

Things Aren't What They Used to Be: Seven Challenges to Traditional Time Management

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The well-meaning professional has been told by traditional time management theory, that if they just work smarter, not harder, they will get everything done. This is not true because today's technological revolution has put more in front of them at a faster rate than ever before. It does not matter how smart you are, you can't do it all.

There is the disappearance of seven things the quality professional, as well as the people they service, live with, and work with are experiencing. There is the disappearance of:

- Lag time
- Lunch time
- The livable workday
- The personal life
- The dining room table (from lack of use or from too much clutter)
- Think time and
- Courtesy or Civility

The increased pace has made lag time (natural downtime) disappear forever. The other realities can be controlled by choice. You deserve lunch as well as all the other disappearing realities. If you don't design your time, someone else will.

To take control of time, professionals must be a planner and then buy a planner if they need one. Determining the critical 20% which gives an 80% return on their investment of time is survival for this time history and the way to be an effective planner @ the speed of thought. Keeping vigilant about what pulls them to the 80% is most controlled by asking questions of those who require time spent on the less effective and satisfying 80%.

Asking for realistic deadlines and clear instructions reduces the amount of wasted time from poor communications. People want to know two things---what can you do and when can you do it. Any part of this information will satisfy their need to feel secure you are in control. This simple awareness is a strong piece of negotiation when communicating priorities. You need to know the same two things.

Most of us will never set our goals in writing—claiming it is too hard, takes too much time, and will be changed anyway. Less than 6% decide to have the best time of their lives by setting and achieving satisfying goals. They will just keep busy.

Professionals can have satisfying personal and professional lives by setting SMARTER goals. These goals are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-trackable
- Elastic
- Rememberable (memorable)

Remember to “put your mask on first” as they flight attendant tells us, “before assisting others.” Don’t forget to put quality in your life, as you are quick to spend your professional time guarding the quality of your organization.

Pam Vaccaro, CSP is a professional speaker whose expertise in managing time and attention brings her before audiences internationally. She is a Certified Speaking Professional, the highest earned designation by the National Speakers Association. Her company Designs on Time challenges companies and associations to rethink traditional time management. She is most known for tailored programs and innovative ideas.

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