

How to Improve Personal Productivity by Allocating Time for Optimal Results

By Randy Goruk

I believe in this quote of Paul J. Meyer; *“Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning and focused effort.”*

More importantly do you believe in this quote?

As you strive to improve your time management it is important to create a personal productivity plan that contains a component of allocating your time for optimal results.

Time allocation is simply deciding how much time you dedicate to any one activity or group of activities.

NOW is a good time to begin creating an allocation plan that works for you and helps you become more productive.

First, list all of your work activities on a sheet of paper. Think about not only what you are doing today but what you do or should do over a typical month. Be sure you have a place for professional growth and development activities.

Next, write beside each activity the approximate amount of time you spend on each activity in a typical week.

Now separate these activities into no more than six groups or categories. Label these groups or categories anyway you want.

Add the number of hours for each group and convert it to percentage of your time. As an example, if you work 50 hours in a week and you have a group totaling 10 hours of time this converts to 20 percent of your time.

Take a hard look at your groups and the amount of time you are spending in each then ask yourself “Is this how I should be spending my time?”

Often I find my coaching clients will identify too much time spent on administrative activities and not enough time spent on their other primary groups. They also find a few activities within a group that they should not be spending their time on at all.

The last step for the day is to identify how much of your time you would ideally like to spend in each of the groups you've created. Create a simple time allocation chart for yourself.

Group Activity	Actual Time Spent	Ideal Time Spent
A	20%	10%
B	10%	30%
C	40%	25%
D	15%	10%
E	10%	25%

Next, review your work from the previous day and make any adjustments to your time allocation chart you feel necessary. Maybe you forgot an activity or maybe you spend less or more time on an activity or within a group.

Now here comes the hard part ... you need to figure out how you transition from actual time spent to ideal time spent.

To do this you need to drill down into each activity within each group and determine what you're going to do to make the transition. Depending on the activity, you can maybe delegate it to someone else or eliminate it entirely. You may need to learn to become more efficient in certain activities.

There usually are a number of choices or decisions to make and it's difficult to make them on your own. It's recommended you get your supervisor involved so you have agreement on the "ideal time spent" identified in the time allocation chart you've created. You may also need their help in reassigning or eliminating activities that are preventing you from doing what you should be doing.

You can also get some help from a co-worker, mentor or coach on how to become more efficient in other activities. As an example, if email is a drain on your time you may need to get some help to learn techniques on how to regain control of your inbox.

There is no shortage of solutions to make the transition from how you are spending your time to what you should be spending your time on. The question is “are you committed to excellence, intelligent planning and a focused effort to improve your personal productivity?”

Randy Goruk is the founder and President of LeadersEdge360.com, a leadership development firm focused on maximizing personal and professional achievement. For over 30 years, Randy has been known for his compelling and inspiring speaking style, and is masterful in educating audiences in identifying key leadership attributes, the most common leadership mistakes, and specific tactics good leaders and teams can implement immediately to create professional and organizational growth.

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