Time Management Activities

Try one of these:

The Jar

Divide the group into teams and give them each a large glass container. The object is to fill their containers with as much material as they can. The material can be rocks, stones, gravel, sand etc.. (But you can use anything.) The larger materials should be placed in the container first and then followed by the next to the largest, and so on… In this order you should be able to fit the most into the container.

You can come to your own conclusion for the activity based on your need. The rocks (due to size) would be the most important items to complete. (Can be home activities…work/life balance.) Then stones would be every day has to finish items. Gravel can be the projects that need completed. Sand could be the extra work that was just assigned to you.

I allow the groups to fill their own container without detailed instructions. I tell them to fill their containers with as much materials as they can. And then we talk about the order they selected. If they had an order…and what the materials represents to them…etc. I use this communication to lead into training.

Posted on LinkedIn by Darlene Bailey

For a video that exemplifies this exercise, click here or here.

$86,400

Tell participants they have $86,400.00 to spend anyway they wish. The only restrictions are that they cannot bank any money and if they do not use any of the money they lose it. We then discuss why and how they spent the money the way they did. I then tell them that 86400 are the number of seconds we have each day and that as often as possible they should consider spending their time on things that are important to them as they did with their money.

Posted on LinkedIn by Joseph Argenio

Ribbon of Life

Take a colored ribbon length approximately 1 meter/100 cms and scissors.
Start with the following questions:

If the life span of an individual say 100 years each cm is one year. The response will be no only 70 to 75 years, then cut 25 cms of the ribbon and throw away say its 75 years.
What is the average age of the participants sitting here, response would be 25 to 30 depends on the group, in that case cut another 25 cms of the ribbon say that is gone you cannot do anything.
What is left is 50 years? People will say, "Yes," but the answer is NO.
Every year we have 52 weeks, that is 52 Sundays. If we multiply that by 50 years, it comes to 7.14 years. Reduce the ribbon by another 7.14 cms. We also usually have Saturdays off, so reduce another 7. cms.
Public/National holidays are 10 multiple with 50 years. That comes to another 1.5 years. Reduce ribbon by an other 1.5 cms.
Your casual leave, sick leave and annual holidays approx. 40 days a year, multiplied by 50. Cut off another 5 cms. Now you are left with about 29.5 years. But, the calculation is not over yet.
You sleep average 8 hour daily multiple with 365 days an again by 50 years (i.e. 122 days X 50 = almost 17 years). Cut off another 17 cms.
You spend time eating lunch, breakfast, snacks and dinner total 2 hours daily (i.e. 30 days a year X 50 years= 4 years or so). Cut off another 4 cms.
Last, let's figure we spend about 1 hour a day traveling from place to place for activities and such. (that's about 2 more years). We're down to 6 (SIX) years of life to make it or break it.
ALL THE BEST TO MAKE BEST USE OF THAT (SIX) YEARS.

Posted on LinkedIn by Joseph Antony

Time Management Icebreaker – Lists & Priorities

Explanation

Divide participants into teams of five to eight. Unveil the numbered list of tasks. Explain that they have ten minutes to collect as many points as possible. They must be safe and they only have ten minutes!

Activity

Give participants ten minutes to perform their tasks, and enjoy the show! After ten minutes, add up their points using your pre-designed matrix and announce the winner. Keep the list of tasks; you may want to tape it to the wall.

Debrief

After the activity, discuss learning points. Possible discussion topics include:

How did teams decide what tasks they wanted to do? Most groups will analyze the time the task will take and/or the difficulty level, compare it with the value (possible number of points), and prioritize as a result. We do this when managing our time, too: we often choose the high-yield, low-effort tasks over the low-yield, high-effort tasks (and rightly so!).

Are any decisions based on task dependencies? For the name card task, for example, teams received bonus points if they used team nicknames. Performing these two tasks together would triple the points received. This often happens in life, too – batching tasks increases your results exponentially.

What group dynamics came into play? If participants knew each other before, they may feel more comfortable performing a personally risky activity, like singing a song. This comes into play when prioritizing tasks, too; we're more likely to stay within our comfort zone, especially if we're working in a team.

Preparation

Write out the following list on a piece of flip chart paper. Ensure that it stays covered until the end of the activity explanation.

Do a lap around the room (5 points)
Create something for the instructor to wear, such as a hat or tie (10 points; bonus 5 points if the instructor actually wears it)
Find out something unique about each person on the team (5 points)
Sing a song together (15 points)
Make a paper airplane and throw it from one end of the room to another (10 points)
Get everyone in the room to sign a single piece of paper (5 points)
Count the number of pets owned by your group (20 points)
Assign a nickname to each member of the team (5 points)
Create name cards for each team member (5 points; bonus 5 points if you use your team nicknames)
Make a tower out of the materials owned by your group (10 points)
Convince a member of another team to join you (20 points)
Name your team and come up with a slogan (5 points for the name, 5 points for the slogan)
Re-create the sounds of the Amazon rainforest with the sounds of your voices (10 points)
Make a list of what your team wants out of the workshop (15 points)
Form a conga line and conga from one end of the room to another (5 points; bonus 10 points if anyone joins you)

You can customize this list as you wish; just make sure there is a point value (which is completely up to you) assigned to each item.

Posted on LinkedIn by Rasha Alshafie

Blind Polygon

Set up: Depending on your group size you may have to divide your group into teams of 9 -15 players. Blindfold each person. (NOTE: If you have more people than blindfolds then require them to close their eyes. Let them know that trust and integrity are key to a successful outcome.)

The Challenge: Place a length of rope in the center of the circle. Explain that their task is to form the rope into a shape of your choosing–a square, a "Z," or a pentagon. Everyone must be in contact with the rope at all times and they must use the entire rope. No tangles or knots are allowed. When the group feels they have made whatever shape you specified they can set it on the ground and take their blindfolds off.

Debrief: During the event you will see all sorts of personality styles, leadership styles, communication styles and a definite pecking order. Regarding Time Management, the group's process is often very hectic. You can discuss team time management or use the experience as a metaphor for personal time management, asking "what is the most efficient way to accomplish a task?" The group will find that when they are deprived of sight, their normal their normal ways of accomplishing a task are thrown into confusion. As part of your debrief talk about what process they would use if they were to do the exercise again. This is also a great processing tool for management training because I can assure what happens when they are blindfolded will not be what happens at the office.

Posted on LinkedIn by Larry Riggs

"Big Picture" Puzzle Challenge

The Challenge: Divide your group into teams. Give each team a puzzles with similar level of difficulty. Don't give them the "Big Picture" of what it will look like when completed.

Push them to complete the puzzle as quickly as possible. Interrupt the process after about 3 minutes and ask, "What's missing? What's making this difficult?" Likely they will identify the absence of the completed "Big Picture" to use as a guide. After you give them the big picture, ask them to complete the puzzle. They will do this much faster now.

Debrief: Explain that having the perspective andclarity of the Big Pic helps one to plan weekly and day-to-day activities

much more effectively. If NO Big Picture is available, then time is spent on urgencies, likes and what others want one to do.

Posted on LinkedIn by Ajit Kamath

How long is a minute?

At the beginning of session I ask people to close their eyes for 30 seconds and after that to open it. Nobody can watch the clock and I don't measure the time. All I ask of participants is to open their eyes after what they believe has been 30 seconds.

Of course, they all open them at different times. Afterwards, we talk about our understanding of time. Even though everyone has an equal (24 hours a day or 30 seconds for excercise), in fact, we experience it and use it in different ways. Some of us experienced it as a short period, other as a long. This always works as a good opener.

Posted on LinkedIn by Darko Todorovic

Another more physical variation of this exercise was Posted on LinkedIn by *Prasad Narayan Susarla.* He wrote: Cover all the clocks in the room, then ask participants to remove their wrist watches and stand up. Instruct them to sit down when they think 1 minute has elapsed after you shout "Start" to begin the countdown. You will be surprised with the results. Just enjoy the fun that follows this activity. To make it more interesting I run this same activity a second time wherein I change the time to 2 minutes.

Time Squared

I give the participants 3 pages with 24 squares (representing 24 hours of a day) printed on them at various phases of the program. For the more finicky ones I have a sheet that further divides the Hour Square into 4 Quarters.

1) Hand the 1st page to them immediately after setting the context. Ask them to fill the squares (based on the time they spend) and label them with **routine activities** of their regular day like sleeping (6 hours = 6 squares), bathing, eating, travel, TV time etc.

2) Hand the 2nd page out after you've discussed "Time Wasters." This time, ask them to fill the squares based on the time they spend on **non-reproductive time at their workplace** like tea-breaks, water cooler chats, personal telephone calls and emails etc.

3) Late in the day, distribute the 3rd page. Ask them to collate the data from "Page 1″ and "Page 2″ on the 3rd Page. The empty squares represent their productive time. Using the 3rd page the participants are asked to identify activities from which they can Mine Time to increase their productive time.

Learning outcome : Identify time wasters and time spent on routine activities. Where to mine for time.

Posted on LinkedIn by Prasad Narayan Susarla

Ace of Spades

This exercise requires two volunteers and two decks of playing cards. I give one deck of cards to each volunteer and then have them race to find the Ace of Spades. What they don't know is that one deck is in order Ace – King, in the correct suits, and all facing the same direction. The other deck is all mixed up and some cards are facing forwards and some backwards making it a lot harder to find the Ace of Spades. They have fun racing, but usually the person with the mixed deck gets frustrated or complains that it's not fair. It's fun and a good way to relate good organization skills to time management.

Posted on LinkedIn by Clay Pennington

The Money Value of Time

If you only have one hour – and especially for a business audience – focus on creating a new conceptual mindset called the "money value of time." Have participants break down their activities into cost and profit centers, and then focus on investing their time in those activities that yield the highest value for them personally and for the firm.

Posted on LinkedIn by Tim Phillips