



Minnesota Women of Today

Leadership Toolbox – Time Management Skills

Time management is the process of planning, organizing, and regulating your time to efficiently meet deadlines. It's about being deliberate with how you spend your time, differentiating between being busy and being productive. It's about balancing work, family, and social obligations. By providing visibility and connecting daily activities to overall objectives, we prevent missed deadlines and improve effectiveness. At the same time, we increase productivity and reduce stress.



The 4 Keys to Minnesota Women of Today Time Management

Effective time management strategies involve planning and prioritizing, focusing by minimizing distractions, learning to say no, and incorporating regular breaks and self-care to prevent burnout. Use the 4 keys to MNWT Time management to help you succeed.

M: Minimizing Distractions

N: Learn to Say "No"

W: Well-being

T: To-Do Lists

➤ **M: Minimizing Distractions**

View time management as decision-making and self-protection against interruptions. Take time to identify and remove interruptions. **Focus on one single activity at a time and avoid multi-tasking.** When we focus on one activity at a time it not only reduces our workload, but it also reduces the amount of time needed to complete it.

- Step One: Schedule time each week to focus on Women of Today Activities. Add this to your calendar and prioritize this as work time without distractions. This can be an hour twice a week, a few hours once a week, or whatever scheduling works best for you. Some may have a Women of Today "word day" once or twice a month where they will spend 6 hours focusing on tasks. Others may only need an hour every week. It all depends on your available time and what you say "yes" to.
- Step Two: find a quiet space to work. Avoid other distractions and tasks outside of what is scheduled using your To-do list.
- Step Three: put your phone away. Mute notifications. Do not check your email or perform other activities outside of your planned focus.

➤ **N: Learn to Say "No"**

When we continuously say "yes" because we feel something needs to be done and no one else is stepping up, we can create more harm than good. It is better to do one or two things well versus five or six things rushed or incomplete. It is okay to let things go, to

delegate to others, to give up creative control and allow change. Saying “no” can cause a physical and emotional reaction in many.

- Learning to say "no" involves shifting your mindset to value your own time.
- **Setting boundaries makes your "yes" more meaningful.**
- A simple "no thank you" is fine.
- To avoid over-explaining try “I can't commit to that right now.”
- Use “No” to manage and reduce unnecessary meetings and tasks.

➤ **W: Well-being**

Prioritizing your own wellbeing helps to maintain energy and prevent burnout. This ensures you can tackle important tasks efficiently. Are you doing things that interest you, support personal learning, cooperation, and calm? When things become overwhelming it's time to reevaluate and focus on your physical and mental well-being. A few ideas to support well-being include;

- Schedule short breaks to recharge; they boost performance. Try a five-minute dance party or simply get up and stretch.
- Proper rest is crucial for mental function. Naps are okay.
- Remember to eat and stay hydrated.
- Practicing mindfulness like deep breathing or meditation.
- Focus on positivity and gratitude.

➤ **To-Do List**

Become more effective by creating a to-do list and categorizing tasks to focus on what truly matters. Start with a prioritized list of essential tasks. Delegate or eliminate unnecessary tasks. Consider setting SMART goals for specific duties/projects that involve several tasks. Then divide the large tasks into smaller, manageable steps. Schedule specific time slots for tasks in your calendar to create focus.

- Step One: Clearly define what needs to be done and rank tasks by using a three-tiered focus.
 - ✓ Urgent: Tasks requiring immediate attention that have significant consequences.
 - ✓ Important: Tasks crucial for long-term success, growth, and commitment.
 - ✓ Attention Needed: Tasks that demand attention but don't contribute to your goals.
- Step Two: Based on its ranking, schedule specific blocks of time for specific tasks in your calendar. Create daily/weekly/monthly plans, use calendars, and break large tasks into smaller steps. Tackling difficult or unpleasant tasks first can reduce stress in the long run.
- Step Three: Regularly check how you spend your time and refine your strategies. Regularly assess your schedule and methods, adjusting as needed.

Time management skills involve planning, prioritizing, and organizing your time to work effectively, meeting goals, and reducing stress. By using the techniques in the 4 Keys to Women of Today Time Management helps balance your activities and time by focusing effort where it matters most. If you find yourself needing additional support, please contact the MNWT Chapter Management Vice President (CMVP) cmvp@mnwt.org.