



Assessment – A Missing Ingredient

At a recent planning and staff meeting, we discussed the merits of a number of candidates for an extremely sensitive assignment. There were a number of competencies that we had to consider and all of the candidates were eminently qualified. When we further explored the candidates, we discovered that one candidate was clearly distinguishable by demonstrating through specific examples the effective use of time management tools. This led us to review some of our own procedures and training.

Time management no longer focuses on timesaving tricks, such as using your commute to return calls or even making up a to-do list. Instead, time management emphasizes a more holistic approach that teaches employees to set priorities and achieve goals in all areas of their lives. "Not doing the right things to begin with gets you nowhere faster" according to Don Westmore, President of The Productivity Institute, a time management training firm based in Stratford, CT.

What does "time management training" teach?

- How to plan
- How to set priorities
- Avoid procrastination
- Become more organized
- Building relationships
- Project management skills
- Managing Interruptions

It can also train employees to examine tasks more critically in terms of their productive value, i.e., **Is it critical, is it worthwhile, does it have value or is it of little value.** Once employees recognize which tasks have less value, they will choose higher-value tasks, emphasized Wetmore.

To find the **most effective time management training** for your workforce, determine what types of time management problems employees have, decide who should attend training and choose the training style and vendor that best suit your needs. Focus on specific needs: i.e. complaints about working late, employees overwhelmed by paperwork and information. The best way to market time management training to your employees is to pitch its personal benefits, i.e. they will accomplish more, have more time and less stress, go home on time and be a better parent. At the same time, the employer benefits in that time management tools applied off the job will become a habit that workers will carry over to the workplace.



After determining the time management problems, seek a training vendor that is willing and able to customize training. Look for training dealing with behaviors and techniques rather than products alone. The most effective time management training is best performed in person, at least initially. Once you have that firm foundation you can then blend live and web-based training for on-going reinforcement.

No matter which training method you choose (live or web-based), individual follow-up with action plans and employee accountability over time is key.

By the way, I personally believe that "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen R. Covey offers one of the best blue prints for effective time management and the tools to use for the rest of your life