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Time

Here are some basic rules on time management: Tell people how you want them to work with you, or how to use your time. Return the favor, treat their time as you want your time treated. No meetings without agenda. No long documents without a short summary. Make sure you know what is expected of you.

Stefan Töpfer, CEO and Chairman of Winweb

What time management skills do you use?

Learning objectives: Unit 15

Business communication skills

Discussing time management; Fluency: Talking about decisions and plans; Asking and answering questions about time management techniques

Reading Article about wasting time at work; Article about working without clocks

Listening A conversation about a delayed project; A talk on time management

Phrase bank Talking about time

Vocabulary Time collocations, Working conditions

Grammar going to, going to vs will

In company interviews

Units 13–15

1 Add vowels to make collocations with *money* and *time*.

s p _ n d		
s _ v _		
w _ s t _		money / time
h _ v _		
_ n v _ s t		

2 Complete the sentences using words from 1. Are they true for you?

- a At work, I _____ a lot of time on the phone and answering emails.
- b I plan my day carefully. If you prepare things well, you can _____ a lot of time.
- c I don't _____ much time for myself, but when I do, I like to get some exercise.
- d Computers should make you more efficient, but they can also make you _____ time.

3 Discuss the following questions with a partner.

- a Some people say 'Time is money'. Do you agree?
- b What do you think of Stefan Töpfer's basic rules of time management? Are there any you disagree with?
- c How aware do you need to be of time in your job? Do you have the same routine every day?
- d Could you work without a watch or clocks?

4 Read the article and answer these questions.

- a How did AOL try life without time?
- b What was the aim of the experiment?
- c Why do companies use time as a measure of productivity?
- d Why is the normal working timetable (nine to five) inefficient?
- e What was the result of the experiment?

Life without time

How dependent are we on time? Is life without clocks less stressful? One company decided to find out. At AOL, they removed all the clocks from their UK headquarters. Then everybody carried on working as usual.

They wanted to investigate how pressure of time can lead to stress, and to see how an environment without clocks would affect productivity. They say that time is money, and most companies use time to control their activities because it is easy to measure. On the other hand, humans have a biological clock which doesn't necessarily correspond to the standard eight-hour working day. We are more productive in the morning, and then our efficiency tends to drop off after lunch. So, if you're feeling hungry, why not have something to eat instead of waiting for the lunch break? Or, if you've finished your work, don't hang on until it's time to clock off, just go home.

So, what happens when you rely on your own body clock instead of artificial deadlines? According to one worker, 'Most people carried on as normal, although some took advantage of the opportunity to have an early lunch.' Another said 'This is great. It makes sense to be able to work when you need to and leave the office when you don't.' On the other hand, one secretary found the experience 'disorientating'. However, one office manager was in no doubt: 'Thank goodness we are going to bring the clocks back tomorrow. Make no mistake, a clockless office leads to chaos. Some people may be less stressed without clocks, but you need to know where people are and when, and meetings, for example, can last forever if you don't have a time limit.'

5 Find words and phrases in the article in 4 which mean the same as the following:

- a** continue _____
- b** result in _____
- c** quantify _____
- d** fall quickly _____
- e** wait _____

6 Complete the sentences with the words and phrases in 5.

- a** Time management methods _____ unnecessary stress.
- b** In some businesses, it is difficult to _____ efficiency.
- c** When you have to make a decision, it's best to _____ until the last minute.
- d** If you _____ in the same job for a long time, you lose interest.
- e** The amount of activity in an office _____ on a Friday afternoon.

7 Which of the sentences in 6 do you agree with? Discuss with a partner.

8 Look at this sentence from the article in 4 and answer the questions.

Thank goodness we are going to bring the clocks back tomorrow.

- a** Does the sentence refer to the past, present or future?
- b** Which of the following is closest in meaning to *we are going to bring the clocks back*?
We would like to bring the clocks back ...
We intend to bring the clocks back ...
We have to bring the clocks back ...

9 Plan how you are going to spend your next working day. Then explain your plans to your partner like this.

At 9.00, when I arrive at work, I'm going to check my email. Then ...

The new database

1 Match the words and phrases (a–d) with the definitions (1–4).

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| a deadline | 1 late |
| b delay | 2 point in time by which something must be done |
| c behind schedule | 3 a hold-up |
| d time frame | 4 period in which something is expected to happen |

2  **2.18** Listen to the conversation and answer the questions.

- a** What problem is the conversation about?
- b** When was the system supposed to be online?
- c** When is it going to be ready now?
- d** What do you think of the IT technician's attitude?

3  **2.18** Listen again and complete the phrases with one word for each gap. Contractions count as one word.

- a** We're worried because it's _____.
- b** Well, yes, I'm sorry about _____, but there have been some problems ...
- c** ... the system was supposed to be online last October. You _____, and it's now February.
- d** ... not compatible with the new design. That means we have a _____.
- e** What do you mean? How _____?
- f** Are you saying that _____ for all this is now next October?
- g** Can you guarantee that you're giving us priority on this? Will _____?

- 4** Complete the phrases so they are true for you. Then compare your ideas with a partner.
- a** It takes me _____ to get to work in the morning.
 - b** I _____ meet my deadlines.
 - c** In my company we _____ time frames for getting things done.
 - d** When people are not on time for meetings _____.
 - e** IT projects _____ behind schedule.
 - f** At work the schedules for projects are _____.
 - g** When things are delayed I _____.
 - h** In my country, _____ on time.

Wasting time

- 1** Match the words to make four common collocations.

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| a bottom | 1 balance |
| b delicate | 2 caught |
| c get | 3 time |
| d waste | 4 line |

- 2** Use the collocations in 1 to complete the introduction to an article.

Wasting time at work

Lots of people are so afraid of getting caught, they never (a) _____ at work. They work the entire eight hours. They are right to be afraid. There is a (b) _____ between not doing any work and doing too much. The (c) _____ is you must get your work done. If you start wasting hours at a time, you'll (d) _____. To be an effective time waster, you have to find small ways to eat up time. Remember, you can't waste the company's time if you don't work for the company. However, with a little effort, no one will ever know how little you do.



- 3** Here are the headings from the rest of the article. What tips do you think the author gives under each heading?

- Be sloppy
- The computer
- The Internet
- Office conversations
- Meetings

- 4** Look at page 142 to see what the author recommends.

- 5** Complete the sentences with words or phrases from the text on page 142 that mean the same as the words in brackets.

- a** 'Your papers are _____. 'Yes, but I know where everything is, so don't touch anything.' (untidy)
- b** Before making an important call, you should _____ time to prepare for it. (reserve)
- c** I only use the Internet to get specific information. I don't have time to _____ the Web. (move around from link to link with no particular aim)
- d** My job requires a lot of _____, so I need a good Internet connection. (information searching)
- e** People who always _____ and agree with everything are no use at all. (move head up and down)