



TESSERACT
Management Systems



GUIDELINES

A Basic Guide to Time Management

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1 Introduction

The implementation of systematic approaches to management, as reflected in 'Managing by Design', carries dramatic implications for the leader's diary, both in terms of the new demands it places, and in terms of the new freedom it provides. The danger is, that if these two things, the 'demands' and the 'freedoms', are out of balance, the pressure can be very unpleasant.

This guide is not intended as a conventional guide to time management, many of those already exist and are written by people far more knowledgeable on the subject than I, but more of a guide to time management within the context of implementing systematic management.

The guide supplements tools like the 'Top-Box' form and the personal QFD, and provides a time management perspective to adopting and developing a practical top-box management approach. It assumes that the reader has a clear understanding of what we mean by process ownership and systematic management, but that he or she needs additional guidance to practically implement it in their own work.

The guide is written from a general perspective and may well require some adapting to your particular situation. However one thing will be true for all those who are reading this document – there is no magic wand for this, and your development will require discipline and focus.

The guide outlines five steps to adopting a more systematic role to leadership:

- Analysing how you spend your time currently, and deciding what needs to change
- Looking at your forward diary and workload, and reconsidering how you will approach it
- Developing and applying a routine for deciding how to tackle any new work that comes to you
- Establishing a plan for undertaking the work required by the top-box role
- Monitoring your progress and developing your approach still further.

These steps are explained in more detail through sections 2 to 6 respectively.

We wish you luck in pursuing these steps, and would appreciate any feedback that you might give us to further develop this document and provide practical examples for others endeavouring to follow this road.



2 Analysing your Time

In improving your approach it will be extremely useful to know the position you are starting from. This requires that you understand how your time is spent currently. In doing this there is no real substitute for monitoring how you are spending your time, activity by activity, as the week progresses. We often deceive ourselves when we attempt to estimate retrospectively, and many who have done this analysis in the past have been surprised by exactly how they do spend their time.

As a start point for your analysis, we would propose the following 18 categories. These you will find useful when it comes to thinking about what you should do.

A1 Helping and guiding customers to develop their own strategies	B1 Dealing with customers on their needs and problems	C1 Responding directly to customer complaints and requests
A2 Helping your staff to formulate their own performance targets	B2 Agreeing what is required of your department and establishing budgets	C2 Receiving and transmitting directions on what your department is to do
A3 Coaching your staff in their attitudes & approach	B3 Reviewing your staff's work schedules	C3 Checking people have done their actions
A4 Developing models of how your department works to achieve its role.	B4 Reviewing process performance & development in your department.	C4 Ensuring issues are covered and general administration
A5 Modelling and monitoring trends in your department's or process' performance	B5 Keeping informed on what is going on and progress	C5 Chasing information to satisfy external information needs
A6 Establishing strategies for performance improvement	B6 Visits to other companies and reading management press	C6 Reviewing issues to sort out a satisfactory solution / timescale



Time Analysis Sheet

Using the 18 categories listed on the preceding page, record your time for at least 5 days and preferably two weeks. We recommend that you break down large activities (e.g. meetings) into what you feel you are actually doing at the time.

Name _____

Date _____

	Activity	Code(s)	Mins.
8.00			
9.00			
10.00			
11.00			
12.00			
13.00			
14.00			
15.00			
16.00			
18.00			

Time Analysis

Code	Mins	Code	Mins	Code	Mins	Code	Mins	Code	Mins	Code	Mins	Totals
A1		A2		A3		A4		A5		A6		
B1		B2		B3		B4		B5		B6		
C1		C2		C3		C4		C5		C6		

Total		Total		Total		Total		Total		Total		
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In looking at your analysis you can see where you spend your time. The number part of the code relates to the 6 aspects of the management process as follows:

- | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| 1 Purpose | 2 Philosophy | 3 People |
| 4 Process | 5 Predict | 6 Perfect |

The letter part of the code gives some indication of how proactive and systematic your efforts are in each of those 6 areas, e.g. the extent to which you are tackling your role from the top-box:

- A Largely Proactive B Largely Neutral C Largely Reactive

From this analysis you might be able to identify where you are spending most of your time, how balanced it is across the aspects of the management process, and the scope for making it more systematic.

As part of your review we encourage you to identify where there are particularly large concentrations of time in C activities, and look back at the timesheets to see where they have arisen. You might then rethink your approach to these activities and how you might get a more proactive bias into them.

[illegible]

3

Having reconsidered the areas where you most wish to move to a more proactive role, look forward at your diary and the routine activities that you undertake each month. For each planned activity, and in particular those which you have determined to address from the last 'step' of time analysis, look at how you might approach each in a more systematic or proactive manner.

In doing this we would encourage you to consider the following options/questions:

- Do you need to do the activity, or is there a more efficient way of achieving the same result?
- Is there someone else in the process team who might be more appropriate to undertaking the activity?
- Could you develop a potentially-more-appropriate member of your process team through involving them in the activity and using it as a coaching opportunity? (See Top-Box form on the website)
- Is there a way of developing the activity so that it can be more systematic and efficient, and is there an opportunity to take the next activity as an opportunity for beginning this process?
- Can the activity be broken down so that bits of it may be made more systematic or involve more relevant people?
- Is there something that can be done within your process or somebody else's to make the activity more efficient or even redundant?

Reconsidering the diary

[illegible]



4 Routine for Tackling New Work

The Manager's role, in a top-box sense, is primarily about three things:

- Improving the performance and potential of the process, systematically
- Improving the performance and potential of staff, systematically
- Improving their own performance and potential, systematically

Where the activities that the manager undertakes, contributes to one or more of the above then there is organisational learning. When they don't, there is stagnation and a tendency toward continued firefighting.

For this reason, any new activity, task, or problem that comes to the manager should be reviewed for its potential to contribute to one or more of the systematic improvement areas listed.

This is not as straightforward as it seems. Compared to just 'clearing the action', using it as an opportunity for systematic improvement is likely to involve the manager or his/her team in significant extra work:

- forethought in evaluating the potential of the task for improvement activity
- additional planning to ensure it is best used in this regard
- extra effort to implement the improvement, such as coaching time
- follow up effort to ensure that the learning is fully assimilated into the operation

However, such extra effort means that the activity will be more manageable the next time it arises, because the organisation will be better able to cope with it within its normal processes.

We would therefore propose that whenever you become aware of the need to undertake a task or to get involved in a particular situation, you work through the following questions:

	Yes/No	Planned Action
■ Does the action or issue indicate the possibility of a systematic process defect?
■ Do our measures indicate the extent of any problem in this area?
■ Does the action or issue indicate a weakness in any staff member?
■ Does addressing the issue provide an opportunity to develop the process or staff?
■ Does the issue, or addressing it by any of the above means, provide an opportunity to develop yourself?
■ Do you see any possibilities for preventing or minimising future issues out of this?
■ Are you able to ensure that any learning really does lead to performance benefits?



5 Establishing a Plan for the Top-Box Role

The previous three steps have been largely about making your current (perhaps habitual?) activities consistent with the systematic focus required of the top-box.

Of themselves they lead to systematic improvement, but not in a balanced and planned manner. Pursuing the preceding steps however should create more control of your working day, and thereby the potential to plan into it the management process itself.

We would recommend that you establish a formal plan to schedule activities in your diary which will enable you to achieve the top level of the 'cultural spectrum'.

<p>Knowledge and desire to ensure "delight"</p> <p>Systematic focus on customer satisfaction</p> <p>Clear desire to satisfy customers</p> <p>Customer awareness is evident</p> <p>Largely task rather than role focus</p>	<p>A clearly designed value set is evident</p> <p>Comprehensive standards rigorously prosecuted</p> <p>Standards exist and are actively pursued</p> <p>A direction is evident but goals are unclear</p> <p>Value set, if any, largely depends on individuals</p>	<p>Development designed into work patterns</p> <p>System of growth through challenge & coaching</p> <p>Clear effort to involve, support and encourage</p> <p>Effort largely a result of observed deficiencies</p> <p>No serious attempt to address development</p>	<p>All process deliberately designed to "perform"</p> <p>Key/critical processes have been "designed"</p> <p>Processes have been mapped & developed</p> <p>Some clear documentation and control of process</p> <p>Concept of processes is not evident</p>	<p>All activity consciously analysed & modelled</p> <p>Rigorous prediction & trending invoke PSD</p> <p>Measured deviations are clearly analysed</p> <p>Performance objectively monitored & recorded</p> <p>No objective performance monitors</p>	<p>Systematic improvement of overall "fitness"</p> <p>"Fitness" is understood & steadily improved</p> <p>Clear strategy for improving performance</p> <p>Improvements take place on an ad-hoc basis</p> <p>There is no clear planned improvement</p>
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We would propose that for each column of the spectrum you work through the following questions and plan the resulting actions:

- Where are we currently against this standard, and how do we know?
- What ongoing systematic activities would we need to have in place to meet this standard?
- What steps do we need to take to develop and implement those activities?
- What is my role in planning, setting up, and facilitating those steps?
- What do I need to do to prepare myself to undertake this?
- So what exactly am I going to do and when?



6 Monitoring and Developing Your Approach

Despite our best intentions, our tendency to fall asleep on our job is always with us. Not perhaps in a physical sense, but certainly in going with the flow.

Your adoption of the top-box model is likely to be under constant attack from old habits, new pressures and the discomfort of trying to go against the flow. As a result, you might find yourself several months further on realising that you had forgotten to maintain your work on the top-box approach.

We need to ensure that we set some sort of alarm-clock which reminds us of exactly what it is we have to do. The way we would propose that you do this is to set quarterly review points in which you reassess:

- your progress against the cultural spectrum
- your time spend using the analysis in step one

By doing this you will be able to assess your progress objectively and make any necessary changes.

We would propose that you put these review points in your diary and record the results quarter by quarter in the following form.

Aspect of the Management Process	Cultural Spectrum		Time Analysis		Planned Action to move forward
	This time	Improv't	This time	Improv't	
Purpose					
Philosophy					
People					
Process					
Predict					
Perfect					