



You only have 24 hours

By DR. LARRY COLE

As many of you know, time is one of our most precious and expensive resources. Calculate how much it costs the dealership to keep you employed per hour. Then do the same to determine the cost to run the dealership per hour. Research suggests that we lose 25 – 30 percent of our day to timewasters attributed to people issues, which doesn't include the loss of efficiency due to sloppy processes. A dealership with which we worked estimated a loss of 45 percent because the body was not communicating with the left and right hands. A total mess.

I'm currently facilitating a course for a manufacturer and was told about the bad habit of people showing up late for meetings. Just imagine how much money that costs when several people are waiting while others are disrespecting their time. Our sessions start on time and I put a sign on the door to please enter quietly after 8 a.m.

Given that we have a finite number of hours per day, there is tremendous variability as to how much people can achieve given the number of hours. The secret is how we manage our time. For example, a vice president complains about his workload and has to catch up on emails into the late evening hours. But he is known to walk the halls engaging others in chitchat. Not only is he wasting his time, but that of his fellow workers. These behaviors become rituals and become hard to see as timewasters.

Here are pet peeves of mine: not completing paperwork on time or submitting paperwork that doesn't include all the needed information. Just think about the time wasted with this simple and inconsiderate act. Ouch, that hurt.

Based on my work within dealerships, we've identified 40 timewasters that are common to many dealerships. Moreover, we're confident we don't have all of them listed. We use this content to help dealerships develop strategies to minimize or eliminate these expensive habits.

Common sense tells us that employees should be focused on making life easier and more successful for everyone rather than doing those things that cost us time and money. Your goal should be to create a corporate culture so that you've got every set of eyes looking for opportunities to eliminate timewasters and maximize performance.

Smart people maximize their use of time

I've included in this article the infamous time management matrix that was created by Steven Covey, author of the popular book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. I've embellished Covey's matrix by adding the estimated time we should spend in each category.

The Time Management Matrix

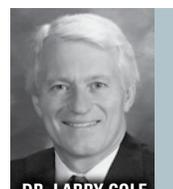
		Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	I 10%	Crises Pressing problems Deadline-driven projects Results Stress, burnout, crisis management Always putting out fires	II 80% Principle-centered Planning Results Vision, perspective Balance, discipline Control, few crises
	III 9%	Interruption Some phone calls Results Sees goals and plans as worthless Shallow relationships Feel out of control, victimized	IV <1% Trivia, busy work Phone calls Total Irresponsibility Fired from jobs Dependent on others for basics
Not Important			

Source: The Time Management Matrix is from *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Steven Covey. The matrix is reprinted with permission of Franklin Covey Co., Salt Lake City, Utah.

As you know, a tool only works when it is put to use. You can complete a time management audit. That is, at 15-minute intervals, take one minute to record what you are doing and the category in which it fits. What do you think I hear upon offering this suggestion? You're right. I don't have the time.

It's been said that to get something done you give it to a busy person because they know how to get things done. Yes, this is an often-used strategy, but let me offer you a warning. Using that strategy basically punishes the high performers and allows the lower performers to be low performers. Thus, you're setting a new standard for the lower performers and burning out the higher ones. That doesn't make a lot of sense, does it?

Brian Moran offers an excellent idea in his book, *12 Week Year*. This author suggests compressing what we want to achieve in 52 weeks into 12-week blocks of time. He further suggests deciding what is to be achieved within each quarter and schedule what must be done for the four weeks of the first month. You continue this process for the following months. Planning it is the easy part. Staying focused on achieving the weekly objectives is the challenging part. For just a moment, think about the production that could be achieved by spending 80 percent of your time achieving your weekly objectives.



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I've heard this excuse before too – we don't have the time to spend 80 percent of our time achieving our weekly objectives. The truth is, most people don't know what they are to achieve within a five-day work week other than repeat what was done yesterday. When that's the case, then anything you get done is okay, right?

Pattern of organization

As you can tell by my writing, I'm very structured.

Getting things done is simple:

1. **Decide** what must be done.
2. **Schedule** the time to do it. (I believe if we want to do something we will find a way if we look for it.)
3. **Execute.** Do whatever needs to be done within the defined timeline.

Let me approach this subject from the empowerment standpoint. Supervisors are consistently doing things that down-line staff should be doing. I listened to a dealer principal explain how to repair a piece of equipment. That explanation lasted about five minutes. Subsequent to that interaction, I asked the owner why he did not refer the technician to the service manager. The response: "It's faster if I just tell him." I couldn't help but won-

der why this technician didn't go to the service manager initially? What is being taught to the technician... and who is doing the teaching?

Let me conclude by saying, you can quickly be inundated with more ideas about how to manage your time than you could possibly put into place with just a few clicks of your mouse. But here's the real deal.

- First, you've got to become aware that time management is an issue for you.
- Second, you've got to be willing to accept the responsibility that you are creating your own problem.
- Third, you've got to develop the plan to maximize the use of your time.
- Fourth, exert the necessary self-discipline to execute a time-management plan. As you know, creating a new habit to replace an old one takes concerted effort.

My last bit of advice is important to consider: If you're not willing to manage your time to maximize your performance, then don't complain about being too busy. **WED**

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