



Productivity:
Multitasking, Time
Wasters and Overcoming
Procrastination

Course #4143A

Business

2 Credit Hours

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PRODUCTIVITY: MULTITASKING, TIME WASTERS AND OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION

This course is designed to help you maximize your productivity and get more out of the time you have while watching your productivity soar. Topics covered by this course include: Multitasking, good communication, strategies to more effective meetings, identifying major time wasters and recognize steps towards overcoming procrastination

LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS AND OBJECTIVES

As a result of studying each assignment, you should be able to meet the objectives listed below each individual assignment.

SUBJECTS

**Managing Multitask Jobs
Time-Saving Techniques – and How to Deal with the Seven Biggest Time Wasters
Overcoming Procrastination**

Study the course materials from pages 1 to 44

Complete the review questions at the end of each chapter

Answer the exam questions 1 to 10

Objectives:

- Recall an example of a parallel task.
- Identify keys to good communication.
- Identify strategies to more effective meetings.
- Recognize major time wasters.
- Recognize steps towards overcoming procrastination.

NOTICE

This course and test have been adapted from supplemental material and uses the materials entitled Time Power: A Proven System for Getting More Done in Less Time Than You Ever Thought Possible © 2007 by Brian Tracy. Displayed by permission of the publisher, AMACOM Books, division of American Management Association, New York, NY. All rights reserved. <http://www.amanet.org> www.amacombooks.org

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EXAM OUTLINE

- **TEST FORMAT:** The final exam for this course consists of 10 multiple-choice questions and is based specifically on the information covered in the course materials.
- **ACCESS FINAL EXAM:** Log in to your account and click Take Exam. A copy of the final exam is provided at the end of these course materials for your convenience, however you must submit your answers online to receive credit for the course.
- **LICENSE RENEWAL INFORMATION:** This course qualifies for **2** CPE hours.
- **PROCESSING:** You will receive the score for your final exam immediately after it is submitted. A score of 70% or better is required to pass.
- **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION:** Will be available in your account to view online or print. If you do not pass an exam, it can be retaken free of charge.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Managing Multitask Jobs	1
The Key Management Skill	1
A Learnable Skill	2
Four Problems to Avoid	7
Plan Your Projects Visually	7
Example of a Multitask Job: Mailing a Newsletter	8
Successful Project Management	10
You Can Learn Any Skill	11
Action Exercises	11
Chapter 1: Test Your Knowledge	13
Chapter 1: Solutions and Suggested Responses	14
Chapter 2: Time-Saving Techniques – and How to Deal with the Seven Biggest Time Wasters	15
The Seven Major Time Wasters	15
A Quick Review	16
The Way You Spend Time Today	17
Get Focused and Stay Focused	17
Seven Ways to Deal with Telephone Interruptions	18
Dealing with Drop-In Visitors	19
Saving Time in Meetings	20
Putting Out Fires	22
Socializing Can Hurt Your Career	23
Indecision and Poor Decision Making	24
Five More Ways to Save Time	26
Action Exercises	27
Chapter 2: Test Your Knowledge	28
Chapter 7: Solutions and Suggested Responses	29
Chapter 3: Overcoming Procrastination	31
Move On to the Fast Track	31
When You Get ‘Round to It	32
Developing a Reputation for Speed and Dependability	32
Developing a Sense of Urgency	33
Five Ways to Get Yourself Started	36
Sixteen Ways to Overcome Procrastination	37
Your Greatest Challenge in Time Management	40
Action Exercises	41
Chapter 3: Test Your Knowledge	42
Chapter 3: Solutions and Suggested Responses	43
Glossary	45
Index	47
Final Exam Copy	48

CHAPTER 1: MANAGING MULTITASK JOBS

Chapter Objectives

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recall an example of a parallel task.
- Identify keys to good communication.

*“America is unique because it offers you an economic ladder to climb.
And here’s what’s exciting: It is the bottom of the ladder
that’s crowded, not the top.”*

—JIM ROHN

All of life is a series of projects. A project is a complex task. It is often called a *multitask job*. This type of job requires the coordination of the efforts of several people, each of whom is responsible for part of the job, with every part of the job being necessary for successful completion. Your ability to handle these multitask jobs is a critical skill for success.

All achievements of consequence are complex, and they involve the cooperation of many people. An example would be the race to put a man on the moon. Tens of thousands of men and women had to coordinate their activities for its successful accomplishment.

Even simple tasks like planning a party, or producing a brochure or newsletter, require the ability to plan multiple tasks. This type of planning and organizing is one of the core skills of time management. Your ability to put together and work with a team of people on a project is the most important skill for advancement in your work.

THE KEY MANAGEMENT SKILL

A study by Stanford University on the qualities that companies look for in promoting people into the position of chief executive officer concluded that the ability to put together a team to accomplish a task was the single most important identifiable quality of an executive who was destined for the fast track in her career.

Take the example of the spectacular success of a man like Lee Iacocca, who saved Chrysler Corporation from bankruptcy. One of the reasons he was hired into the presidency of Chrysler was because of his ability to bring senior executives together from a variety of different areas to turn the company around. In his first thirty-six months at Chrysler, he replaced thirty-five out of thirty-six senior vice presidents. His ability to assemble this team made all the difference. In his autobiography, he gives full credit to the men and women on those teams who revived the company.

Your ability to put together teams to do multitask jobs or complete complex projects will determine the course of your career as much as any other factor. It will enable you to multiply yourself times the talents and efforts of others, and accomplish vastly more than you ever could on your own.

A LEARNABLE SKILL

Fortunately, project management is a learnable skill, like riding a bicycle. It can be divided into a series of steps, each of which you can master, one at a time.

Start With the End in Mind

In managing any project, you begin by defining the *ideal desired result* of the project. What exactly are you trying to accomplish? What will the project look like if it is a complete success?

Start by defining the successful completion of the project, the ideal desired result. Write it down and clarify it on paper. Then, work backward to the beginning of the project. Do this exercise in conjunction with the team members involved whenever possible.

How will you be able to tell if you have completed this project successfully? This step, of thinking through and defining your ideal end result, is one of the most valuable of all mental and physical planning tools for any project.

Start at the Beginning

Once you are clear about your desired result, you then start from the beginning. Determine what you are going to have to do to get from where you are to the completion of this project, on schedule and on budget. Determine a specific deadline or target to aim at. Make sure that it is realistic and achievable.

Assemble the Team

Bring together all the people whose contributions will be necessary for the success of the project. Sometimes you need to assemble the team before you can even decide upon the ideal result and the schedule. Remember that people are everything. Take ample time to think carefully about the people who are going to be the team members. Fully 95 percent of success in everything that you accomplish as a leader will be determined by your ability to select the people who are going to help you to do the work. If you make the mistake of selecting poor team members, you will almost invariably find it more difficult to achieve the goals that you have set for yourself.

Jim Collins, in his best-selling book *Good to Great*, says: “The key to success is to get the right people on the bus, and get the wrong people off the bus. Then, put the right people in the right seats on the bus.”

Focus on the people before the task. Remember that because all productivity comes from people, the people are the most important ingredient.

Share the Ownership

Instill ownership of the project in the team members by sharing the job with them. There is a direct relationship between how much a person feels a sense of ownership for the job and how committed he is to making the project a success. One of the key jobs of leadership is to instill this feeling of ownership in each member of the team, so that each person feels personally responsible for the accomplishment of

the overall project. You accomplish this by discussing every detail of the project with the people who are expected to carry it out.

Develop a Shared Vision

A shared vision is an ideal future picture of success that everyone buys into. How do you develop a shared vision? You sit down with the members of your team and work with them to answer the question, “What are we trying to accomplish?” You encourage everyone to contribute, to visualize, and to imagine the ideal outcome or desired result of the project. Once this vision is clear and shared by everybody, you move on to the development of “shared plans” to achieve the vision.

Create Shared Plans

Shared plans are essential to successful project completion. This step requires that everyone on the team work together to discuss and develop the plans. Plans include the step-by-step activities that will be necessary to complete the project. Everyone knows what has to be done, and even more important, everyone knows what each team member is supposed to do. The more time you spend planning with the members of your team in the early stages, the more committed and creative they will be in accomplishing the task once you get started.

Set Schedules and Deadlines

Once you have a shared vision and shared plans, and everyone knows exactly what is to be done and what the ideal result will look like, the next step is for you to set a deadline for project completion based on the consensus of your team. You may require sub-deadlines as well. Achieving consensus is extremely important in building a peak-performing team. Ask people how long they think it will take to complete each part of the task and to complete the task overall. As the result of discussion and exchange, everyone should agree that the project can and will be completed by a certain time. One of the biggest mistakes in project management occurs when the project leader sets a date or deadline that is arbitrary and with which the team members do not agree. In each case where this happens, problems arise and the deadline is not met. If the deadline is met, the result is often so full of mistakes and problems that it would have been much better to have agreed on a reasonable deadline before you began. Set your deadlines based on the consensus of your team, or even a majority decision, if that works for you. Get everyone to agree on the timing and scheduling for each job or task that they will be expected to contribute to the overall project.

List Everything That Must Be Done

List every task, function, and activity that must be completed, right down to the smallest job. The more that you can break the project down into individual jobs and tasks, the easier it is for you to plan, organize, supervise, delegate, coordinate, and get the project finished on time.

Identify the Information You Will Require

Identify any additional information that you will need to complete the project. List the acquisition of the information as a separate task. Assign it or delegate it specifically to one of the team members. Set a