Time management for the data processing professional

by J. F. TOWSEN
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

No longer can the Technical Professional ignore a day-to-day interface with peer groups from within the Organization. The advent of newer—smaller and faster—operating systems have made the user a new partner in the development of the Corporate Data Processing Strategies.

But with this new role of partner came a new and different type problem for our technical professional. A new problem called TIME MANAGEMENT.

When they started to become more involved in the BIG PICTURE, they started just like their peer groups to complain about:

Meetings
Interruptions
Lack of Planning
Visitors
Snap Decisions

Telephone
Postponed Decisions
Crisis Management
No Priorities
Peer Demands on Time

The story is always the same, someone or something is WASTING my TIME. But have you noticed how most people are reluctant to admit their own faults or shortcomings as the real TIME WASTERS.

Telephones and meetings are very important tools for the D. P. Professional. Ideas need to be exchanged, questions asked or answered.

And let’s not overlook the team members of this new partnership who can’t COMMUNICATE. Behind most every user-D. P. problem, is a breakdown in some form of communications. When will they ever realize how much time is lost as a result of poor communications, and TIME IS MONEY.

Up to this point I have dwelt on the Data Processor. But we must understand that they are no different than other managers, most of whom don’t know how to MANAGE their OWN TIME.

How many times have you seen major Data Processing projects go down to the wire or even come in late? Why does this happen? Why is all of this time and money wasted because of unnecessary reruns?

There are many reasons, but I do suggest that part of the problem comes from the D. P. Manager’s inability to manage the many demands on their time. The normal management functions such as planning, delegation, follow-up and communicating get lost in the fast pace of doing business.

And we can’t forget the cluttered desk and cluttered office. I believe in the saying “CLUTTERED DESK EQUALS CLUTTERED MIND.” I have seen MANY D. P. centers and for the most part they are cluttered.

Along with many other Managers, the D. P. Professional must develop some of the basic techniques of good TIME MANAGEMENT.

This seminar will help the manager to develop some of these techniques. We will consider some of the following:

1. Spend more time on FIRE PREVENTION and less on FIRE FIGHTING.
2. Spend 10 or 15 minutes reflecting on the day’s activity and planning for tomorrow.
3. Prepare a THINGS TO DO list detailing the major items to be accomplished tomorrow.
4. Don’t become involved in areas of responsibility directly assigned to others.
5. Consider a management by exception program. Only the important exceptions reach your desk and require your time, energy and ability.
6. LEARN TO SAY NO.
7. If your job entails dealing with outsiders, learn to control these interruptions. Always be in control of the situation.
8. Don’t spend all of your time “getting organized” only to find at the end of the day that nothing was accomplished.

And as part of the same seminar, we will look at how to get more out of our meetings, and how to “get an extra hour out of every day.”