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Time Management for the Procurement Professional

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Value of Time within Procurement

- Maximizing the value of time is particularly important in public sector organizations
- Budgetary constraints
- Focus on efficiency
- Focus on data-based decision making
Value of Time within Procurement

- Need for immediate response
- Workplace changes
- “Do More With Less” philosophy
- New emphasis on workflow management
How to Take Control of Your Time

- **Recognize**: Recognize personal strengths and weaknesses in how you manage your time.
- **Organize**: Better organize yourself and your workspace for better efficiency.
- **Take**: Take control of your time and make improvements to your work habits.
- **Set**: Set goals and learn proper planning steps and methods.
- **Identify**: Identify time bandits, assess priorities, and handle time related stress.
- **Learn and practice**: Learn and practice the proper steps of delegation.
Time Management or Protecting your Time?

• What we do with that time, and how we manage ourselves, our environment and our relationships, will result in being more productive or less productive
There are Two Different Types of Time

• Opportunity time
• Replenishment time
Managing Your Time is a Critical Skill

• The functions of the procurement profession are many and procurement professionals must be multi-taskers, jugglers and strategic planners

• Effective time management and protection skills are critical when managing the various functions of the procurement process
Must Have Skills for Procurement Professionals

- Detail Oriented
- Persistence
- Communication and Active Listening
- Time Management
- Flexibility & Adaptability
- Negotiation
- Judgement & Decision Making
- Relationship Building
- Creativity and Problem Solving
- Passion
Who is in Control?

• Is your work managing you, rather than you managing your work?

• Many procurement professionals feel that:
  – There is always too much work on their plate
  – They will never get caught up

• They live with a sense of hopelessness and despair regarding their ability to reduce the stress of “getting it all done”
Effective Time Management

- **Manage Yourself**
  - You are your greatest asset – Invest in yourself

- **Manage Your Environment**
  - Technology Workspace

- **Manage Your Relationships**
  - Internal Customers
  - Suppliers
  - Supervisors
  - Elected Officials
  - Family & Friends
Time is Like a Government Budget

USE TIME OR LOSE IT

$86,400
86,400 Seconds = 1,440 minutes

- 8-hour work day = 480 minutes at work
- 7-hour work day = 420 minutes at work

- Time is the true equalizer – everyone has the same amount of time
Investment

- Time must be invested today, to save time in the future
Pareto Principle

80/20 Rule
Pareto Principle & Procurement

- 20% of internal customers generate 80% of purchase requests
- 20% of errors generate 80% of time-wasting problems
- 20% of meeting time results in 80% of decisions
- 20% of purchase orders = 80% of purchase volume
- 20% of the items to read on your desk contain 80% of information you need to know
Focus Your Energy

• Only 20% of those things that you spend your time doing produces 80% of the results that you want to achieve

• Identify the key 20% activities that are most effective (producing 80% of the results) and make sure you prioritize those activities
How Are You Using Your Time?
Evaluate Your Priorities

• Urgent
• Important
• Unimportant

“Lack of Time is Actually a Lack of Priorities”
Urgent vs. Important

1. Crisis
   - Present problems
   - Dead-line driven

2. Planning
   - Relationships
   - Empowerment

3. Interruptions
   - Some phone calls
   - Some emails
   - Some reports
   - Some meetings

4. Games
   - Some phone calls
   - Irrelevant mail
   - Excessive TV

URGENT

IMPORANT

Highest

Zero
Reactive vs. Proactive

**Reactive Priorities**
- Meetings
- Messages
- Crises
- Unanticipated Events
- Interruptions

What happens when most of your time is spent on Reactive Priorities?
- Missed procedures
- Preventable failures occur
- Priorities for resources are dictated
- Work load increases
- Standards drop
- Moral declines

**Proactive Priorities**
- Thinking
- Strategy
- Prevention
- Longer-term activities
- Relationship Building

Proactive people keep focusing on the following themes:

- The picture of success is ...
- The physical steps I am now going to take are ...
- The practical action plan is ...
- The potential challenges are ...
- The potential strategies are ...
Why it Matters – Reactive vs. Proactive

• Both reactive and proactive tasks are needed
• You need long-term benefits proactive tasks bring as well as the reactive tasks for the daily running of your operations
• But when we get busy, the proactive tasks often get forgotten, and then their long-term benefits either disappear or never materialize
• Proactive tasks are easy to procrastinate because they don’t feel urgent
To-Do Lists

• Done daily
• Prioritized based on your goals
• One combined list instead of multiple lists
• Kept in plain sight
• Taken with you wherever you go
To-Do List Tips

• Don’t put too much on it
• Overestimate commute time
• Don’t carve it in stone
• Order creatively
• Schedule breaks and rewards
The Problem with To-Do Lists

• 41% of to-do list items are never completed

• 50% of to-do list items are completed within one day, many within the first few hours of being written down

• To-do lists make us gravitate to the quick and easy tasks
The **Not** To-Do List

- All priority items
- Anything you can delegate
- Thoughtless & inappropriate demands from others
- Errands with low consequences if ignored
- Anything you might have done for someone they should be doing themselves (attention all parents)
Instead, Live Life from Your Calendar

• If you want to get something done, you need to schedule time for it.

• According to Kruse “the simple act of scheduling tasks on your calendar, instead of writing them on a to-do list, will free you mind, reduce stress and increase cognitive performance”
Microsoft Outlook Essentials

• Start up in your Calendar or Tasks rather than your inbox
• Drop and drag emails into tasks, calendar entries, notes
• Insert documents into calendar entries and tasks
• Master the Rules Wizard
• Use Colors
• Auto-send email to folders by sender or address
Microsoft Outlook Essentials

• Auto-send emails to folders by content or keyword
• Learn to use Advanced find
• Archive your data
• Print in various formats
• Learn to plan Group Meetings
• Set up a prioritized Daily Task List
• Schedule your tasks and time for planning
Dealing with E-mail

• Your brain uses email and social media like a cognitive slot machine

• “Like pulling a slot handle, there is anticipation, which feels good as you go check for new messages”

• “For each email we answer, our brain releases a bit of dopamine which makes us feel good and want to come back and check it again and again” -- Kruse
Open Outlook to your Calendar

• On the **File** tab, click **Options**, and then click **Advanced**

• Under **Outlook start and exit**, click **Browse**

• In the **Select Folder** dialog box, select the folder you want to appear when you start Microsoft Outlook

The Calendar should be your **focus**
Kruse’s 7 Steps to Mastering E-mail

- **Turn off**: Turn off all email notifications
- **Unsubscribe**: Unsubscribe from email newsletters or unsolicited promotional emails (takes time but you have to do it)
- **Process**: Only process email three times per day, using the 321-Zero system
- **Apply**: Apply the 4 D’s: Do it, Delegate it, Defer it, Delete it
- **Think**: Think twice before you forward, cc or bcc
- **Use**: Use the subject line to indicate action required
- **Keep**: Keep emails short, really short
Additional E-mail Management Tips

• File and delete aggressively
• Stop using the Inbox as a to-do list
• Prioritize, *then* respond
• Create reusable text blocks to save yourself hours of typing
Additional E-mail Management Tips

• Triage your email to an empty inbox
  – Use folders for Follow-up, Archive and Hold
• Check email only 2 - 3 times per day
• Remove yourself from group lists
• Scan subject lines for important messages
OH NO – You Do The Math

- According to the McKinsey Global Institute, office workers spend an average of 2.6 hours per day reading and answering e-mails.

480 minutes – 8-hour workday

-156 minutes spent on e-mail

324 minutes left to get work done
Manage Your Work Environment

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Time Bandits

• Anything that decreases your productivity and effectiveness

• Anything that causes you to shift your focus away from your number one priority
Common Time Bandits

• Drop-in visitors
• E-mail
• The telephone
• Badly managed meetings
• Waiting time / travel time
• Confused responsibility / authority
• Lack of standards and progress reports
• Unclear communication
Organize Your Workspace

• Do you have a cluttered desk?

• On average people spends 45 minutes every day looking for lost papers or documents

(Time Magazine)
Filing and Finding

- All documents should be saved digitally
- Name files and organize them with an electronic tree
- Think of how you need to access information?
- When a piece of paper comes into your possession you must deal with it right away
  - File it
  - Take action
  - Dispose of it
What is the most time saving device in your office?
Manage Your Relations

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When to Delegate?

When the task...

- Is not your strength and someone else has more skill
- Requires a lower level of expertise
- Will take more time than you have and someone else has the time
- Would be a good training opportunity
7 Delegation Steps

• Explain why the job is important

• Describe what is needed in terms of results

• Give the person the authority they need to do the job

• Indicate when the job needs to be completed and get agreement
7 Delegation Steps continued

• Ask the person to tell you his/her understanding of the task, deadlines, etc.

• Never ask the person the question “do you understand”

• Check back on progress long before the deadline
Learn to say “NO”

- One way to make sure that your schedules are kept on time is the ability to say no to new and untimely commitments
- May I say no……
- When do I say no……
- How do I say no……
Tone of Voice is Important

How you say “NO” is very important...

- **AGGRESSIVE**: You will damage the relationship
- **PASSIVE**: They won’t take you seriously
- **ASSERTIVE**: They’ll take you seriously and you won’t damage the relationship
Saying “NO” – The process

• Give a reason
• Be diplomatic
• Suggest a trade-off
• Don’t put off your decision
Final Minute Tips
Do The Worst Thing First
Theme Your Day

• Batch your work with recurring themes for different days of the week and parts of each day
  – Requisition processing
  – Solicitation development
  – Solicitation evaluation
  – Contract administration
  – Contract extensions & renewals
  – Personal development & training
  – Meeting with internal customers
Indicators of Effective Time Management

Your Adding Value

You start each day with the Most Important Task

You keep your Energy High

You realize Time Management is Hard Work
Questions