

# Time Mastery Profile®

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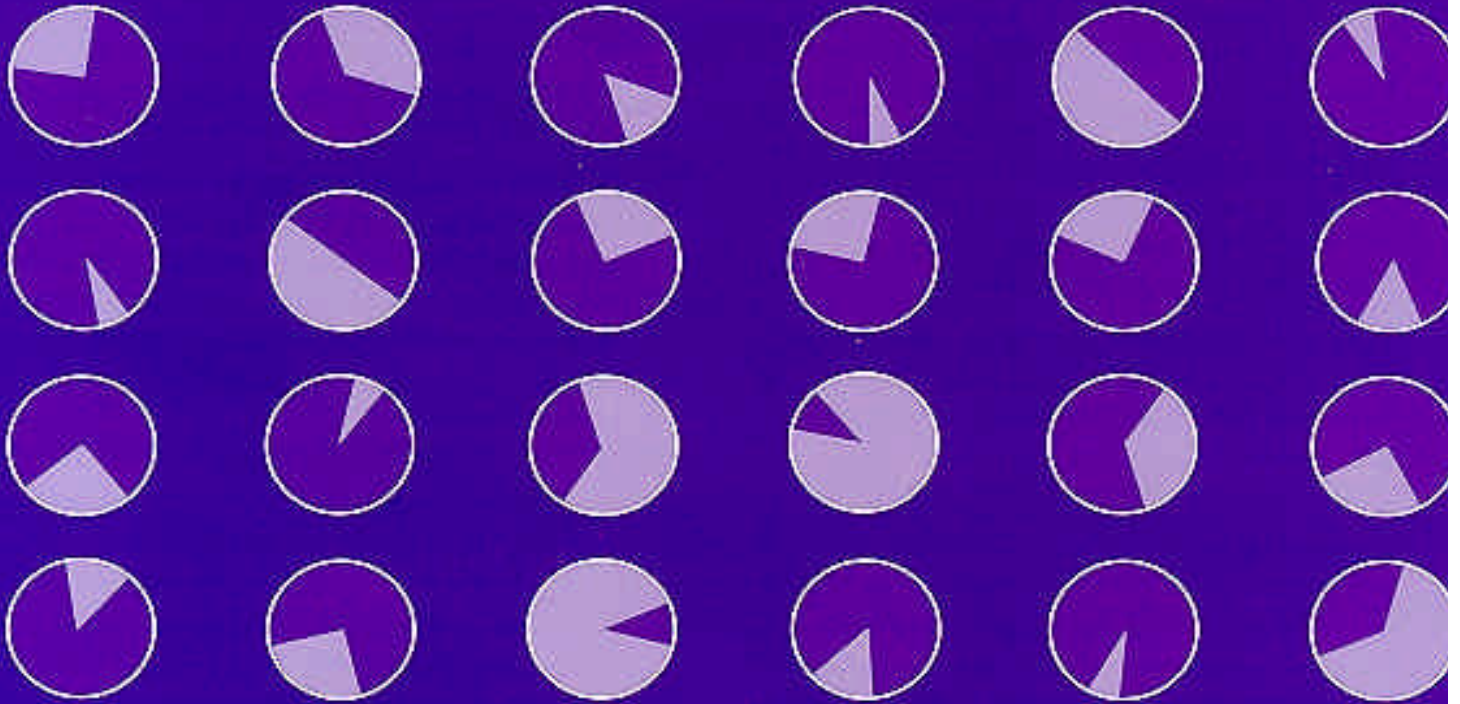
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# Time Mastery Profile®



Name

Date



## Introduction

We all face a daily dilemma: **too much to do and not enough time to do it.** Time management concerns how we resolve that dilemma. Time is the limiting factor, not activities. We must make tough choices about what to do and what not to do.

### **Time management is really self-management.**

Although time is not adaptable, people are. Managing time means adapting ourselves to its passage in some satisfying manner. It means managing ourselves. If time seems to be out of control, it means that we are out of control. To bring ourselves back under control, we must learn new, more appropriate habits.

### **Habits are the key to good time management.**

Good results come from good habits; poor results from poor habits. It is important to remember,

however, that habits are learned behavior. They can be changed. Your habits may control your destiny, but you can control your habits.

### **The first step may be to change your thinking.**

Henry Ford put it this way: "Whether you think you can or you can't, you're right." What you think is important. You usually act in ways that are consistent with your beliefs. To become master of your time, you must first believe you can do it.

In order to change your habits, you must also **identify them.** That's what this *Time Mastery Profile* is all about. Over the next few pages, you will be assessing your habitual time management behaviors. As you do, you'll become more aware of what your time management habits are and whether they help or hinder you.

## Instructions

1. On pages 3 through 5, you will see statements about specific behaviors. They are grouped into 12 categories to reflect various aspects of time management. There are five statements for each category.
2. Read each statement and consider how it applies to you. Please read each statement carefully and think about your response. **Some statements are worded positively and some are worded negatively.** Please be sure your response is the one that best represents your typical behavior and your particular situation.
3. Following each statement are four response choices: Strongly Agree, Mildly Agree, Mildly Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Select the response that indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement as it applies to you and your situation; then rub a coin on one of the

four ovals to the right of each statement. A number will appear, which will be used later to score your profile.

**EXAMPLE**

	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I believe I can control or influence most of the things that happen in my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. After you have responded to ALL of the questions, go back and add these numbers together to get your score for each category. Record your total score in the box at the right of the five statements in each category.
5. Work as rapidly as you can. Your first response is usually your most accurate response. Please go to page 3 and begin.

# Response Page

## Time Mastery Profile®



Please read each statement carefully and consider how much you agree or disagree. Rub a coin on the oval that best represents your typical behavior.

### CATEGORY A

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1. I believe I can control or influence most of the things that happen in my life.
2. I do some things at work I enjoy, even though I know they are not essential.
3. I have a lot of self-discipline and willpower.
4. I don't have enough time to do what I want to do.
5. I still feel positive even when there are many changes at work.

Strongly Agree Mildly Agree Mildly Disagree Strongly Disagree

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**TOTAL**  
Category  
A

### CATEGORY B

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6. I write annual performance objectives for my job.
7. I keep a master list of all the smaller jobs and assignments that need to be handled over the next several weeks and prioritize each one.
8. I review my longer range goals at least once every day.
9. I constantly ask how what I am doing will help me achieve my goals.
10. I have a written or electronic list of long-range personal goals.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**TOTAL**  
Category  
B

### CATEGORY C

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11. I often feel driven by the urgencies of the day.
12. I prioritize my various jobs and activities.
13. I tend to do the quick, easy, or enjoyable jobs first.
14. Unexpected demands cause me to constantly switch my priorities.
15. I am able to balance the priorities among all aspects of my life.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**TOTAL**  
Category  
C

### CATEGORY D

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16. At least once a year, I keep a record of how I actually spend my time.
17. I regularly think about everything I am doing and look for ways to improve my performance.
18. I often think I am overcommitted and trying to tackle too much at once.
19. Constantly recurring crises take up too much of my time.
20. I study how my work patterns differ from day to day, as well as throughout the day.

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**TOTAL**  
Category  
D

# Response Page

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## CATEGORY E

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Strongly Agree   Mildly Agree   Mildly Disagree   Strongly Disagree

- 21. I prepare a list of things to do every day.
- 22. I prepare a weekly plan, which includes specific goals, activities, and priorities.
- 23. At least once a week, I coordinate plans, priorities, and activities with others through face-to-face, telephone, or virtual electronic meetings.
- 24. I often think I should get better organized and use a more effective system for planning my time.
- 25. In my daily plan, I allow time for the unexpected things I can't control.

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**TOTAL**  
Category  
E

## CATEGORY F

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- 26. I schedule a specific time each day for doing the most important tasks.
- 27. I often get distracted from my schedule and tend to jump from one task to another.
- 28. I group similar tasks and arrange activities in a logical sequence.
- 29. I estimate the time required for my activities.
- 30. I can find quiet time, without interruptions, whenever I need it.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**TOTAL**  
Category  
F

## CATEGORY G

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- 31. I analyze my interruptions and systematically work on reducing or eliminating them.
- 32. I bunch items together and handle several things at one time, so I won't interrupt others so much during the day.
- 33. Spending too much time socializing or browsing the Internet keeps me from concentrating on my work.
- 34. I prearrange contacts with others rather than relying on spontaneous interruptions.
- 35. Interruptions and distractions are a big problem on my job.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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**TOTAL**  
Category  
G

## CATEGORY H

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- 36. Our meetings aren't very well organized, and some of them aren't even necessary.
- 37. Our meetings start on time.
- 38. Our meetings have well-prepared agendas.
- 39. We use electronic technologies whenever possible to save time in scheduling our meetings.
- 40. We often analyze our meetings and try to improve them.

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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**TOTAL**  
Category  
H

# Response Page

Time Mastery Profile®



## CATEGORY I

- 41. I often analyze my paperwork and electronic documents and look for ways to eliminate, simplify, or improve them.
- 42. I use a manual or electronic system to keep track of details and maintain proper follow-up.
- 43. I have a good systematic procedure for sorting and handling my paperwork, email messages, and other electronic documents.
- 44. I have trouble staying up-to-date with all my reading.
- 45. My desk, work area, and computer files could be better organized.

Strongly Agree Mildly Agree Mildly Disagree Strongly Disagree

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**TOTAL**  
Category  
I

## CATEGORY J

- 46. I often do things myself because it is faster and easier than delegating them.
- 47. I confirm details of delegated jobs in writing by memo or email.
- 48. I tend to get involved in too many details.
- 49. I often forget to follow-up or check on jobs I have delegated.
- 50. When work is delegated to me, I promptly ask any questions necessary to clarify details.

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**TOTAL**  
Category  
J

## CATEGORY K

- 51. I often put off tasks that are unpleasant.
- 52. It takes pressure from an approaching deadline to get me started; I tend to wait until the last minute.
- 53. I have to wait for the right mood, or the right time, to tackle creative work.
- 54. I often worry about making mistakes or wrong decisions.
- 55. I tend to delay jobs that take big blocks of time.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**TOTAL**  
Category  
K

## CATEGORY L

- 56. Whenever possible, I use the latest electronic technologies to save time for the people I work with.
- 57. I often ask others how I waste their time, so I can improve.
- 58. I am always on time and prepared for meetings.
- 59. I regularly discuss team time concerns and problems with others.
- 60. When I work as a part of a team or committee, I never miss deadlines or deliver my part of the work late.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**TOTAL**  
Category  
L

# Overall Time Mastery Level

Time Mastery Profile®



To find your Overall Time Mastery Level, simply add together all 12 of the Category scores from pages 3 through 5. Compare your Total Score to the Overall Time Mastery Level chart to discover your own degree of mastery. Remember, though, that your score is only a number. It represents conditions as they exist now.

It is the result of habits you have developed in the past. It does not determine what you will be or do in the future - that is up to you. The purpose of the *Time Mastery Profile*® is to help you assess your personal time management strengths and weaknesses and to help you decide how to improve.



## Your Overall Time Mastery Level

Score	Level	What It Means
60-79	I - Beginning Time Mastery	You have limited understanding of managing time. You have many opportunities to develop your skills.
80-115	II - Improving Time Mastery	You have an improving but limited understanding of time management. Skill development remains a high priority.
116-185	III - Intermediate Time Mastery	You have basic knowledge and skills for managing time. Some areas need continued development.
186-221	IV - Competent Time Mastery	You have strong knowledge and skills for managing time. You're on your way to becoming a Time Master.
222-240	V - Excellent Time Mastery	You are a Time Master. You are ready to actively share your knowledge and skills about time management.

The *Time Mastery Profile*® will help you build action plans for each of the 12 categories.

# Time Mastery Profile Graph

Time Mastery Profile®

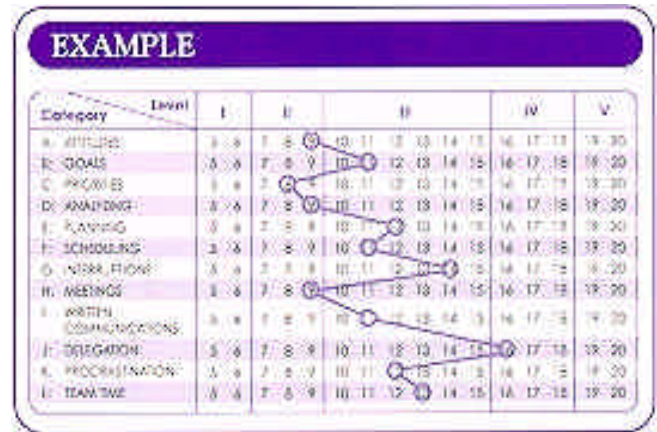


Time management is not just a single issue; it is multidimensional. The *Time Mastery Profile* reflects 12 of those dimensions. This graph will highlight your strengths and weaknesses in each of the time management categories.

Look at each Category below. On the scale to the right of each Category, circle the number that represents your total points for that Category (see scores in the boxes on pages 3 through 5). For easier viewing, connect all the points on the scale into a continuous graph line (see example at right).

The vertical lines divide the graph into the five Time Mastery Levels, beginning with Level I on the left and proceeding through Level V on the right. You will probably notice that your Time Mastery Levels for some categories are either higher or lower than your Overall Time Mastery Level shown on page 6. This is normal. It simply means that you are better at some aspects of managing time than you are at others.

Use this graph to help you decide where to begin your time management improvement program. Select the categories you believe would help you improve your overall performance the most. The questions on page 8 will help you identify where to begin. After a few months, you may want to retake the *Time Mastery Profile* to check your progress.



## Your Overall Time Mastery Level

Category	Level	I	II	III	IV	V									
A: ATTITUDES	5-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
B: GOALS	5-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
C: PRIORITIES	5-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
D: ANALYZING	5-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
E: PLANNING	5-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
F: SCHEDULING	5-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
G: INTERRUPTIONS	5-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
H: MEETINGS	5-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
I: WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS	5-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
J: DELEGATION	5-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
K: PROCRASTINATION	5-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
L: TEAM TIME	5-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

# Identifying Where to Begin

Time Mastery Profile®



**1. What are your strengths?** You probably did better in some areas than in others. There is a tendency to concentrate so much on your weaknesses that you forget to celebrate your strengths. Your greatest time management strengths are those statements where a "4" appeared in your response. Go back through the statements on pages 3 through 5 and highlight each of your top strengths. Take time to feel good about them! List those statements below.

**2. Where should you improve?** This *Time Mastery Profile®* is an excellent guide for developing good time management behaviors. As you look over those statements where you scored lower, think of them as opportunities for improvement. These are the statements where a "1" or "2" appeared in your response. List those statements below.

**3. What are your strongest categories?** Your top categories are the ones in which you reached Level IV or Level V on the *Time Mastery Profile* Graph on page 7. List those categories below.

**4. What are your weakest categories?** Your lowest categories are the ones in which you scored at Level I or Level II on the *Time Mastery Profile* Graph on page 7. List those categories below.

**5. Which categories do you believe are most critical in your job?**

**6. Which categories do you think you can control the most or change most easily?**

**7. Action Planning.** Don't try to change everything at once. You didn't get the way you are overnight, and you're not likely to reshape everything overnight either. Focus on the categories most important to you and to your job. Turn to the following pages for the two or three categories you want to focus on improving over the next few weeks. Master these, then move on to a few more for the next several weeks. Be sure to read *Changing Habits and Building Action Plans* on the next page. It outlines a proven process for changing old habits and creating new ones. Then the specific category pages will help you write out your Action Plans.

# Changing Habits and Building Action Plans

Time Mastery Profile®



How much do you really want to change your work habits? Desire is the key to success or failure. With a strong desire, you will probably initiate changes.

In order to change long-established habits, you must want to change. Desire is the beginning point. No one can force you to master your time. The "want to" must come from within.

Some habits are relatively easy to change; others can be extremely difficult. A change in one part of your life often has a direct impact on other parts of your life. Some habits are difficult to change because they are interconnected. A single behavior becomes a cue for another behavior, which in turn may be a cue for still another. In this way, you develop habit sequences that form vigorous modes of patterned behavior.

How long does it take to replace a poor time usage habit with a better time mastery habit? Many of your work-related habits can be successfully changed in three days to three weeks. In other words, if you consistently practice the new time mastery behavior for three weeks, it will become your predominant response pattern. At that point, you have replaced the old habit with a new one.

To eliminate your self-defeating habits and replace them with self-reinforcing habits, try the following approach.

**1. Identify the habit you want to change.** In order to pinpoint the precise behaviors you wish to change, you will have to analyze many of your behaviors and the situations where they occur. Use the statements in each Category (pages 3 through 5) as a guide for analyzing your behaviors. Carefully examine your assumptions to see if any of them are holding you back from achieving the change you desire. The more you know about what you do, when you do it, and why you do it, the easier it will be to identify the habits that are detrimental.

**2. Carefully define the new habit you wish to develop.** Use the Action Plan questions in each Category to record what you want to change and then to describe the new habit you plan to adopt.

Be honest with yourself. Gather the information you need to implement the change and visualize yourself in the new role. Develop a realistic action plan, and get started.

### **3. Begin the new behavior as strongly as possible.**

Tell everyone about the new habit you want to develop. Set up a routine to go with your habit. Put signs in your office reminding you of the new behaviors. Remember the importance of cues and how habits are interrelated. If possible, change your environment to give your new habit some "fresh air" to grow in.

### **4. Do not stray from the behavior until the new habit is firmly established.**

Many people practice a new behavior some of the time; some practice a new behavior most of the time; only a few practice a new behavior all of the time. Part-time application doesn't develop new habits - new habits come as a result of consistent and persistent practice.

You will be tempted many times to do things the old way. Resist these temptations. Some people rationalize deviations by saying, "Just this once won't matter." The truth is that each deviation matters a great deal. Every time you stray, you must start over again. The more times you attempt to start over, the harder it is to change.

**5. Ask other people to help you change.** Few of us make significant changes without the support of others. Think carefully about who might be able to help you. How can they help you best? What will you ask them to do? Building a strong support team around you makes new habits much easier to master.

Remember - focus on a few things at a time. Use the questions on page 8, Identifying Where to Begin, to help you focus on key areas first. Master these, then move on to a few more.

The most important thing, however, is to get started. Don't talk about doing it later; do it now! Mastering your time is only a habit away.

# Attitudes

Time Mastery Profile®—Category A



Time is a paradox. We never seem to have enough time, yet we have all the time there is. The problem is not a shortage of time, but how we choose to use the time available to us. The key is to concentrate on the essentials, and ignore the nonessentials.



## What You Think Is Critical

Research has shown that people respond in two primary ways to their environment. At one end are the "internals," people who believe strongly that they can make a difference in their world. Although they may not be able to control everything, they believe they can at least have some mastery over the things that happen to them.

At the other end are the "externals," people who believe they have no control or influence over the things that happen to them. They feel pushed around. They simply react to their environment and may complain about what happens to them.

The more you believe you can control, the more you will try to control, and the more you will control. Of course, there are certain situations that none of us can anticipate. However, letting the possibility of uncertain events govern our daily behavior is self-defeating. Most of us can probably control far more than we believe we can.



## Avoid Regrets

Most of us have regrets about what we did or didn't do in the past. Regrets are just part of life. Having regrets is not necessarily bad, unless you let them hinder the future. In a way, regrets are unavoidable, no matter what you do. They often arise because your values change as you grow older.

There are two lessons we can learn from regrets. The first point is that some regrets are irreversible. We need to think carefully about what is really important. The second point is that some regrets are partially reversible. For instance, if you regret not going to college, you can always choose to go later. But you can't go back to an earlier time or place and change things.

Whether reversible or not, we should never let regrets get in the way of moving forward. We should look back and learn from the past, but we must always realize that we are free to change the future.

You can master your time and your life. In doing so, you will accomplish more and gain more satisfaction from the things you do. You will feel more fulfilled, and the quality of your life will increase. Your time is your life, and as you master your time, you will create a better life.



## Self-Discipline Pays Off

Most of us have discovered that there is a big difference between knowing what to do and doing it. We know the bridge between the two is called self-discipline, but we can't seem to cross it. Self-discipline can be the difference between those who achieve and those who only dream about it.

Self-discipline is the key to personal freedom. It releases us from the prison of our habits and allows us to fulfill our lives. In a world where we often feel we control nothing individually, self-discipline helps us define that part of the world where we can make a difference.

Where do we find that golden key known as self-discipline? Philosophers and poets, inventors and executives have searched for it throughout the centuries. They can tell us only that it comes from within. Each of us must find it for ourselves. We are the only ones who can unlock our potential and master time management techniques for ourselves.

Reflect on what you have just read about attitudes. Read the statements on the next page. Note ideas and actions to positively adjust your own attitudes.

# Attitudes

Time Mastery Profile®—Category A



## Key Concepts about Attitudes

- You never seem to have enough time, yet you have all the time there is. The problem is not a shortage of time, but how you choose to use that time.
- Time management is really self-management.
- Chinese proverb: Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life lies in eliminating the nonessentials.
- Earl Nightingale: "Habits are the key to success. Successful people form the habit of doing the things that others don't like to do."
- Zig Ziglar: "When you choose a habit, you also choose the results of that habit."
- It is not enough to know; you must also act. Knowledge without action is powerless.
- Most of us only change when we are forced to do so. Force can be either external or internal.
- The key to willpower is "want-power." If you want something strongly enough, you will usually find the discipline necessary to do it.
- Self-discipline is simply doing what you know you should do, regardless of whether or not you feel like doing it.
- Self-discipline is easier if you stop thinking about it and simply do it.
- Press on. Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.
- Henry Ford: "Whether you think you can, or whether you think you can't, you're right."

## My Action Plan to Improve Attitudes

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habit(s) I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

Consistency and persistence are the only ways to develop new habits. To keep myself from straying from my new habit(s), I will:

Which people will I ask to help me, and what will I ask them to do?

# Goals

Time Mastery Profile®—Category B



It's not how much we do, but what we get done that counts most. Top Time Masters develop clear goals, and then focus on the activities that will achieve them.

Clear goals are SMART goals. They meet several criteria. These goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed ...and written.



## Two Approaches

There are only two ways to approach time mastery. You will either focus primarily on the results you intend to achieve, or you will focus on the activities you are doing. Of course, there is a relationship between goals and activities. You can't "do" a goal, you achieve it. You do activities. If you do the right activities, you'll achieve the goal.

Our focus - most of the time - is on activities, in part because the goal is not always clear and in part because that is what we have learned to do. No matter the reason, there is a big difference between the two approaches. People who focus primarily on their goals tend to master their time use and accomplish more.



## Link Goals Together

Goals should be related to one another. The accomplishment of daily goals should lead to the achievement of weekly goals. The accomplishment of weekly goals should lead to the achievement of monthly goals, and so on, up to long-range goals.

Daily behavior is more often controlled by routine tasks and projects. These projects are our short-range goals. Most of us keep track of them by listing all the jobs and assignments we must take care of over the next several weeks. Be sure that your short-term projects lead to longer-term goals.



## Develop the Results Habit

Focusing on results must become a habit. Setting goals, and striving to reach them,

must become a way of life. Never send an email, make a phone call, hold a meeting, or meet with someone without first thinking about what you hope to achieve. When you stop thinking about intended results, you risk getting bogged down in activities that do not help you reach your desired results. These are known as activity traps.

To develop the results habit, think about what you are trying to accomplish every year, every month, every week, every day, every hour, and every minute. Read your long-term goals every day, and use them to help sort out all the trivia that comes your way.



## Time Is Life

The way you spend all your time defines who you are. Managing your personal life means asking yourself what kind of life you want to lead and what kind of person you want to be. Changing the way you use your time requires that you set some goals - goals about what you want to be and do.

Goals are the key to successful living. The reason more people are not successful is that they do not pursue specific goals. They simply shift from one activity to another without any focus or purpose, naively assuming that things will take care of themselves or will be taken care of by others.

The things that people value can be divided into eight broad areas: family, career, spirituality, social life, financial stability, health, personal development, and leisure. Are you satisfied with the way you distribute your time across all these areas of your life?

The importance of goals cannot be overemphasized. They lead to time mastery. They are powerful because they work.

Consider what you have just read about goals. Review the statements on the next page. Note any actions needed for clarifying your goals.

# Goals

Time Mastery Profile<sup>®</sup>—Category B



## Key Concepts about Goals

- Determine your long-range goals. Make sure you are aiming at what you really want.
- Be sure to set SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timed.
- Don't try to keep your goals in your head; document them on paper or on your computer.
- Read your long-range goals at least once every day. You will find it easier to sort out all the trivia that comes your way.
- You need short-range goals to know what to do today. You need long-range goals to add continuity and meaning to all your short-range goals.
- Consider projects carefully. Make sure they will move you toward your goals. Identify the critical steps, when they should be done, and who should do them.
- Set deadlines for all your projects. Estimate the time needed and determine the logical starting time to avoid last-minute rush jobs.
- For complex projects, use project management software to organize and manage the details.
- Focus on your goals at all times. Constantly ask yourself, "Will what I am doing right now help me achieve my goals?" If the answer is "no," then switch to something else that will help you.
- Be sure you have at least one significant goal every day. Don't quit until you reach your daily goals. Before long you will develop the habit of setting goals and reaching them.
- Develop and document long-range personal goals. Strive to balance your time across all aspects of your life.
- When conditions change, you may need to modify your goals. As you achieve your goals, be sure to set new ones.

### My Action Plan to Set Goals

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habit(s) I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

Consistency and persistence are the only ways to develop new habits. To keep myself from straying from my new habit(s), I will:

Which people will I ask to help me, and what will I ask them to do?

My daily, weekly, monthly, and annual goals now include:

# Priorities

Time Mastery Profile®—Category C



Basically, setting priorities is easy. You decide on your goal, and then you determine which activities must be done to reach the goal. Those activities are your top priorities. Do those things before you do anything else. This is true for all aspects of your life, not just your work. The challenge is to allocate your time to maintain a balance.

You know you ought to do the things that are most important — those valuable activities that contribute to your goals. But you don't always do it that way. Often, you prefer to work at tasks that you like or find interesting. You do this even though these activities may contribute much less to your goals than the more difficult, complex activities. When you examine your activities, you will probably see several ways in which you allocate time ineffectively.



## Important vs. Urgent

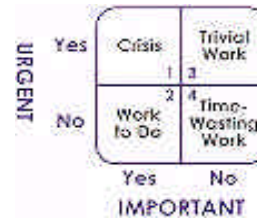
Priorities refer to important things. In order to get better results, you need to spend more time doing important tasks. Unfortunately, most of us are still in the habit of responding to the urgency of things instead of the importance.

Important things are those that contribute significantly to our objectives — they have high value. The more direct the contribution, the more important the activity. Important things also tend to have long-term consequences and effects.

Urgent things require immediate attention. They may or may not relate to our objectives or make significant contributions. But urgent things are far more compelling than important things, so we live in constant tension between the urgent and the important. Our problem is that important things seldom must be done today or even this week, since they are rarely urgent. Urgent things, however, call for our attention — making endless demands and applying pressure every hour of every day.

Many of us believe that virtually everything we do is important. Even if that were true, not everything is equally important. Some things are far more

important than others. Even though it may be painful to admit it, we spend much of our day engaged in relatively unimportant activities.



Every activity you do has some degree of both importance and urgency. Generally, activities fall into four categories: Crisis — Important and Urgent; Work to Do — Important, but not Urgent; Trivial Work — Urgent, but not Important; or Time-Wasting Work — neither Important nor Urgent.

One of the key principles for mastering time is to understand that you will almost always have time for the most important things, unless you **fill** the day with unimportant things first. Your challenge is to decide what the most important things are, and then to focus on those and ignore or work around the others.



## The Pareto Principle

While attempting to reallocate activities and gain more value from your time, it will be helpful to remember Pareto's Principle. Vilfredo Pareto, a nineteenth-century scholar, discovered that in any set of elements the critical elements usually constitute a minority of the set. Over the years this concept has evolved into the so-called 80-20 rule: 80 percent of the value comes from 20 percent of the items, while the remaining 20 percent of the value comes from 80 percent of the items.

This 80-20 rule can be related to the important urgent concept. Important but not urgent items are usually part of the 20 percent that contribute to 80 percent of your results.

Reflect on what you have just read about priorities. Read the statements on the next page. Note any actions needed to clarify and master your priorities.

# Priorities

Time Mastery Profile<sup>®</sup>—Category C



## Key Concepts about Priorities

- Think carefully about what priorities mean to you and about how you decide what is really important. Remember, you will never have time for everything, but you will almost always have time for the most important things.
- 80-20 Rule: 80 percent of the value comes from 20 percent of the items, while only 20 percent of the value comes from 80 percent of the items. Learn to concentrate on your high-value 20 percent and master those activities.
- Most people start with the quick, easy, enjoyable things first. Instead, start with the important things.
- Just because something is urgent doesn't mean it's important. Important activities are those that help you achieve your goals.
- Learn to distinguish between important and urgent.
- Don't allow trivial things to crowd out the important things.
- Don't always do someone else's requests at the expense of your own top priority tasks. Learn when to say no. Do it logically, firmly, and tactfully.
- Constantly switching priorities often results from failure to establish priorities properly in the first place. The best way to set priorities is on the basis of importance.
- Don't switch priorities just because people make loud demands. Be very careful about which squeaky wheels get greased.

## My Action Plan to Set Priorities

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habit(s) I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

Consistency and persistence are the only ways to develop new habits. To keep myself from straying from my new habit(s), I will:

Which people will I ask to help me, and what will I ask them to do?

My priorities for this week, this month, and this year include:

# Analyzing

Time Mastery Profile®—Category D



There's an old proverb that the more you do of what you're doing, the more you'll get of what you're getting. If you want better results, you've got to change the way you spend your time. The trouble is that most of us don't really know where our time goes.

If you are like most people, you think you know more about how you spend your time than you actually do. We really believe our memories are good enough for an accurate account of the hours and minutes we spend on a given task. Time after time, people come up short when put to the test. Here's the truth: no one can really master their time use until they know how they spend their time now. Would you expect a doctor to prescribe a cure without first diagnosing the illness? You can't prescribe good time cures without diagnosing the problems.



## Habits Control

It is our habits that determine most of what we do daily. Habits, however, can either help us or hinder us. It depends on the habit.

Habitual behavior consumes a great deal of our time. This behavior is often unconscious. Although we may claim to remember where our time goes, countless studies have demonstrated that we need more certainty about what is actually happening. Furthermore, because we fail to perceive time use accurately, we frequently think of it as beyond our control. No doubt some of it is beyond our control, but there is still much we can do with the rest.

Before we can control our time, we must understand how it is truly being used. We must accept the fact that we are the cause of most of our time problems, no matter how much we would like to blame others. We must also acknowledge that the solutions to many of our time problems must come from inside ourselves, not from external sources.

The point is that everything you do, all day long, either helps you move toward your goal or it doesn't. If it doesn't help, it hinders. If possible, you want to avoid doing anything that hinders your progress.



## Keep a Time Log

Keeping a daily log of your activities and the time spent on each is an excellent way to highlight established time patterns. By understanding these patterns, you can create new time habits that will result in good time mastery.

You can also use your time log to answer the question, "Who controls my time?" Go through each activity listed and ask yourself whether it represents discretionary time or time controlled by someone else. Caution must be exercised here. It is often easy to assert that someone else is in control of your time when actually you have wide discretion in performing an activity.



## Return on Time Invested

The Japanese word "kaizen" sums up the rationale for analyzing time. Kaizen means continual incremental improvement. Whatever our time habits are, we didn't get them overnight. We will not change everything overnight either. The important point, though, is that we can change.

Every year, more technologies become available to help people master their time. Opportunities for improvement involve the use of these new technologies. For example, electronic meeting schedulers, PDA's, mobile phones, satellites, and the Internet offer many timesaving possibilities.

Time Masters recognize the value of exploring options and opportunities to analyze and improve on existing time habits. By continually looking, you will find more and more ways to improve.

Consider what you have just read about analyzing time. Review the statements on the next page. Note actions needed for analyzing your time.

# Analyzing

Time Mastery Profile®—Category D



## Key Concepts about Analyzing Time

- Everything you do either helps you or hinders you. Once your time is spent, it can't be recovered.
- The key is to make sure your activities are consistent with your goals.
- Keep a record of how you spend your time for at least one week every year. A month would be even better. Discover what you do, when you do it, and why you do it.
- Ask others to tell you how you waste your time, or how you could spend your time better. They may see what you can't see.
- Practice kaizen. Strive for continual improvement.
- Explore opportunities to try out new technologies to streamline processes and save time.
- Regularly examine work procedures for jobs you are doing. What are the steps involved? Who does them? When are they done? Can any steps be eliminated, shortened, or simplified?
- Ask your peers, staff, or team to help brainstorm new ideas. Look for ways to eliminate steps, combine operations, shorten procedures, streamline work, and remove obstacles.
- Don't overreact to something that is not really a crisis. Don't invest more time and energy in a situation than it is worth. Use the Important/Urgent grid on page 14 as a guide.
- Keep records of your crises. Analyze them and look for patterns. Are they recurring or unique? Can any of your crises be predicted?
- If faced with constantly recurring crises, find out why things keep going wrong and fix them. Many recurring crises are caused by poor planning, poor coordination, and poor follow-up.

## My Action Plan to Improve Analyzing

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habit(s) I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

Consistency and persistence are the only ways to develop new habits. To keep myself from straying from my new habit(s), I will:

Which people will I ask to help me, and what will I ask them to do?

# Planning

Time Mastery Profile®—Category E



Everyone admits that planning is important, but few actually spend as much time planning as they should. Many claim they don't have time to plan. Planning is a habit. People who plan regularly master the habit of planning. It simply becomes part of the regular routine, so finding time is no longer a problem.

Many of us fail to plan because we are action-oriented. We prefer to be in the thick of things, doing instead of thinking. As a result, we react to whatever happens around us. Planning is the only way to break out of the reactive pattern.



## Plan Work and Time

The key to successful planning is to plan both work and time. Simply ask these six questions:

1. Results What are my goals; what do I expect to accomplish?
2. Activities — What will I have to do to get those results?
3. Priorities — What are the priorities involved?
4. Time — How much time will each activity require?
5. Schedules — When will I do each activity?
6. Flexibility — How much flexibility must I allow for the unexpected things I can't control?

The first three questions form a work plan. The last three questions make a time plan. You need both.



## Take Control

Planning is an attempt to control as much of your time as possible. But remember, you can't control everything. Many things are simply beyond your control.

If you fail to control whatever time you can, you will diminish your effectiveness. Whether you can take charge of eight hours daily or just one hour is irrelevant. The idea is to control whatever time you can so that you can spend as much time as possible on important issues.



## Weekly and Daily Plans

The daily "to do" list is the most common time plan used today. While daily planning is certainly worthwhile, weekly planning is even better. It provides a longer perspective and allows more room for options. You can use the same six questions to develop a daily plan or a weekly plan.

To prepare a weekly plan, ask the six basic planning questions for next week. If possible, do this at the end of the preceding week. For instance, you might take time out on Friday afternoon, or perhaps on the weekend. Preparing a weekly plan only requires about 30 minutes for most people, but it will enable them to recover at least an hour a day. An extra hour or more every day for important work will produce remarkable results in almost any job.

Reflect on what you have just read about planning. Read the statements on the next page. Note any actions needed to improve your time planning.

# Planning

Time Mastery Profile®—Category E



## Key Concepts about Planning

- To improve your planning, ask six questions:
  - (1) What results do I intend to achieve?
  - (2) What must I do to get those results?
  - (3) What are the priorities?
  - (4) How much time will each activity require?
  - (5) When will I do each activity?
  - (6) How much flexibility must I allow for the unexpected things I can't control?
- Flexibility is the key to successful planning. Allow time for unexpected things like interruptions, problems, and crises.
- Be slow to alter your plan when the unexpected strikes. A thoughtful response is usually better than a quick reaction to events.
- Prepare a plan for every week. An excellent time to do this is on Friday afternoon before you leave work. Ask other people to do the same thing. Meet with key people to review the plans for next week, and coordinate priorities and activities. These meetings can be face-to-face, by telephone, via email, or instant messaging.
- Make sure your daily "to do" list has priorities and time estimates. You run out of time, not work.
- Make sure deadlines and time estimates are realistic. Don't ignore them.
- Learn to control your unplanned action impulses.
- Be prepared for a productive start tomorrow morning. Set things out tonight before you leave, so they'll be ready when you get there.

## My Action Plan to Improve Planning

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habit(s) I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

Consistency and persistence are the only ways to develop new habits. To keep myself from straying from my new habit(s), I will:

Which people will I ask to help me, and what will I ask them to do?

# Scheduling

Time Mastery Profile®—Category F



Many people use the terms "planning" and "scheduling" interchangeably. Actually, they refer to two different activities. Planning is deciding *what* to do. Scheduling is deciding *when* to do it. Scheduling is simply picking a time to do the activities.

Scheduling, some people say, is just not possible. Things just don't work out the way they intend them to. You can't anticipate what's going to happen on any given day. Yet, at least half the things you schedule will probably work out exactly as planned. The more you work at it, the more you master it. The more you try to schedule, the more you learn about how to schedule successfully.

Scheduling is the secret for making things happen. Planning is an intention; scheduling is more like a commitment.

Things that are scheduled tend to happen and happen on time. Things that are not scheduled may never happen. If you want it to happen, schedule it.



## Maintain Flexibility

The biggest mistake people make in scheduling is to allocate every minute of their day. You can seldom control the entire day because there are just too many unexpected things that make demands on your time. You must leave room for the unexpected when you are constructing your schedule. For example, most people know that they will be interrupted during the day, but very few actually plan for interruptions. Remember, interruptions are a part of your job. Planning for interruptions means leaving room for them in your schedule.



## Schedule Quiet Time

If you work in an office, an endless stream of emails, voice mails, and interruptions makes it difficult to get things done. The constant start-stop-restart pattern stretches jobs out longer than necessary. It often reduces the quality of your work. You accomplish only about half of what you should be able to do during the work day. Quiet time can change much of this.

Quiet time is simple: create an uninterrupted block of time so you can concentrate on your work. This usually means turning off the telephone, ignoring emails, and blocking drop-in visitors for a while. Find an empty conference room, turn off your telephone, turn off the email notification on your computer, close your door, go to the library, or ask for help from those in your work area. A big benefit is that in one hour of scheduled quiet time, you can get as much done as you could in three or four hours of regular time.



## Get An Early Start

Everyone knows that starting early is good advice for mastering time, but we don't all follow it. Get a good, productive start and you're more likely to have a successful, productive day. Get a poor start and you'll be playing catch-up all day.

Starting early can have three different meanings. First, it might mean starting the day at an earlier hour. Many people find this beneficial. Second, it might mean starting to work when you get to work. Don't waste the first hour of the day on coffee, conversation, or newspapers. Third, it might mean starting on projects earlier than you normally would and giving yourself more lead time.

The key to scheduling is the belief that there is a time and place for everything. Scheduling allows you to consider the appropriate time and place in advance, when you still have an opportunity to do something about it. Scheduling allows you to operate purposefully rather than randomly. You are likely to get more accomplished in less time and have more time to do other things that are also important.

Reflect on what you have just read and review the statements on the next page. Note any actions needed to improve your scheduling habits.

# Scheduling

Time Mastery Profile®—Category F



## Key Concepts about Scheduling

- Little ever happens in your life until you create the space for it to happen. That means scheduling.
- Schedule the most important activities for each day. This simply means picking a specific time to do them. Things that are scheduled are much more likely to happen.
- Don't hesitate to take large time blocks for important work. Schedule quiet time so you won't be interrupted.
- Prepare tomorrow's schedule before you leave work today. You won't risk starting your day by reacting before you consider what's really important.
- Make a list of small jobs that only require a few minutes. When you have little time gaps during the day, do one of the small jobs instead of wasting those few minutes.
- Group related items and actions whenever possible.
- Be sure to allow enough time for each activity. Most people are overly optimistic. They don't allow enough time, and they often start late. As a result, their jobs are more frantic and pressured than they need to be.
- Set time limits for everything you do. Try to finish within the time allowed.
- Whenever possible, set appointments to see people. Call ahead or use email to confirm that they will be there.
- Schedule regular times for talking with key people.
- Identify your prime time - the time of day when you're at your best and when you do your best work. Try to set this time aside for completing important projects, making important decisions, or doing creative work.
- Schedule time to do it right the first time. You won't have to waste time doing it over.

## My Action Plan to Improve Scheduling

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habit(s) I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

Consistency and persistence are the only ways to develop new habits. To keep myself from straying from my new habit(s), I will:

Which people will I ask to help me, and what will I ask them to do?

# Interruptions

Time Mastery Profile®—Category G



Realize that interruptions are part of your job and that it may be your attitude that needs adjusting. When interrupted, most of us are at least mildly irritated; we don't like to stop what we're doing and focus on something else. Sincerely try to look at interruptions in a different way. Instead of being upset when an interruption occurs, think of it simply as part of the job. You'll be less frustrated and better able to stay in control of the situation.

Realize, though, that you will not achieve total control of interruptions. When you work with people, you must expect some of their actions to be unpredictable. The basic idea is to accept the uncontrollable and control the controllable.

The key is to allow enough time in your schedule for unexpected, uncontrollable events. If you allow flexibility for interruptions, you won't be so frustrated when they do occur. If you don't allow adequate flexibility in your schedule, interruptions will occur anyway, and your frustration level will rise.



## Analyze Interruptions

The single most useful approach for reducing interruptions is to keep records. Note who interrupts you, when they interrupt, how long it takes, and what it concerns. Look for patterns among your interruptions. No matter what the pattern, knowing what it is puts you way ahead. You can't solve a problem until you have accurately identified it.

Everyone struggles with interruptions. Most of us complain about them, but do little else. It would be far better to analyze them and systematically work to control them. In the words of the ancient Greek philosophers, "It is better to light one candle than curse the darkness."



## Bunch Things Together

Some of your interruptions are important, but most are merely routine. They need to be handled, but not immediately. To get better results, ask people to hold routine items in order to discuss them at one time.

Schedule regular meetings with key people. Encourage people to set appointments instead of relying so much on spontaneous drop-in visits. A simple one-on-one meeting, once a day or once a week, could work miracles in your schedule.



## Tame Telephones and Email

Phone calls and emails are important. Everyone knows that. Studies show, however, that many emails and business calls aren't about business. Even calls that start discussing significant topics often digress into trivia. And too many emails are unnecessary, or they suffer from incomplete information that requires further clarification. Don't let noncritical conversations and email messages distract you from the business in front of you.



## Limit Socializing

Socializing is like aspirin: a little helps a lot, but too much can be harmful. We need to talk to each other. Communication is the organizational grease that keeps everything working smoothly. The issue is more a matter of degree. We want to continue the necessary socializing and stop the unnecessary part. Learn to recognize your actions for what they are. Socializing can be reduced without becoming antisocial.



## Interruptions Are Human

As long as we work together there will be interruptions. They are part of your job, but that doesn't mean you must be at the mercy of whatever interruptions occur. Practice prevention and reduction techniques whenever you can.

Consider what you have just read about interruptions. Review the statements on the next page. Note any actions needed to control your interruptions.

# Interruptions

Time Mastery Profile<sup>®</sup>—Category G



## Key Concepts about Interruptions

- Interruptions are more manageable when you accept that they are part of your job.
- Keep a record of all your interruptions. Find out who interrupts you, when it happens, how long it lasts, and what it concerns. Look for patterns.
- Allow enough time for interruptions in your daily schedule.
- Keep interruptions short and you will solve half the problems.
- Suggest alternatives, such as email, voice mail, or fax.
- Bunch things together and handle several things in one visit, call, or email.
- Stand up when someone comes into your office or when you answer the phone. Standing up gives you a better position for controlling how long the interruption lasts. You can begin walking out of your office (or telling the caller you must go) to more quickly conclude the interaction.
- Rearrange your furniture so you don't face the door or the traffic flow.
- Get through the small talk as quickly as possible. Get right to the point and stay there.
- Set up quiet time when you won't be interrupted.
- In open work areas, turn down the level of telephone bells or ringers. Better still, try blinking lights instead of bells.
- Socializing is like aspirin. A little helps a lot, but too much can be harmful. Don't rationalize that all conversations are worthwhile.
- After the interruption, train yourself to go right back to the task you were doing. Don't use the interruption as an excuse to drift aimlessly.

## My Action Plan to Control Interruptions

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habit(s) I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

Consistency and persistence are the only ways to develop new habits. To keep myself from straying from my new habit(s), I will:

Which people will I ask to help me, and what will I ask them to do?

# Meetings

Time Mastery Profile®—Category H



Most people complain that meetings are major time-wasters. Yet they don't complain about effective meetings because they enjoy them. It's just the nonproductive meetings that cause so much grief.

The following sign used to hang on the wall of one company:

*"Intelligence is no substitute for information;  
Enthusiasm is no substitute for ability;  
Willingness is no substitute for experience."*

Then one day someone added a new line:

*"And a meeting is no substitute for progress."*

Here are some of the common reasons for wasted time in meetings:

- No real purpose
- Ambiguous objectives
- Wrong people present
- No agenda
- People aren't prepared
- Agenda isn't followed
- Too many people present
- Starting late
- Ending late
- No results or decisions
- Poor follow-up



## Who's Responsible?

When meetings waste time, everyone usually shares the blame. The people in charge aren't doing their job well. The attendees aren't doing their job well either. It takes effective behavior from everyone to make a meeting work. The person in charge, however, must carry the brunt of the responsibility.

Different people react to being in charge of meetings in different ways. Some see it as an opportunity to dominate the group. Others are caught up only in the social process of group interaction, with little need for achievement. Some use meetings to justify inactivity.

The majority, however, truly wish to do something effective, but may not know how. Ironically, while all organizations need productive meetings, only a handful do anything to teach people to master the skills needed to plan and conduct good meetings.



## Everyone Benefits

Of all the major time-wasters, meetings are probably one of the easiest to solve. And eliminating wasted time in meetings will probably do more good for more people at one time than solving almost any other time management problem. It takes a little effort, but the rewards are especially attractive: higher morale, greater productivity, and time savings.

Advances in technology have made it much easier to schedule meetings, allowing meeting organizers to save time even before the meeting takes place. Some people still call or email back and forth to find time when everyone can meet. However, various types of scheduling software enable you to check other people's calendars and set up a common meeting time. These programs also include meeting reminder features, which help get people to meetings on time, and they make it very easy to notify everyone when a meeting must be cancelled.

Consider what you have just read about meetings. Read the statements on the next page. Note any action ideas for improving your meetings.

# Meetings

Time Mastery Profile®—Category H



## Key Concepts about Meetings

- Clarify the specific purpose of the meeting. Be sure it is really necessary. One-way communication does not require a meeting.
- Consider alternatives to meetings, such as emails or conference calls.
- Explore scheduling software options to streamline the process.
- Whenever you must hold a meeting, make an agenda and stick to it.
- Invite only those people whose attendance is necessary and let them know how to contribute.
- Identify a specific result to be achieved for each agenda item.
- Set time limits for each agenda item. Make sure the most important issues get the most time.
- Be prepared for the meeting.
- Set a time limit. Start on time, stay on time, and stop on time.
- Allow people to come and go as their contribution is needed and completed.
- Stay in control. Resist tangents. Keep things on target.
- Keep the meeting small. You won't accomplish much with more than five to eight people.
- Try holding meetings where everyone stands up. You'll get more done in less time.
- Summarize the results of the meeting. Clarify or review assignments.
- Prepare a follow-up action plan. Note what must be done, who will do it, and when it is due. Give a copy to everyone at the end of the meeting.
- Spend a few minutes at the end of the meeting to critique it. Discuss and agree on ways to improve the next meeting.

## My Action Plan to Improve Meetings

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habit(s) I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

Consistency and persistence are the only ways to develop new habits. To keep myself from straying from my new habit(s), I will:

Which people will I ask to help me, and what will I ask them to do?

# Written Communications

Time Mastery Profile®—Category I



Handling all the written communications we receive every day is a problem! And it's getting worse, not better. Letters to read, letters to write. Emails to send, emails to respond to. Reports to prepare, reports to read, reports to file. And both regular and electronic mail never stop.

For many of us, the paper and electronic communications spill over into our personal time. Advances in technology have resulted in our work creeping into other areas of our lives. Email reaches us at home day or night, and even on our mobile phones. The line between work time and personal time continues to blur.



## Communication Overload

Paper and electronic communications provide information, and information is the lifeblood of any organization. Without it, we couldn't conduct business. But it grows at such a staggering rate that it's also creating a communication overload.

There's even a Clutter Law: Clutter expands to fill the space available, whether in your office or on your computer hard drive. Clutter confuses. It also promotes poor work habits.



## Psychological Factors

Although we complain about it, rarely do we do anything to reduce the amount of paper and documentation around us. In part, this reluctance stems from our failure to understand the psychology of written communications.

Written communications can be a tremendous security blanket. We feel safe and important with lots of these documents around us, whether paper or electronic. We feel exposed in their absence. We sometimes assess our value by the amount of documents we handle. Even our loyalty to the organization may be measured in documents processed and produced.

Written communications are often the essence of our work. There is simply no way to escape them. Because

they are so common, we accept them as normal. We have even been conditioned since childhood to think that all communication is "good."



## Healthier Habits

Written communications are often required to make things happen. The key seems to be in maintaining the proper level at all times, realizing that these documents are only a means to an end, seldom the end itself.

Like many other things, the way we handle written communications is largely habit. We're probably unaware of exactly how much volume we handle, or how much we impose on others. But just as we've developed the habit of putting too much emphasis on paper and electronic documents, we can also develop the habit of resisting them.

Written communications may be inevitable, but being buried in them is not. We can learn to trim out the unnecessary parts and concentrate only on those documents that help us achieve results.

Reflect on what you have just read about written communications. Review the statements on the next page. Note action ideas for improving your skills in handling paper and electronic communications.

# Written Communications

Time Mastery Profile®—Category I



## Key Concepts about Written Communications

- There are only four things you can do with a paper or electronic document: dump it, delegate it, do it, or delay it.
- Analyze your documents to see what can be eliminated, shortened, modified, combined, or otherwise improved.
- Screen and sort all incoming communications: action, reading, filing, or trash.
- Develop criteria for what to respond to and what to discard or delegate.
- To manage your paper and electronic communications, ask three questions about everything that comes your way: (1) Will I really do anything with it? If the answer is "no," don't accept it. If the answer is "yes," ask the next two questions. (2) When will I do it? (3) Where will I keep it?
- Develop a system to help keep track of details and handle follow-up on time.
- Develop routines and standard responses; streamline everything you can. Simplify all reports.
- Schedule regular work sessions for your paper and electronic communications.
- If possible, handle each piece of paper or electronic document only once. Don't set it aside without taking some action on it.
- Use dictation, email, voice mail, and fax to help speed up your communication chores.
- Schedule time to read on a regular basis. Be selective in what you choose to read.
- Learn to read faster and better.
- Clean out your paper and electronic files at least once a year. Have a party.

## My Action Plan to Master Written Communications

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habit(s) I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

Consistency and persistence are the only ways to develop new habits. To keep myself from straying from my new habit(s), I will:

Which people will I ask to help me, and what will I ask them to do?

# Delegation

Time Mastery Profile®—Category J



Mastering delegation today is different than it used to be. Historically, delegation was a vertical process, flowing downward through the chain-of-command from one superior to his or her staff. Vertical delegation followed the flow of formal authority through the organization.

Today, with a growing emphasis on self-directed work teams and quality teams, horizontal delegation is as important as vertical delegation. Horizontal delegation involves delegating to peers or others over whom you have no formal authority. Some people believe that since they have no formal authority, they cannot delegate effectively. This isn't true.

The assumption from the past was that formal authority gave you the right to dictate to people: do it or else. But this was only partially true. Coercion did indeed bring about performance, but not always excellent, high-quality performance.



## Acceptance Authority

An alternative explanation may be more helpful. You never have any more authority over another person than that person is willing to grant you.

Your authority, in other words, depends on acceptance by the other person. This means that the only condition for delegation is someone willing to accept what you want to delegate. Acceptance authority does not rely on formal authority relationships; it relies on your ability to persuade someone to do something.



## What Is Delegation?

Delegation today means work-sharing, whether vertical or horizontal. It means sharing responsibility and authority with others and holding them accountable for performance.

Responsibility refers to the job assignment - the intended results. It also includes the obligation to perform the activities necessary to achieve the intended results.

Authority refers to the right to act and make decisions. Successful delegation requires authority equal to the responsibility. Accountability means being called upon to answer for actions and decisions. It also implies rewards and penalties.



## Effective Delegation

For most of us, delegation involves a dilemma. We must keep what we want to give up - the responsibility - and we must give up what we want to keep - the authority. How well we handle this dilemma determines our success in delegating.

Delegation is a powerful tool for empowering people. However, it requires a high level of trust between delegator and delegatee. Trust takes time to develop. Delegation works best when the organizational climate emphasizes employee development, growth, innovation, creativity, and human dignity.

Reflect on what you have just read about delegation and read the statements on the next page. Note the action you can take to improve the way you delegate.

### Steps for Effective Delegation

1. Think and plan first.
2. Clarify the responsibility and results intended.
3. Select the right person.
4. Decide on the authority level.
5. Decide on controls and checkpoints.
6. Create a motivating environment.
7. Hold them accountable.

# Delegation

Time Mastery Profile®—Category J



## Key Concepts about Delegation

- General Levels of Authority
  - Level 1: Get the facts, I'll decide.
  - Level 2: Suggest alternatives, I'll decide.
  - Level 3: Recommend an alternative, I'll decide.
  - Level 4: Decide, wait for my approval.
  - Level 5: Decide, act unless I say no.
  - Level 6: Act, report results.
  - Level 7: Act, report if unsuccessful.
  - Level 8: Act, reporting not needed.
- Be sure to delegate enough authority to enable the other person to accomplish the intended results. Remember the eight levels of authority.
- Consider how you will manage the job before you delegate it. If you can't manage it, maybe you shouldn't delegate it.
- Consider the behavioral style of the other person.
- Adapt your delegation accordingly.
- Don't interfere, undercut, overrule, or arbitrarily reverse others' decisions.
- Delegate the right to be wrong. Use mistakes as a learning process.
- Write out the pertinent details of the delegation. Give the other person a copy.
- Follow-up does not mean breathing down a person's neck. Leave the person alone to do the job, but maintain regular checks at critical points along the way.
- Don't simply accept upward delegation. Ask for solutions along with problems. Help others learn to make their own good decisions.
- Insist on results, but not on perfection. There are usually many ways to get the same result. Don't insist that other people do it your way. Learn to live with differences.

## My Action Plan to Improve Delegation

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habit(s) I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

Consistency and persistence are the only ways to develop new habits. To keep myself from straying from my new habit(s), I will:

Which people will I ask to help me, and what will I ask them to do?

# Procrastination

Time Mastery Profile®—Category K



Procrastination plagues all of us. More plans go astray, more dreams go unfulfilled, and more time is wasted by procrastination than by any other single factor. For many people, procrastination becomes a harmful habit that can impede their personal and professional development.



## Procrastination Prevents Success

Success comes from doing the really important things critical to obtaining results. Essentials are most subject to procrastination, for we seldom seem to procrastinate about unimportant things. If we could only learn to shift our procrastination from important to unimportant matters, our problem would disappear!



## What Causes Procrastination?

Procrastination respects no one. All of us suffer from it at one time or another. Procrastination is doing low-priority actions or tasks instead of high-priority ones. Procrastination is straightening your desk when you should be working on that report; watching TV when you should be exercising; having another cup of coffee when you should get back to the office; calling on the friendly customer who buys very little when you should be preparing a sales presentation for that tough prospect who could buy much more; avoiding co-workers rather than telling them bad news; staying away from the office to avoid critiquing a staff member's performance; and postponing time-consuming activities with your children because something always seems "more urgent."

Procrastination can be traced to three major causes. We tend to put off

- things that are unpleasant;
- things that are difficult;
- things that involve tough decisions. Yet these are the very things that contribute most to our success.

When we don't want to do something, we putter around with little things. We try to keep busy so that we have an excuse that will ease our consciences.

Have you ever noticed how putting off a task never makes it disappear? Postponing it only makes it worse. Anxiety nags at you, and you're more likely to get irritable.

None of us escapes our quota of difficult or disagreeable tasks. They do not fade away by being ignored. Eventually, we have to roll up our cuffs and wade into them. In the meantime, we suffer.



## Preventive Action

Changing your do-it-later urge into a do-it-time mastery habit requires positive action. Don't defend your procrastination habits; change them instead. If you simply defend, deny, or rationalize them, there is no hope for improvement.

The most valuable thing you can do when you are procrastinating is to admit it. As long as you continue to deny or rationalize your procrastination, you are not in a position to overcome it. Once you admit that you are procrastinating, you can examine your situation and determine why in order to find a technique for conquering your procrastination. In the end, procrastination - like any problem can be solved only by positive action.

Consider what you have just read about procrastination. Read the statements on the next page. Record action ideas for learning to conquer your tendency to procrastinate.

# Procrastination

Time Mastery Profile®—Category K



## Key Concepts about Procrastination

- When procrastinating, the best thing you can do is admit it. Stop rationalizing and you're more likely to act.
- Analyze what causes you to put things off. Most of us tend to avoid things that are unpleasant, complex, or overwhelming.
- Do the toughest jobs first.
- Tackle unpleasant tasks in small pieces and short time segments.
- Delegate the task to someone else who may enjoy doing it. Others often enjoy what we don't like to do.
- Break complex tasks down into smaller steps. Focus on one step at a time.
- Do a small task that will get you moving in the right direction.
- Give yourself a pep talk. Don't put things off because you're feeling sorry for yourself.
- Don't be a perfectionist. Some risk is inevitable. Remember, you're paid to get results, not to be perfect.
- Don't wait for the right mood. Start in spite of your mood. Thomas Edison said, "Creativity is 99 percent perspiration, and only 1 percent inspiration."
- There are only two rules for achieving anything. Rule 1: Get started. Rule 2: Keep going.
- Commit yourself to action. Set deadlines. Promise results to others. The fear of losing face is a powerful motivator.
- Promise yourself a reward for completing the task. If you earn the reward, be sure to take it.
- Yes, you can! Do it now!

## My Action Plan to Conquer Procrastination

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habit(s) I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

Consistency and persistence are the only ways to develop new habits. To keep myself from straying from my new habit(s), I will:

Which people will I ask to help me, and what will I ask them to do?

# Team Time

Time Mastery Profile®—Category L



It is always good to ask the question, "What's the best use of my time?" But the larger question is, "What's the best use of our time?" No one works in a vacuum, and no one gets much done alone. Top performance demands the joint effort of many people working together toward a common goal.

The greatest concern is not just for personal time management, but for team time management. When an individual works together with others, effectiveness grows, creating greater productivity for everyone involved. Together, we can do more than the collective efforts of each individual working alone.

Team time management requires an entirely new approach to time management. It suggests that the tempo of the organization is focused not on individuals, but on groups of people working together formally on project teams, committees, task forces, or even collaborating informally. It requires that we learn to think and act with respect to our time as it fits into the greater whole. This is not meant to diminish the individual, but to enlarge the individual's perception.



## Support Teams

Time Masters are constantly striving to develop a good support team. They realize the value of partners. And they realize that partners are not just the people who report to you they are also associates. Wherever you work, the success of your organization depends on positive working relationships.

Effective time managers discover many ways to develop a continuing dialogue about time. They find ways to talk about time waste without blaming others.

No matter how hard we try, even with the best intentions, we still waste other people's time and create problems for them. It's inevitable. Unfortunately, there is very little dialogue about these problems. We spend a lot of time complaining, but little time honestly trying to resolve these issues.



## Think of Others

One key to developing good team time management is the honest desire to respect and help others. Little is gained by always thinking in terms of your own self-interest. We're all in this together. You can't solve your time problems at the expense of others or by excluding any consideration of others. At best, it's a temporary gain with disastrous side effects.

We need to improve ourselves, and we need to help others improve too. We need to respect our own time and the time of others. We need to develop good team time management.



## Mutual Influence

Mastering time is not just an individual problem. It's a matter of mutual influence. We either help each other or we hinder each other. We're all part of the problem, and we're also part of the solution. Take time to be a positive influence for others. Above all, treat others as you would like to be treated. The results are terrific.

Reflect on what you have just read about team time management. Review the statements on the next page. Note action ideas for improving your time teamwork.

# Team Time

Time Mastery Profile<sup>®</sup>—Category L



## Key Concepts about Team Time

- No matter how good you are, you can't do everything. It is up to you to develop a strong support team to help everyone achieve more. Not one of us can do as much as all of us.
- Don't wait for someone else to take the first step; assume that everything depends on you. "If it is to be, it is up to me."
- Set a good time mastery example for others to follow.
- Show people you respect them and their time. Look for ways to save time for them, including the use of new technologies.
- Ask others how you waste their time. Change your ways. Don't distract team members with needless phone calls or by stopping by their work space without an appointment. Be sure your email messages are clear and complete.
- Don't send emails to an entire list if only a few people need it.
- Nurture work relationships. Get to know people well. Talk with them. Laugh with them. Share their concerns.
- Develop the on-time habit. Deliver what you promise on time.
- Discuss goals, priorities, and plans with superiors, subordinates, team members, and support staff. Do it often.
- Make an agenda before calling or meeting with anyone.
- Don't be in too big a hurry when instructing others. Take time to do it right.
- Take time to be a good listener.
- Start earlier. Ask for things earlier. Give people plenty of advance notice.
- Ask everyone for ideas on how to improve team time. The more ideas you get, the more you can improve.

## My Action Plan to Improve Team Time

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habit(s) I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

Consistency and persistence are the only ways to develop new habits. To keep myself from straying from my new habit(s), I will:

Which people will I ask to help me, and what will I ask them to do?

## Conclusion

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By now, you've profiled your time mastery habits, developed action plans for improvement, and discovered how your team or work group can use time more effectively. Congratulations!

The key to mastering individual and team time is to follow the five-step approach used for building your action plans:

1. Define what habits, methods, procedures, or behaviors you want to change or eliminate.
2. Define the new habits, methods, procedures, or behaviors you want to develop.
3. List the steps you will take to be sure you begin strongly.
4. List the things you will do to keep from slipping back into the old patterns.
5. Identify which people you will ask to help you master your new approach. Also, identify specifically what you will ask them to do to help you.

At first, these steps may seem mechanical and stiff. After you have used them to master a few aspects of time management, you will find the process becomes more natural and occurs more quickly.



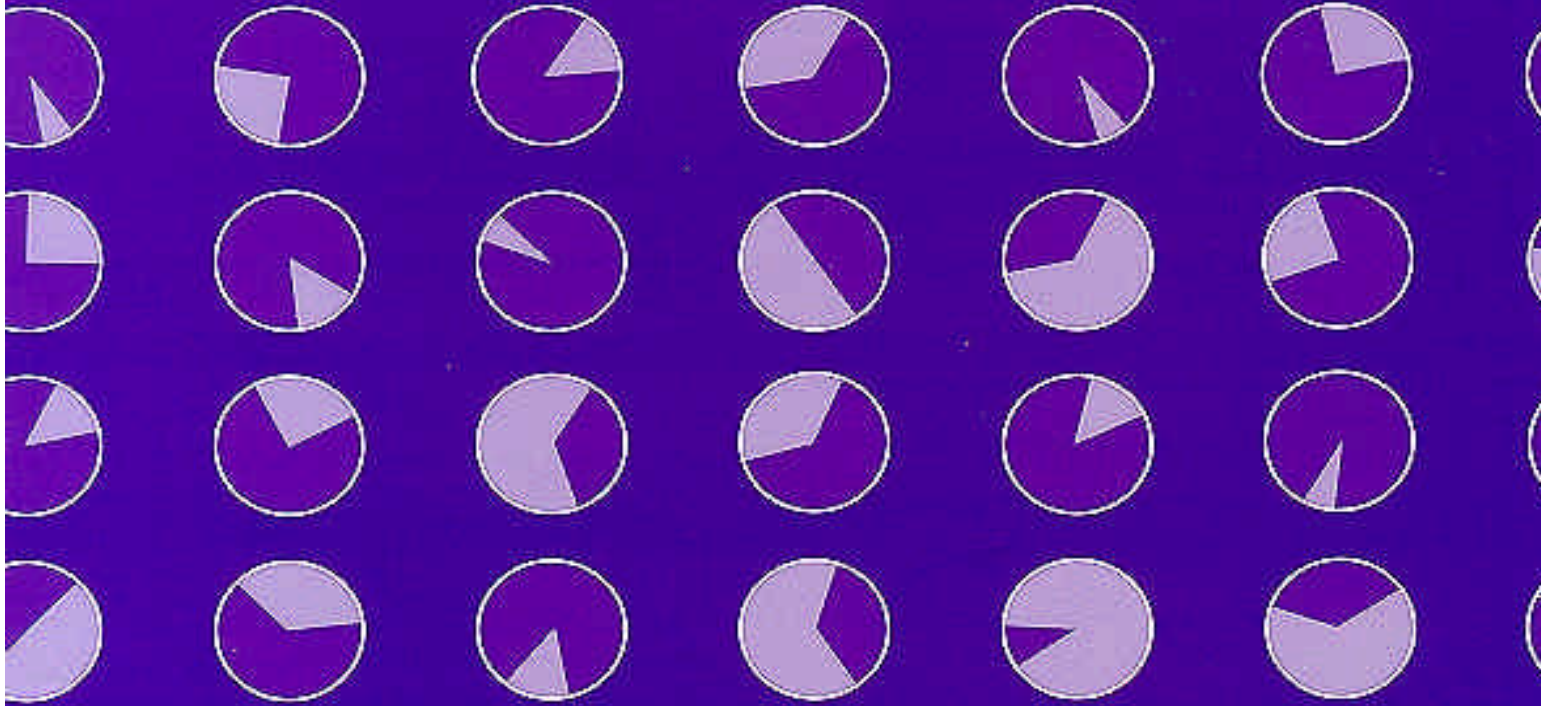
Having addressed 12 ways you can accomplish more, you are now ready to continue mastering your time. Use the following note page for your personal summary and record which habits will be first on your list. Where on the list will you begin?

- Developing my "Can Do" attitude
- Establishing clear goals
- Knowing what to do by prioritizing
- Analyzing my time use
- Mastering planning for effectiveness
- Knowing when to do things by scheduling
- Controlling interruptions
- Improving meeting effectiveness
- Handling written communications
- Increasing delegation strategies
- Conquering procrastination
- Developing team time management



### My Time Mastery Action Plan

I will begin immediately to improve my mastery of time, starting with the following categories and action plans. Once these are mastered, I will focus on improving additional categories.



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Authors: Dr. Lamy Baker and Dr. Merrill Douglas

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