

Improving Your Personal Effectiveness as a Manager or Leader

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Introduction

There will be a host of demands on you as a manager and leader and how personally effective you are will play a major part in determining the results you achieve.

This short article will focus on 5 areas where with improvements you can become more personally effective. The 5 areas are:

- Organising your time
- Managing your manager
- Working out what you do best
- Delegating
- Organising your office

It is intended to give you a snapshot and some initial ideas and tips to get you started. After reading the article, start to look for on-line articles at www.ezinearticles.com or www.squidoo.com for resources to broaden your knowledge and discover more insights.

Organise your time

We only have 24 hours in the day so what determines whether we are effective is how we use our time.

As a manager or leader, do you really know where you spend your time?

I know that the vast majority of clients that I work with have at best a limited understanding of where they spend their time. When they take the time to analyse where they spend their time they are often surprised to discover that the bulk of their time is spent on areas other than their key priorities.

Do you know what your key priorities or results areas are as a manager?

When working with clients, I am surprised how often people in management and leadership roles don't fully appreciate what their key deliverables or results areas are

Actions

- 1. Determine your key deliverables.** Set up a meeting with your boss to agree what your key results areas are.
- 2. Do an analysis of where you are spending your time.** Keep a diary or spreadsheet for a month and see where your time is being spent.
- 3. Use the results of your time analysis to become more focussed in planning your days, weeks and months.** Make sure that you are spending time and energies on your key deliverables.

Manage your manager

Senior people can often interrupt or get in the way without even being aware of the impact they are having. You know the scenario. You are just in the middle of working through something technically complex when your boss wants to ask you that quick question or just quickly look at something.

Make a point of agreeing with your boss how you can work together in a way that minimises routine interruptions. You might need to start with a 15 minute meeting every morning and gradually move to a weekly meeting. Find out what will work best for both of you.

Actions

- 1. Set up a process with your boss where you check progress on key issues.** In doing so make sure that this is scheduled regularly and that key actions are captured.
- 2. Agree how you will deal with the crisis or urgent requests that will arise from time to time** in a way that is effective and efficient.

Work out what only you can do

Do you really know what tasks can only be done by you?

There are likely to be a few things that only you can do because they require a specific qualification or specialised knowledge.

Chances are that there are things you are doing out of habit. If you are like most managers there will be things that you keep doing because you think it will take too long to train someone, it will be quicker to do yourself or you just like doing them

Actions

1. **List out all of the tasks that you do** no matter how trivial
2. **Categorise these tasks into 3 columns.** Column 1 being those that only you can do. Column 2 being those that could be released with some training. Column 3 being those tasks that you could stop doing immediately.

Start to delegate

Most managers struggle when it comes to delegating. They might be worried that they will lose their job because they don't have enough to do. They might be frightened to pass on tasks for fear that someone else will not do as good a job or even that they will do a better job. They might be convincing themselves that they don't have the time to train someone else.

The bottom is that unless you start to delegate you will never be as effective as you could be as a manager. The reason I say this is that you will spend time, effort and energies on tasks that take you away from your key results areas. You might even see your own performance dip as you try to do everything.

Actions

Determine what you can delegate and start doing it now.

Organise your office

It is impossible to work at your most effective if you are surrounded by clutter. I know that I and many people like to hold on to stuff just in case you might need it. Chances are you get a lot of paperwork. You might have files or bundles everywhere but are they really organised?

Unless you can put your hand on things quickly and easily, chances are your office is not organised. I heard someone say recently that unless you can put your hands on something in less than a minute, you are probably working in chaos.

With time being so precious you cannot afford to be spending time looking for things and the easiest way to do this is to set up a system. If this is not your area of expertise, find someone who is and get them to help you set up a system.

Remember that systems for finding things apply to stuff stored on your computer as well as those in hard copy. With the vast majority of things being received or stored electronically, you need to organise your electronic files with the same rigour and discipline of your paper files.

Actions

- 1. Set aside some time to de-clutter your office**
- 2. Set up systems** that will help you to be more personally effective in the future

About the Author

Duncan Brodie is Director of Goals and Achievements, a Leadership Development Company that works with individuals, teams and organisations to develop their management and leadership capability.

With 25 years real life business experience, Duncan understands first hand the challenges of managing and leading in the complex business environment.

For more information and to sign up for his free e-course and newsletter, please visit www.goalsandachievements.co.uk