

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TIME MANAGEMENT AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

Ph.D. Student Ioana Cătălina GHÎȚĂ
Valahia University of Târgoviște, Romania
E-mail: ghita.i.catalina@gmail.com

Abstract: *We live in a society of speed in which time, or better said its lack has become one of the most important sources of stress. Deadlines, communication „on the run”, increasingly busy agendas (coupled with a lack of manager’s will to change them) require a new approach. The support elements that come from a growing science, „Time management”, are great in reducing stress and preparing the body to the action of exogenous factors. Time management helps us to have some control over life, both in professional and personal life. It is essential to focus on results, so we can identify what activities contribute to our efficiency and what are the activities that waste our time and distract us from the proposed goals.*

Keywords: *time, stress, behaviour, time management.*

JEL Classification: *I15, J24, O15.*

1. Introduction

Almost one hundred years ago, the author who has set the basis of the scientific management, Frederick Taylor, was postulating the principle of “keeping strict evidence of time and labor quoting”, making a giant step towards the increase of the efficiency within an organization. Management means efficient and forcible leadership for a certain activity. From this perspective, the manager cannot do profitable business for the activity he is responsible if he does not know how to efficiently manage his resources. And time is a valuable, assertive, and irreversible economic resource.

Time compression is a more and more frequent topic of discussion, and the argument through which this theory stands up is the lack of time to successfully carry out all the activities we have set ourselves for a given day.

The bigger and bigger changes occurring around us every day which bring about greater and greater challenges through the adaptations they require create the impression of time compression.

There truly is a continuous flow of time, the way we handle this dimension can generate the impression of time flowing at an immeasurable speed. The fact that we cannot control time makes us more and more stressed as well as more and more frustrated.

2. Time – the most valuable resource

The time is our most valuable resource: whatever we do, we need time; time cannot be enhanced; time cannot be stored; time cannot be bought; success depends in a high degree on the way we manage our time.

We spend a great part of our lives going to work, solving the tasks required by our job before going home and handling problems generated by time, trying to solve all our duties outside our professional life.

Time management helps us obtain, to a certain extent, control over both our professional and personal life. It is essential to focus on the results as, in this way, we will be able to identify the activities which contribute to our efficiency and also the activities which waste our time and distract us from our attaining goals.

The key to a good time management rests in understanding the difference between urgent and important.

The urgent tasks require immediate attention, but our actions might not count, regardless of whether we offer our attention or not.

The important tasks matter, as ignoring them might lead to severe consequences upon ourselves or other people.

For example: answering our phone is urgent, regularly going to the dentist is important, picking up the kids from the kindergarten is both urgent and important, checking Facebook or reading funny emails is neither urgent nor important.

This distinction between what is urgent and what is important helps us prioritize the activities in our everyday lives whether we are at work or at home.

In order to organize our tasks, we can use a priority matrix.

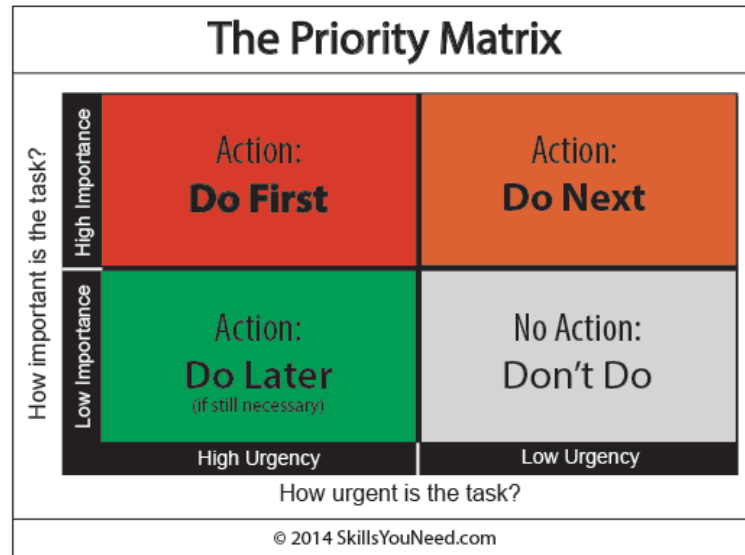


Figure no. 1. The priority matrix

Source: Skills You Need, 2018. *Time Management Skills*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/time-management.html>> [Accessed 14 July 2018].

In an interview, Peter Drucker expresses his regret regarding the way he uses his time: „if I look back, my greatest frustrations are, probably, in retrospective, that is, as I later understood, too often have I considered a priority what is urgent and, as a result, I have never got to write some of the books I should have written. I have written books which were urgent, or I have taught things which needed to be taught in that very moment, rather than the things necessary for the past five years. I wanted to be a sprinter rather than a marathon runner. However, this is something I have understood only later” - Peter F. Drucker, interview with reverend James Flammig, 1989 (Maciariello, 2016, pp.77-78).

Is there any connection between time and stress? There can only be one answer: YES.

3. Time – an important, stress generating resource

Time is the most important source of stress. It has been demonstrated that there are important connections between the presence of ‚stressors’ generated by time and lack of professional satisfaction, as well as a series of illnesses like: high blood pressure, premature ageing, high cholesterol levels and so on. In the case of faulty time management, stress manifests itself in subtle yet various manners, people subjected to stress tending to accentuate their usual behavior: the more shy individuals become shier and more uncommunicative, and the ones who prefer solitude will be more avoidant of social interactions. The ones who work late, will work much later overtime. Aside from these, there may appear also sleep disfunctionalities, isolation from the other members of

the organization, substance abuse. All these lead to the decrease of efficiency and an even worse time management.

Temporary presence of time ‘stressors’ can be, in some cases, an important motivating factor, the individual wanting to accomplish his or her tasks, their accomplishment bringing greater satisfaction than in the instance where stress-causing factors would be lacking (Corodeanu, 2005).

The studies elaborated along the years (Mintzberg in 1973, Vinton in 1992, Stalk&Hout in 1990, Kahn & Byasiere in 1992) (Whetten and Cameron, 2002) have pinpointed the most common sources of stress: time, meetings, unwanted situations and anticipation. The four categories of stress-causing factors are illustrated in the table below:

Table no. 1 - The four time-related stress sources

Stress-causing factor	Sources of stress
Time	Over strung work, losing control over the time
Meetings	Role conflicts, conflicts between the debates, actions
Situation	Bad work conditions, sudden changes in the organizational climate
Anticipation	Pleasant surprises, fear

Source: Whetten, D. and Cameron, K., 2002. *Developing management skills*. Boston: Prentice Hall, p.113.

Stress, a problem and responsibility of both employer and the employee, is considered the second most frequent health problem connected to one’s work in Europe, the most frequent being illnesses of the bones and muscles. The costs connected to the mental health disorders covered by the Companies surpass 200 billion Euros per year. Faultily conceiving, organizing and managing the activities, as well as inappropriate social context within the workspace hold psychosocial risks and can have negative effects on a psychological, physical or social level, as well as stress within the workspace, exhaustion or depression (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2018).

What are the causes which lead to the development of stress in the workplace?

There is no such thing as the perfect workplace. Whatever career we might choose, whatever job we might have, we will face the problem of adjusting or modifying our expectations. Almost any job we might have this can be a source of stress. Almost any job we might have is a source of stress. The way in which we view our job determines the amount of stress which will affect us.

Stress affects individuals differently, but there are a number of situations which normally lead to occupational stress. The most common stress-generating factors within the workplace are (Goliszek, 1998, p.39; Vişan, p.23):

- Being unable to schedule time;
- Lack of time organization;
- Conflicts with colleagues or managers;
- The role within the organization: overwhelming tasks, ambiguity of the role, role-conflict;
- Characteristics of the organizational environment: contaminants, temperature, noise;
- Extra-organizational characteristics: the distance between home and the workplace;
- Legislation changes;
- Organizational characteristics: evaluation and communication systems, rythm of the changes;

- Job uncertainty;
- Lack of necessary qualifications in order to fulfill some tasks;
- The feeling that the work is overwhelming;
- Too much or too little responsibility;
- Deadlines which cannot be kept;
- Communication excess (too many emails, conference calls, foreign language communication);
- Time issues (time zone difference, frequent business trips);
- Cultural and linguistic differences;
- Loss of orientation in the transition period;
- Incapacity to adapt to changes within the daily routine;
- boredom;
- Incapacity of using our own abilities;
- Lack of collaboration with the management;
- Value incompatibility: this occurs when people have a career which comes into contradiction with their own values and beliefs;
- Our activity is dull or it lacks challenges;
- Lack of team-spirit promoting etc.

The three methods of time streamlining and, implicitly, of stress reduction are: Organization; Prioritization; Planning.

Planning techniques: Mind mapping (A mind map is a diagram used to visually organize information. A mind map is hierarchical and shows relationships among pieces of the whole. It is often created around a single concept, drawn as an image in the center of a blank page, to which associated representations of ideas such as images, words and parts of words are added. Major ideas are connected directly to the central concept, and other ideas branch out from those); Spreadsheet (columns for key areas / timelines / deadlines / costs / other details); SWOT analysis for the evaluation of the objectives.

Presentation of time management plan:

- Give up the strive to plan absolutely everything. The attempt to plan each minute can become a waste of time and can become counterproductive;
- Do not overtake to many tasks at once;
- Delegate;
- Be creative;
- Be flexible;
- Take breaks;
- Be ready to give up your list;
- Use the technology at hand as much as possible.

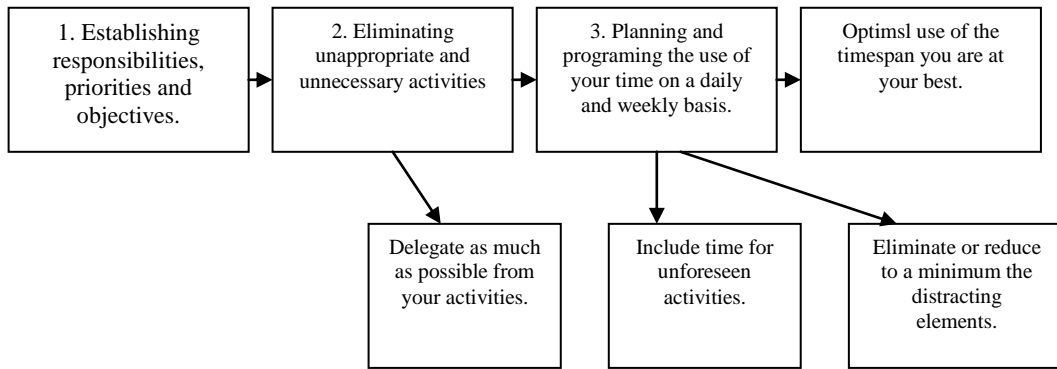


Figure no. 2. Time management plan

Source: Center for Career Development, 2018. *Managementul timpului*. [pdf] Available at: <http://www.dezvoltarea-carierai.com/media/files/Time_management_-curs.pdf> [Accessed 14 July 2018].

Solutions to prevent stress and create a good psychosocial work environment:

- Ensure workers have enough time and autonomy to manage their work;
- Clarify roles and tasks, providing regular constructive feedback;
- Inform workers about change and involve the, in decision-making;
- Implement policies to prevent harassment and violence;
- Ensure fair work distribution and reward;
- Facilitate open and two-way communication.

A few pieces of advice for making the best of the time available:

- Make time for work, it is the key to success;
- Make time for thinking, it is the source of power;
- Make time for playing, it is the secret of eternal youth;
- Make time for love, it is the pleasure of life;
- Make time for reading, it is the fountain of wisdom;
- Make time for friends, it is the road to happiness;
- Make time for laughing, it is the music of the soul.

4. Conclusions

Stress is a multi-faceted phenomenon with multiple causes and requires a systematic approach to its identification and management. It is a growing issue in the workplace especially due to the current economic downturn but it is also an issue that can be prevented and reduced so it does not become detrimental to workers' health. Employers will gain in performance improvements if employees are able to give their best and do not feel under constant unbearable pressure. Ample guidance and stress risk assessment tools are freely available to employers to support them in managing stress effectively.

I personally consider that, in the current conditions and with the attention channeled upon this syndrome, the problem o stress in the workplace will be diminished over time, It is important that each of us helps in this endeavor, adopts a more positive attitude and try to reduce stress at a personal level, as change begins with oneself.

References:

1. Center for Career Development, 2018. *Managementul timpului*. [pdf] Available at: <http://www.dezvoltarea-carierai.com/media/files/Time_management_-curs.pdf> [Accessed 14 July 2018].

2. Corodeanu, D.T., 2005. Time management or techniques or instruments for efficient time saving. *Scientific Annals of the „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iași, Tome LII/LIII*, Economical Sciences, 2005-2006. [pdf] Available at: <http://anale.feaa.uaic.ro/anale/resurse/27_Corodeanu_DT_-_Managementul_timpului_sau_tehnici_si_instrumente_pt_a_economisi_eficient_timpul.pdf> [Accessed 14 July 2018].
3. European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2018. *Psychosocial risk and stress at work*. [online] Available at: <<https://osha.europa.eu/en/themes/psychosocial-risks-and-stress>> [Accessed 14 July 2018].
4. Goliszek, A., 1998. *Overcome Stress*. Bucharest: Teora Publishing.
5. Ionescu, C.R. and Trifu, A., 1998. *Approach to stress management in the microeconomical environment*. Iași: Pim Publishing House.
6. Legislația Muncii.ro, 2018. *Sănătatea în muncă, modalități de combatere a stresului la locul de muncă*. [online] Available at: <<http://legislatiamuncii.manager.ro/a/9359/sanatatea-in-munca-modalitati-de-combatere-a-stresului-la-locul-de-munca.html>> [Accessed 14 July 2018].
7. Maciariello, J.A., 2016. *Peter Drucker, Training Course for Managers. 52 weeks of coaching for intelligent leadership*. Bucharest: Litera Publishing House.
8. Skills You Need, 2018. *Time Management Skills*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/time-management.html>> [Accessed 14 July 2018].
9. Vișan, D., 2014. *Communication Problems - Stress Source for Teachers*. Bucharest: Sfântul Ierarh Nectarie Publishing House.
10. Whetten, D. and Cameron, K., 2002. *Developing management skills*. Boston: Prentice Hall.