



Making Time for Leadership

Time Management

- Have a system, any system.
- Stick to it!
- Use a planner/PDA with room for notes.
- Write everything down.

Prioritizing

- What's important?
- What do I need to do?
- What can I delegate?

Planning Your Day/Week/Month/Year

- ✓ As much as possible, you want to control your day. Although there will always be emergencies and situations that will need your immediate attention, you should try to stick to your daily schedule as much as possible. Your goal is to minimize interruptions so that you can complete items on your master list.
- ✓ Create a yearly calendar with all scheduled events. Highlight those you are responsible for leading. If you don't know, ask your secretary to do this. This calendar should include:
 - All regular scheduled meetings (school board, school committees, PTA, etc.)
 - All athletic events (home and away)
 - All fine arts events
 - All testing dates
 - All regularly scheduled field trips
 - Grade-reporting periods, progress reports, report card mailing days
 - All final exams (1st and 2nd semester)
 - All deadlines for state reports
 - All holidays, vacation days, in-service, etc.
 - All award ceremonies
 - Everything elseWrite all events in your planner.
- ✓ Using the yearly master calendar, create a master monthly calendar with all upcoming events. Highlight those you are responsible for leading. If you don't know, ask your secretary to do this. [This is also a great resource for your parents. Consider sending home two-month calendars at the end of each month.]
- ✓ Review your current daily schedule and create a master daily schedule. Ask yourself these questions?
 - What are the times of the day that you must be in the halls, lunchroom, or visible in the building?
 - What are other daily responsibilities that must be scheduled?
 - What time of the day do you work best?

With this information, create a template daily schedule. Then, select times for the following:

- To return phone calls.
- To work on items on your master list. Schedule this during your best work time.
- To eat lunch.
- To observe in classrooms, take care of referrals, etc.

You do not need to fill every hour of your day. You will need time to schedule meetings, appointments with staff, and just plain “down time” and “think time.”

- ✓ Each day:
 - Arrive early.
 - Review master list, decide which tasks to address today (prioritized), and plan your day using your daily template. Write everything into your planner. Refer to your planner throughout the day.
 - As much as possible, stick to your schedule!
 - At the end of the day, review your master list and identify the most important things that will need to be completed the next day.
 - Make time for yourself and your family!

Timesaving Tips for Organizing Piles of Paper

- ✓ When you pick up a piece of paper, ask yourself:
 - What is it?
 - Why do I have it?
 - What am I going to do with it?

If you don't have a good answer, throw it away.

- ✓ Check to see if it needs to go to someone else.
- ✓ If you find within your piles some task that needs to be done, write it on your master list. This includes telephone messages. Write the date beside the task.
- ✓ If you need to keep a document, put it in a file folder and label.
- ✓ If you don't need a document any longer, throw it away!!! (Or recycle it.)

Timesaving Tips for Using Your Master List

- ✓ Use a letter- or legal-sized piece of paper.
- ✓ Don't worry about priorities.
- ✓ Review the list throughout the day and ask yourself, “What's the most important thing I must do now?”
- ✓ When you complete a task, cross it off your master list by drawing a line through it. Use a different color pen to cross off.
- ✓ Look at your list before you go home at night and ask yourself, “What's the most important thing I must do tomorrow?”

- ✓ When you've completed 50% of the items on page one of your list, transfer the unfinished items to page two, consolidating your list, and then throw the old list away (or put it in a file labeled "Old Lists").



Handling Mail

- ✓ Have your secretary sort the mail into stacks – important (first-class mail), "can wait," junk mail, and professional information. Your secretary can also separate mail that should go to others.
- ✓ When you open it, ask yourself:
 - What is it?
 - Why do I have it?
 - What am I going to do with it?If you don't have a good answer, throw it away. If it requires action, add it to your master list and file.
- ✓ Professional journals/newsletters: Do not create "to read" piles. Quickly scan the table of contents, highlight articles to read or tear out the article and file. Carry a few with you for those times when you are waiting (railroads, doctor's office, picking up kids, etc.).



Handling the Phone Calls

- ✓ Have your secretary screen your calls.
- ✓ Schedule time each day for making/returning phone calls. Unless it is urgent, do not interrupt other tasks you have scheduled for the day to take or return calls.
- ✓ Make a list of the information that you want to discuss with the person you are calling. For conversations you know will be difficult, script the call. Arrange this information so that the most important items will be discussed first.
- ✓ Have at your fingertips the files, notes, or other papers to which you will be referring to during the call (notes, discipline referral, etc.).
- ✓ Keep notes from phone calls which include date and time of the call.
- ✓ If you need to regroup during a difficult phone call, put the caller on hold for a few moments.

- ✓ Angry callers: Let the caller vent. After a few minutes, he/she will wear out and then try to address his/her concerns. Try not to get sucked into an argument; remain calm. If you find yourself becoming defensive or sucked into the argument, stop the conversation as quickly as possible and ask if you can call him/her back.
- ✓ Abusive calls: Tell the caller that you are willing to deal with his/her concerns, but that you are not willing to take this kind of verbal abuse. Explain that if he/she does not stop, you will terminate the call. If it doesn't stop, hang up. You should immediately call your supervisor and inform of situation.
- ✓ For those long-winded callers:
 - Tell the caller you were just on your way out the door, you have a meeting, or someone just came into your office.
 - Put the caller on hold, come back on and tell them you have a situation you must take care of or another long-distance call on another line.



Handling Email

- ✓ Remember that email is NOT CONFIDENTIAL! Do not write anything in an email that you would not want to become public. FYI--Emails may be considered a student record.
- ✓ Maintain good writing standards.
- ✓ Use the subject line; it is the most important part of your email.
- ✓ Put the most important information in the first line of the first paragraph.
- ✓ KISS – Keep it super simple☺
- ✓ Be careful about your message's tone of voice, jokes, and sarcasm.
- ✓ Only work-related messages should be sent to your colleagues and coworkers.
- ✓ When you are angry, don't express your anger in an email message. This is referred to as "flaming." Pick up the phone or schedule a face-to-face meeting with the individual.
- ✓ **When communicating a negative message, it is best to say it face-to-face, not through email (or phone).**
- ✓ File or delete messages as you read them.

Other Tips

- **Administrative Timetables**
- **Tickler files**
- **Getting the monkeys off your back: If someone comes to you with a problem, schedule an appointment (using your daily planner) and ask them to come with a list of possible solutions to the problem.**

Mayer, J. J. (1999). Time management for dummies. Foster City, CA: IDG Books Worldwide.