumulation at score group 56-65 (good) with a percentage of 63, the percentage of the 46-55 score group is 25 and the last group with a percentage of 5 with scores 36-45 follows a sequence. No data collected for the score group of 25-35.

Thus, the findings of the survey determines that Turkish managers are doing good in using the time effectively. However, most of the managers generate an interesting dilemma when their responses to control questions (21, 23, 24 and 25) are reviewed.

Question 21:

-Do you find time for visitors?

Only 29 % of the managers' responses were yes, and 43 % of the managers responded as sometime and 25 % answered as no. 3 Managers didn't answer to this question.

Question 23:

-Do you complain that you don't have enough time to finish your work?

35 % of the managers' responses were no (no complaints, they have time), 29 % answered as yes and 40 % responded as sometime.

Question 24:

-Do you often have the pressure of completing your work in hurry-at the very last moment?

Only 10 % of the managers answered as no, 40 % of the managers responded as yes and 50 % responded as sometime.

Question 25:

-Do you often have the feeling that you have done nothing and you have wasted the day?

50 % of the managers responded this question as no an 30 % responded as sometime and 20 % responded as yes.

As a conclusion of the research, it is determined that most of the managers can cope with time traps and use time effectively. However their dilemma complaining from time pressure in some cases creates an interesting fact.

This issue shows that probability of stress risk can be high and problems from both individual and organizational aspect can emerge.

Another possibility of this contradiction can be the orientation of the individuals to the ideal situations in case of reality.

However, it is also noticed during the face to face interviews that most of the managers have complaints about scarcity or lack of time and time pressure as well.

DISCUSSION

Although the findings of the research determines that managers are doing well in time using, according to some findings they better try to impro-

ve the way use time.

The symptoms of not using time effectively can be listed (from the research findings) as follows:

- The continuous stress of not completing the work on time.
- Having no time for visitors
- The feeling of spending the day without doing anything
- Finding no time to answer the letters
- Finding no time to answer the telephone calls
- Bringing work at home to be completed after dinner and stress of not completing it.

Also we can list some more examples taken from the findings how to waste time:

- Uncontrolled use of the telephone
- Unproductive meetings
- Unprogrammed visitors
- Long reports with unnecessary details
- Failure to delegate
- Leaving things to the last minute (the 10' minutes syndrome)
- Trying to do several things at once
- Lack of speed reading, effective writing and listening habits.

These examples of the mis-management of time do illustrate how much people can under-estimate its significance and misunderstand its proper use. Misuse of time affects both the individual manager and the organiza-

tion.

For the individual it can lead to a sort of stress demotivation and exhaust. This can lower standard performance and lead to a demonstration from emotional stability. Less drastically it can make work unpleasant and leave no time for the individual to learn from work and thus develop his ability and potential (ITS, Time Improve Program 1989). And for the organization, it can lead to a lack of common purpose.

If senior managers are preoccupied with reacting to events (there being "no time" to plan), the events themselves will provide the organization's direction -or conflicting directions-.

Moreover, in circumstances where overload through ineffective use of time creates pressure for senior management and unless managers learn to manage time, they will have difficulties in managing other resources effectively.

Better management of your time pays off in many ways. Poor management of time causes the work to exceed official working hours and good management of time eliminates the need for extra hours and makes them available for other uses you might want to make of them.

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