

SESSION 5

BUILDING A COHESIVE TEAM

OVERVIEW

This session builds on yesterday's themes of supervisory styles and communication techniques, with an emphasis on working with groups rather than individuals. We will present essential concepts and skills for building and sustaining work groups. The session begins with an exercise to introduce team concepts and explore behaviors which help or hinder problem solving in groups. A second activity will explore group decision making, leadership, and team member roles. We'll observe groups at work and study behaviors that contribute to or obstruct group problem solving. How much did group members participate? How well did the team communicate? How did leadership emerge in the group? We'll explore the group dynamics issues we observed and experienced during the group activities. Later in the session, you'll self-select into groups to apply what you've learned to specific team-related issues in your own work.

We will also discuss the stages of group development. One of the most important functions of the group leader is to observe and interpret what happens as teams come together and grow more cohesive over time. What stages of development have you seen in your team, or in other groups? What motivates team members at each stage? How does diversity affect group development and motivation? What is the role of the supervisor as team leader during each developmental stage?

Finally, we will reflect individually on how well we are fulfilling our roles as team leaders in our projects back home.

OBJECTIVES

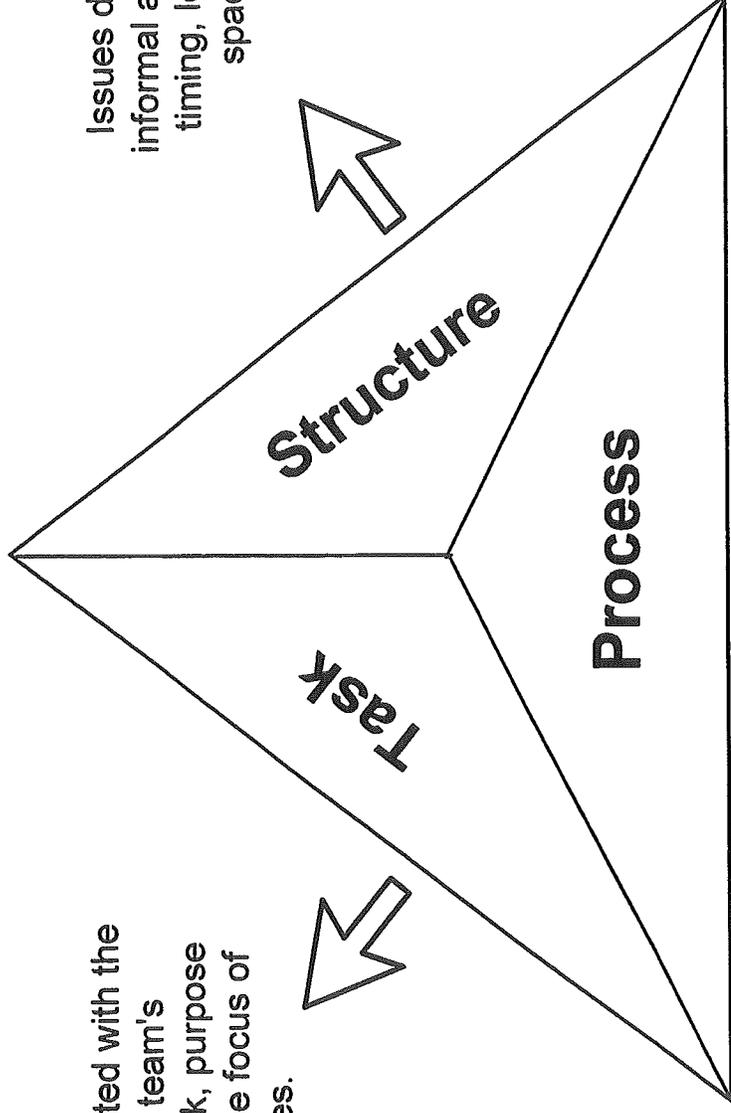
By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- ▶ Analyze group dynamics in terms of the roles team members typically play during group work and the ways decisions are made.
- ▶ Examine the relationship of group development to changes in motivation on the part of team members.
- ▶ Describe appropriate roles the supervisor should play in relation to the development stage of the team.
- ▶ Identify ways to use the diversity that exists among AmeriCorps members for building stronger teams.

VENUE Home Groups

Process Observation in Teams

Three elements exist in all teams at all times:



Issues are associated with the reason for the team's existence. Its work, purpose and output are the focus of task issues.

Issues deal with formal and informal authority, leadership, timing, location, and use of space in meetings.

Issues deal with how the team works together within the structure to accomplish its tasks.

TASK ROLES

Concerned with getting tasks accomplished

Initiator

Proposes tasks, goals and/or actions; defines group problems and suggests procedures.



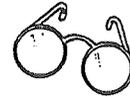
Informer

Offers facts, expresses feelings, and offers opinions.



Clarifier

Interprets ideas; restates questions and suggestions; defines terms, and clarifies issues for the group.



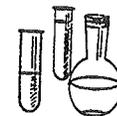
Summarizer

Pulls together related ideas; reframes suggestions; offers decisions and conclusions for the group to consider.

$$\frac{X + Y}{Z} =$$

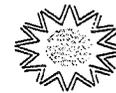
Reality tester

Tests ideas against data to see if the ideas will actually work.



Energizer

Causes the group to move forward. Focuses on the quality of the group's decisions and the progress it is making toward its goals.



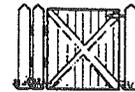
**Process
Observation in
Teams
Material**

MAINTENANCE ROLES

Concerned with how the group is working

Gate keeper

Keeps the group on track; watches time; makes sure that participation is occurring from the membership; invites quiet members to participate.



Harmonizer

Reduces tension; tries to resolve disagreements; tries to get the group members to explore their differences.



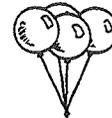
Encourager

Brings members into the group's task. Helps the reluctant or shy members to participate. Tries to get the group to see the positive parts of all of the ideas.



Consensus tester

Presses the group to move toward decisions. Tries to get total "buy-in" from all members of the group on the group's decisions.



Compromiser

Lets go of her/his ideas when the group is in a conflict over a decision or status; admits errors and begins to search for alternatives for the sake of the group.



**Process
Observation in
Teams
Material**

BLOCKING ROLES

Behavior that hinders the group's ability to accomplish its tasks

Dominator

Asserts authority or superiority to manipulate the group and its members; interrupts others; forces decisions or will on the group; controls others by use of flattery or other forms of patronizing behavior; uses a great deal of the group's "air time" and controls who speaks.



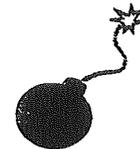
Blocker

Keeps the group from moving forward by being stubborn, uncooperative and disagreeable beyond reason; has hidden agendas; resists the group's progress toward the completion of its tasks.



Aggressor

Takes "pot shots" at group members, their ideas, and their attempts to work within the group; attacks the ideas and the motives of the group; uses humor as a weapon.



Avoider

Takes the group on "wild goose chases," bringing up issues that are not related to the tasks and insisting that the issues are relevant.



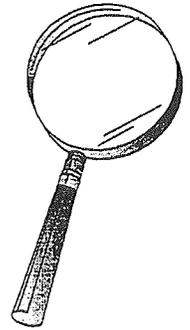
Comedian

Uses humor inappropriately to put down the group's members and their ideas; distracts the group from its task focus.



Process
Observation in
Teams
Material

A Few Things to Watch for...



...when observing a team's process

Communication

*Who talks to whom?
Who is dominant?
Who is quiet?
How clean and clear is the communication?*

Leadership

*How does the leadership emerge?
Who are the formal leaders?
Who are the informal leaders?*

Decision making

*Dictatorial?
Voting?
Consensus?
What kind of "games" are being played?*

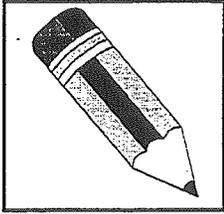
Group style

*Aggressive?
Passive?
Assertive?*

Conflict management

*How does the team handle differences in:
Age?
Sex?
Sexual preferences?
Race?
Experience?
Expertise?
Education?
Opinion?*

**Process
Observation in
Teams
Material**



Consensus Building

An Exercise

Please read each of the following statements carefully and **individually** agree (A) or disagree (D) with the statement. Then, as a **team**, take 30 minutes to reach consensus on all the statements, again, using A or D.

- 1 **A or D** In a group with a strong leader, an individual is able to achieve greater personal security.
- 2 **A or D** Leadership is the intelligent control of group activity rather than just getting others to follow you.
- 3 **A or D** When a leader is doing her/his best, one should not openly criticize and find fault with her/his conduct.
- 4 **A or D** Generally, there comes a time when democratic methods must be abandoned in order to solve practical problems.
- 5 **A or D** In the long run, it is more important to use democratic methods than to achieve specific results by other means.
- 6 **A or D** It is sometimes necessary to ignore the feelings of others in order to reach a decision.
- 7 **A or D** By the time the average person has reached maturity, it is almost impossible for that person to increase their skill in group participation.
- 8 **A or D** Silent members constitute a threat and a nuisance to the group.
- 9 **A or D** Conflict is not the expression of differences in individuals, but of their failure to make their differences contribute to the common good.
- 10 **A or D** A group functions most efficiently when it ignores rather than discusses rivalries between members.

Decision Making

In Groups

Decisions made at meetings -- even briefing meetings -- are many and varied. What's interesting is the way each decision is made. Some methods include:

- ★ One individual makes a proposal that no one actually responds to, but which becomes a binding decision on the team.
- ★ One member agrees to a proposal made by another member that then becomes binding on the team.
- ★ The leader offers a point of view and asks, "Are there any dissenters?"
- ★ The leader summarizes after a discussion and offers the majority or consensus view that owes its origins to neither.
- ★ There is a straight voting process involving counting heads.
- ★ A compromise solution is arrived at that pleases some members.
- ★ Genuine exploration of different points of view is accomplished to seek an answer that satisfies everyone.
- ★ The decision is enshrined in a history that only one or two people can actually recall.

From: *Team Building: A Practical Guide for Training*, by Neil Clark

Stages of Group Development

Group Stages	Interpersonal Issues	Group Behavioral Patterns	Group Tasks/Issues	Leadership Issues
Forming	Inclusion	Move to similarities; anger and frustration; superficial and polite; ambiguity and confusion.	Membership definition; similarities and differences; orientation and introductions.	Dependence
Storming	Control	Establish operating rules; try to create order; attacks on leader; emotional response to task demands.	Decision making process; powerful and influence.	Counter-dependence
Norming	Affection	Cohesion; negotiation.	Functional relationships	Inter-dependence
Performing		Growth, insight, and collaboration.	Productivity	
Adjourning	Grieving and Farewells	Sadness and closure.	Concluding and celebration.	Parting

Adapted from: *The Group: A Cycle from Birth to Death*, by Richard C. Weber in *Reading Book for Human Relations Training*, NTL Institute, 1982.

Journal Reflection

Artistic Image



Session 5 - Building Cohesive Teams

Reflect on what your ideal AmeriCorps team would look like, then create an image using any symbols or materials you wish. Abstract or literal representations are both okay!

Journal Reflection

Hmmmmm.....Reflection Sheet



Session 5 - Building Cohesive Teams

Please record significant things you learned or had special insights about as you focused on teams during this session. Note any ideas or questions.

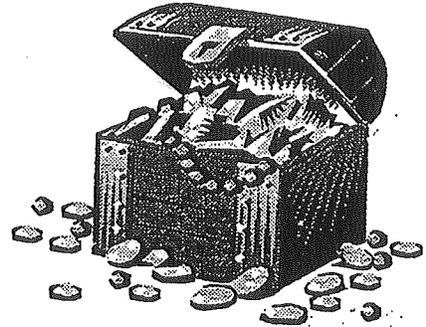
★ I noticed...

★ I was surprised that/when...

★ I was disappointed that/when...

★ With my AmeriCorps team, I plan to...

Why Teams?



- 1 Teams provide the opportunity for the group to develop a common vision and mission.



- 2 They enlarge the resource base for each member.



- 3 They provide the opportunity for mutual "buy-in" if a collaborative decision-making process is used.



- 4 They provide a place for people to share and ask for help with work-related issues with others.



- 5 A supportive environment can be developed that makes it easier for members to get through difficult times.



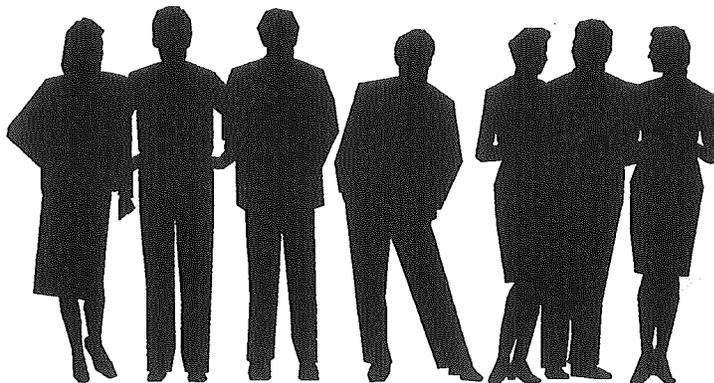
- 6 Teams increase the probability of creative problem-solving.

Typical Team Development Concerns



- ★ Is this really going to do any good?
- ★ What happens if I can't keep up with the work?
- ★ Am I going to be "hurt" as a result of what happens here?
- ★ Should I "get into it" or "play it safe"?
- ★ What is the real reason we're spending all of this time?
- ★ Will the others open up and talk about things that they've talked to me about in private?
- ★ What will happen if we open up issues that nobody can handle?
- ★ Will what I say here show up on my performance evaluation, or alter my supervisor's perception of me?

High Performing Teams



And now, another thought from
the Tao Te Ching...

*The master doesn't
talk, [the master] acts.*

*When the work is
done, the people say,*

*"Amazing, we did it all
by ourselves!"*



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SESSION 6

PRIORITIZING AND ORGANIZING YOUR WORK

OVERVIEW

AmeriCorps supervisors face the challenge of handling many and varied tasks -- from how to figure out what is most important, to how to strike a healthy balance between getting things done and helping members, to how to keep from burning out, and so on. Your job is very big -- so big, in fact, that it's sometimes difficult to know if and when you're doing enough. The balancing act between getting things done and helping members is tricky and sometimes stressful. When it seems that you have approximately a hundred things you *could* do this week, it's hard to know what you *should* do. In this session, we will examine and practice several planning techniques that will help you gain more control over your work life. Dividing into two groups according to project type (individual placement and crew-based), we'll work through case studies of AmeriCorps supervisors who have a few problems organizing their work; we'll analyze their situations and make recommendations for how they can get a better handle on her work load. We will review the personal planning tips offered by the group and give you an opportunity to select the ones that are most helpful for you in your back-home situation. This exercise should help you develop techniques to reduce stress in your life.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- ▶ Use planning, organization, and management techniques to take better control of your life as a supervisor.
- ▶ Apply project planning tools to set objectives; identify resource needs; and define, prioritize, schedule, and assign tasks.
- ▶ Select specific planning tools you can use for getting things done at your projects.

VENUE Home Groups

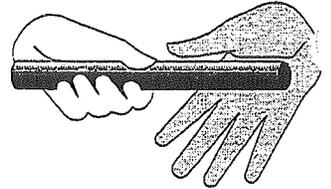
Time Management

As an AmeriCorps supervisor, you probably spend your time in one of four ways, as illustrated in the time management matrix below. This matrix defines activities in terms of "urgent" or "not urgent" and "important" or "not important." Often, a supervisor will have no choice but to spend most of her/his time responding to the urgent crises of Quadrants 1 and 3, escaping occasionally for survival to accomplish the non-urgent, unimportant activities of Quadrant 4. This is especially true if circumstances in the organizational culture reinforce this choice. Unfortunately, even despite their best efforts, supervisors sometimes end up having very little time left for the vitally important activities of Quadrant 2 – the activities that will lead to the most personal and organizational effectiveness. By using worksheets like the one on the following page, you will be able to organize your week around roles and goals, and your activities will move increasingly into Quadrant 2, allowing you to gradually steer away from a reactive to a pro-active supervisory approach.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<p>Quadrant 1 Activities</p> <p>Crises Pressing problems Deadline-driven projects</p>	<p>Quadrant 2 Activities</p> <p>Preparation Crisis prevention Values Clarification Planning Relationship building Reflection time</p>
Not Important	<p>Quadrant 3 Activities</p> <p>Interruptions, some calls Mail, some reports Some meetings Many proximate, pressing matters Many popular activities</p>	<p>Quadrant 4 Activities</p> <p>Trivia, busy work Some mail Some phone calls Time wasters Many pleasant activities</p>

Delegation

Some Basic Principles



Definition

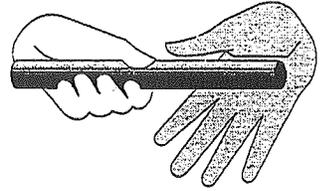
The transfer of part of your responsibility and authority to a person working for you to completely execute a given task.

Principles

- 1 The member must have the skills and technical competence to accomplish the task.
- 2 Dialogue with the member is essential to insure proper understanding of the task and an appreciation of your expectations.
- 3 Levels of authority appropriate to the task must be given to the member. (Avoid turning over "responsibility with no power.")
- 4 The member must know that you are available to address any questions or needs for clarification s/he has.
- 5 Other people who are involved in the task or its product must be informed that you have delegated specific responsibilities and authorities to the member.

Delegation

Some Basic Principles



Rules to Remember

- 1 Once the task has been delegated, don't "hover." Let the member handle it.

Your role changes from "doer" to enabler, clarifier, answer person, resource provider and/or advisor. The more you hover, the less the member feels that s/he truly has the responsibility to do the task his or her way. The member may simply feel that s/he is "just another pair of hands" for you. If you hover, you will still spend time making sure that the task gets done properly (i.e YOUR WAY!) When you hover, the member will not develop self-confidence, you will not perceive her or him as competent (because you are still spending too much time on the task), and you will rightly be perceived as a micro-manager.

- 2 Effective delegation is built on trust.

Trust builds slowly but can be destroyed quickly.

- 3 Effective delegation can be a great developmental tool.

The member must not perceive the delegation as one test after another. A stretch is good, but you have to calibrate the limits of the member carefully. If s/he fails frequently, s/he is likely to remember only the failures and avoid responsibility and authority in the future.

- 4 Abdication of responsibility can occur under the guise of delegation.

This occurs when you give little task definition, unilateral directions with no dialogue, do not make yourself available to the employee, provide no oversight, follow-up and basically forget the task, leaving the member with virtually no support.

- 5 Confidence in an employee allows you to let go of a task.

But good delegation suggests that you never forget about it...only your role in the task completion changes.

Chapter Twelve

Managing Time Effectively

Roger A. Ritvo

Executive Summary

On the surface it would seem anachronistic that in a culture steeped in the work ethic, space in this volume would be given to managing time effectively. Yet if an analysis were done detailing hour-by-hour the ways in which managers utilize their time, the amount of unproductive hours would stagger the imagination. More staggering yet would be the associated costs to organizations and to society of this unproductive time. In this chapter, Roger Ritvo explores the myths about time and proposes clear actions to help managers use this most valuable of resources more effectively.

Ritvo discusses internally and externally imposed time wasters. As he observes, it is easy to blame circumstances beyond our control for the existence of time wasters. But that's only half the story. After a review of time wasters that come from sources *outside* of managers, and are often beyond their control, Ritvo goes on to examine "internally developed time wasters." Unlike those for the external ones, the remedies for the internal ones lie *within* individual managers. It is in this context that endless cultural myths abound. He outlines seven broadly held myths about the use of time. Chances are, most managers will be able to see themselves in one or more parts of this discussion.

The fundamental point of this chapter is that managers need to remain clearheaded about how they are using their time. Ritvo outlines 10 ways to respond to the challenge of becoming an effective time manager. Among those discussed is the requisite need to schedule open time. This acknowledges that subordinates require access to their immediate supervisor, but rather than maintain an open door policy, wherein a manager's time is subject to subordinate access, he

suggests that managers set aside a particular time during which it is understood that she or he is available to meet with subordinates for up to 15 minutes.

Embedded in this discussion is another issue with which managers must come to grips. The manager who takes the position that she or he must handle all of the *tough* assignments is one who is failing to meet arguably the most important managerial requirement of all. Tough assignments often serve as the best opportunities for managers to develop subordinate capabilities. In most complex organizations, this is the most highly prized role a manager will ever be asked to perform.

This chapter is important because it raises an issue that is becoming more and more pervasive in conversations among managers. How do we go about managing all of the complex requirements constantly coming at us? Clues to the most productive path through this often nightmarish thicket are contained in this chapter.

How much does one hour of lost time per day cost? If your company pays an employee a \$50,000 salary, those 60 minutes per day are expensive—\$6,250 each year. The figure is \$2,500 for the employee whose salary is \$20,000. Lost production time can never be recovered. It can be saved, however, if managers are willing to look at how they spend their own time. Organizational cultures support different work patterns and habits, ranging from extended coffee breaks to the open door policy, which may mean a steady stream of interruptions. Effective time-management programs increase organizational productivity and efficiency while controlling costs. The overall bottom line will be improved, even in service and nonprofit organizations. In addition, managers benefit directly through reduced stress. This chapter explores the myths about time and proposes clear actions to help managers use their time more effectively. If you have "too many fires to fight," then this chapter is written for you.

WHAT ARE TIME WASTERS?

There are numerous ways to waste time. Individually, none may seem onerous; collectively, they decrease individual and organizational effectiveness. Alone, none of them are difficult to change;

together, they form a pattern of behavior that requires a planned refocusing of work habits. Here is a list of a dozen common time wasters:

1. Lengthy socializing
2. Too many unplanned visitors
3. Waiting for upper management to approve routine decisions
4. Too many meetings
5. Extended luncheons
6. Unclear priorities
7. Can't see the top of your desk
8. Too many interruptions
9. Junk mail
10. Unrealistic deadlines
11. Trying to do too much at once
12. Competing demands

SOURCES OF TIME WASTERS

It would be easy to blame circumstances beyond our control for the existence of these time wasters. Yet that would only tell half the story. Some do indeed come from outside forces, but the other half come from within the person reflected in the mirror: the individual manager.

Externally Imposed Time Wasters

Some of the problems that managers encounter in attempting to utilize their available time effectively are externally imposed. The following should sound familiar to many first-line supervisors as well as chief executives:

- Unexpected assignments from the boss
- Lengthy telephone conversations
- Unproductive meetings

- Poor communications
- Crises
- The responsibility of solving problems created by subordinates

In each of these instances, the manager responds to meet the needs of others. The irony is that the manager is often forced to reach decisions without having complete information, knowing of other possibilities, or having time to reflect on the implications of the decision.

Effectively responding to the time pressures created by externally imposed circumstances often requires assistance from others. Support staff can help think through the desired outcomes of a meeting before it begins. Clear communication with the secretarial staff can prevent memos and letters from constantly being retyped and edited. Junk mail can be screened by staff and discarded as necessary. It may be a valuable intervention to ask subordinates to present several options along with the problem.

Internally Developed Time Wasters

Other concerns about managing time have an internal source. These come from within each of us: They may be part of our identity and our self-concept, but they certainly contribute to the problem. Examples include:

- The inability to say no
- Procrastination
- Poor listening skills
- Outside activities
- Poor planning
- Unclear priorities
- Trying to do too much for too many people

The remedies for the internal time wasters lie within the manager, who should ask the questions shown below on a regular basis. The answers go to the heart of effective time management. But more importantly, they are at the core of effective management.

- Do I have written goals for the next six months?
- What are my primary responsibilities?
- What can I delegate?
- What areas of responsibility can I get preapproved now?
- Do I delegate challenging as well as routine tasks?
- Do I know how I spend my time?
- What is my prime time? When am I at a low point?

COMMON MYTHS ABOUT TIME

Myths abound. Time is so precious in our organizational and personal lives that we have created a number of fallacies to justify the way we work. Here are a few common myths:

Myth 1: *Lots of activity brings results.* Clearly, something will get done. But there is another axiom that states, "There is never time to do it right, but always time to do it over." The key is to plan and implement the right activity. The axiom's cousin, "Don't just stand there, do something!" implies the same thing: that any action is better than none at all. Of course, improper actions consume time, deflect energy from other tasks, and require additional resources later to rectify. Lots of activity does not mean that desired results will occur.

Myth 2: *Efficient workers are effective.* Speed is valuable, but not if it leads to errors or if there is nothing to do once a job is completed. By accentuating task completion, we give more weight to the process than to the results. Efficiency focuses on the use of resources needed to complete a task. Effectiveness assures that the completed tasks are done correctly. One does not assure the other. Since the output of one employee's job often becomes the input for another's, the role of management is to assure that the work flow is smooth, predictable, and appropriately timed. Finishing too early can actually cause other problems.

Myth 3: *If I want the job done right, I have to do it myself.* The myth is that others are not able, capable, available, or willing to do the work. Thus, this can actually become a self-fulfilling prophecy. As long as a manager keeps doing the work, delegation to others is impossible. So who gets to do the job the next

time? The same manager—while the halls echo with the refrain, "If I want the job done . . ." The assumption of managerial omnipotence stands firmly in the way of change. Potential consequences of this managerial approach include high stress, burnout and myopic perspectives.

Myth 4: *The harder you work, the more you will get done.* Hard work obviously has important payoffs. But, like an elastic band, if pulled too hard it will snap. And by the same logic, if pushed too hard or too long, employees will burn out. It is important to distinguish between hard work and successful engagement. A related issue lies in the collusion between supervisors and staff to always "look busy." Every successful manager knows that there are peak periods and slower times. If we perpetuate the myth that the entire system works at peak speed all the time, the culture will eventually revolt.

Myth 5: *A stitch in time saves nine.* This homily is so widely known that it warrants special attention in the Mythology Hall of Fame. Evidence supports the idea that an hour of planning can save two of misdirected work. But it has to be the right stitch, with matching thread. Often, system maintenance activities fall into this category. It is easier to delay a repair job than to schedule one now, because "we are too busy." or "that report needs to get out by the holidays." Then when the machine breaks down, the entire process comes to a halt.

Myth 6: *There is always a shortage of time.* Assume that no one has all the time needed to do all they want as perfectly as they would like. The illusion is that there is not enough time. The reality is more likely to be mismanagement of available time. We all become victims of our own choices. At some level, we want to be busy—and be seen that way by others—as a justification for our job. Often this comes out in the organizational axiom, "Never go home before the boss."

Myth 7: *An open door policy improves communication.* Perhaps the open door does say that management is accessible. But in other instances, it tells employees that their supervisor expects them to check all decisions before implementation. And when will managers have time to do their own jobs? It is important that managers who keep the door open be in the office. If supervisors are preoccupied, then the open door does not work for anyone.

MANAGING TIME EFFECTIVELY

Whether internally developed or externally imposed, time wasters are indeed a fact of work life. Even successful managers have learned to cope with them. There is no single, agreed-upon method to manage time effectively in every instance. But the following principles have a proven track record. They will help overcome Murphy's Law, a variation of which postulates that "everything takes longer than you think." It doesn't have to be that way. Here are 10 ways to respond to the challenge of becoming an effective manager of your own time.

1. *Know where your time goes.* Most of us feel tired at the end of a busy day at work, but we often think, "Gee, what did I really get done today?" This classic symptom often reflects action without planning. Self-awareness is the first step toward change; try keeping a weekly log of your activities, using the following questions as a guide:

- With whom did you meet?
- What was the purpose?
- Who called the meeting?
- What was accomplished?
- How much time were you on the telephone?
- What memos did you write?
- How much reading time was devoted to junk mail?

2. *Do important tasks first.* This sounds easier than it is in practice. Most managers know the importance of planning in order to chart a course of action for the following quarter or year. Yet this same practice does not always carry over to their own daily activities, though it should. Doing too many things at once is a characteristic result of having no priorities. Some habits are difficult to break. When managers engage in light conversation with staff for the first 30 minutes of an 8 AM workday over that bottomless cup of coffee, their message is that work functionally begins at 8:30 AM. But the psychic risks of change may preclude some managers from seeing that their rigidity means that important meetings cannot occur at 8 AM—because people want to catch up with the boss.

3. *Schedule open time.* Subordinates require access to their immediate supervisors. Yet these occasions do not have to be on demand. Try open hours. This differs from the open door policy; it is a time for walk-in conversations that can be focused or unfocused. There are corporate presidents who have such systems in place. Any employee can see the president for 15 minutes; it forces the visitor to be of clear mind on the purpose of the visit.

Another option for managers lies in alternative or creative scheduling. Instead of the traditional 30- or 60-minute meeting, try using 20- or 45-minute time blocks instead. The shorter time period will not harm the effectiveness of the conversations; in fact, it should sharpen it. And, it frees time for other things.

4. *Use available technologies.* If you are not available, there are numerous options. In addition to the standard request to "send me a note about that," ask others to leave you a voice mail message. If E-mail is available, give out your address. Thoughtful replies can be composed at your convenience. Written memos provide excellent documentation, but consume vast amounts of time. And, unfortunately, they often cry out for a formal reply . . . thus creating two memos. Perhaps a quick discussion (while standing) can solve a problem or convey the needed information.

5. *Be phone smart.* The telephone warrants special attention, of course. Even with speed dialing, this instrument is cited by most managers as the source of many problems. The cornerstone of organizational communications, it is also a primary time waster. Few managers take (or make) the time to understand how they use and misuse Alexander Graham Bell's invention. Yet imagine the paradox of expecting a secretary to accomplish assignments on time when the telephone rings constantly! Managers need to become comfortable saying that they only have a few minutes before another appointment; this will help the caller stay focused on the topic at hand. And many managers are surprised when they review their own telephone logs. "Gee, I never realized that I spent so much time on the telephone!" Was it worth the investment?

6. *Plan effectively.* Remember the axioms, "An hour of planning saves two of execution" and "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." If they start with the notion that they will never have all the information that is available on any topic, managers can suffer from

“paralysis by analysis.” Others view this as a liberating message—that at some point a decision can be made and implemented. A related proposition is that managers must learn to accept that some things cannot be changed. This will allow them to put their time and attention elsewhere.

7. *Delegate appropriately.* Managers often find themselves overwhelmed with routine tasks; this is the classic sign of a failure to delegate responsibility and authority to competent subordinates. Returning from vacation provides an excellent opportunity to see how effectively responsibilities are delegated. If it takes three days to go through the accumulated items, that should be a clear signal to learn to delegate more effectively. In order to be an effective delegator, it may be necessary to share more information than in the past. Subordinates must also be given the freedom to fail, as long as they learn from their errors. This allows managers to make more effective use of their own time.

8. *Focus on results.* Managers have a tendency to focus on what needs to be done—the activities of daily work life. An alternative way of thinking stresses the results to be achieved. In addition to facilitating appropriate delegation, it changes the manager’s role from control agent to negotiator. Sound human resource principles stress empowering employees to meet their potential. If accepted, this concept encourages managers to hold subordinates accountable for *what* they accomplish, not just *how* they work. Emphasizing results provides an important solution to the time crunch. Getting stuck in operational details may contribute to this problem. There are many issues that attract the supervisors’ attention. Some shouldn’t. Thus, it is important to state goals and expectations in clear, measurable terms that relate to outcomes, not just processes and procedures. Otherwise, managers will spend time on low-priority items while critical tasks mount up.

9. *Have alternatives.* When an unplanned block of “free” time opens up, managers are relieved but have few alternatives at the ready. Create them. Sometimes it is helpful to have something to read in case you are held up by unforeseen events, such as having to wait for the boss!

10. *Take your vacations.* Some managers fear long vacations because they are all but certain that things will fall apart without them. Perhaps they will, but there is a significantly greater chance

that managers who do not take time for themselves (and their families) will eventually burn out. Job stress is real. Responding with hard work may indeed be valued by the company, but it is important to remember that managers are supposed to be there for the marathon, not the short dash.

CONCLUSION

“Time is what we want most, but alas, we use worst.”

William Penn

“All my possessions for a moment of time.”

Queen Elizabeth I

“Either you manage time or it manages you.”

Unknown

These sayings remind us that the struggle to use time effectively has been with us for centuries, yet solutions remain elusive. This chapter defines several strategies that can help managers model effective time management skills. If only they had the time to read it!

Roger A. Ritvo

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Previous academic positions include serving as visiting scholar at Sheffield University in England, visiting professor at American University, and assistant dean for 10 years at Case Western Reserve University. He was founding director of the graduate program in health administration at Cleveland State University.

Dr. Ritvo has served on numerous boards of directors, including the NTL Institute; Health and Human Services, Inc. (a Catholic multihospital system); the Cleveland Arthritis Foundation; and his temple. As a consultant, his services have been used by public and private organizations in the health, human service, and corporate sectors.

Professor Ritvo's many honors include serving as a government fellow of the American Council on Education, collaborating as a World Health Organization research fellow in Denmark, serving as senior health policy adviser to two Secretaries of the United States Department of Health and Human Services; and chairing the Health Care Advisory Task Force of the Ohio state senate. He received the Outstanding Administrator award from the student government at the University of New Hampshire in 1992.

SESSION 7

SPECIAL INTEREST SESSIONS

OVERVIEW

The special interest/elective sessions allow participants flexibility to focus on skill development in their areas of greatest interest, importance, and need. Based on participant group size and interest areas, the Special Session workshop subjects will be determined on-site and announced to participants at the end of Day One. At this time, you will be asked to indicate on the Sign-up Sheet (following page) which two sessions you would be interested in. Based on your preferences, we will assign you to one session, keeping in mind your first choice whenever possible.

Session Seven

Sign-Up Sheet

On Day Two, your Home Group trainers will describe the menu of special sessions being offered during Session Seven. Please indicate in the space provided below which TWO sessions you would like to attend and return the form to your Home Group leader at the end of Session Four. **Thanks!**

Name

First Choice

Session Title

Second Choice

Session Title

SESSION 8

ACTION PLANNING: ON BECOMING A BETTER SUPERVISOR

OVERVIEW

In this session, you will accomplish two important activities relating to planning skills. First, you'll formulate a personal action plan for using and building on the knowledge and skills gained during this workshop once you are back at your project site. Second, in creating the action plan, you'll be practicing all of the components of a simple project planning process using a tool that serves two purposes: it creates a self-improvement plan, and it can also be used for planning work projects.

At the beginning of the hour, you will individually review your Self-Assessments (from Session 1) along with the Reflection Sheets you completed during previous sessions. Using this information for insight and inspiration, you will begin to develop a personal action plan for how you will use the workshop learnings to improve your skills as an AmeriCorp supervisor. You will be able to work on your action plan independently but may draw on trainers and colleagues as resources as needed. Afterwards, you'll share your plans with colleagues and discuss the merits of the planning tool. Did you have trouble with specific components of the planning process? How useful is this format for your planning needs (for planning an orientation event, a major community meeting, or a celebration event, for example)? What could be modified to make the planning process as smooth and user-friendly as possible?

To link your learnings from this workshop to the "real world back home," you might want to pick someone from your Home Group to check-in with after about a month. Write your phone number down on the action planning sheet and make a note to remind yourself of the call on your personal calendar. Pick out one idea from the workshop that you want to apply in your day-to-day interactions with others; write it down on your action planning sheet. Then, follow up on your commitments to call each other to counsel and congratulate each other on your progress!

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- ▶ Create a self-improvement plan for applying the supervisory knowledge and skills gained in this workshop to your project work back home.
- ▶ Use a simple project planning tool for setting goals and objectives -- identifying and scheduling tasks, identifying resources, and monitoring and evaluating results.

VENUE Home Groups

Project Planning

A Primer

Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary* defines the verb "to plan" as

- 1: to arrange the parts of (design);
- 2: to devise or project the realization of achievement;
- 3: to have in mind.



A less-formal definition of planning is:

What you do so you'll know how to get to where you're headed.

Think of a plan as your choice of routes on a road map. You need to know where you are on the map, where you intend to be (your goal), and the best way for you to get there. There may be several good ways to get there; which one you choose will depend on the variables. Failing to choose a route can mean hours of wasted time, aimless driving, or mid-trip halting.

Project Planning Components:

Project planning tools abound! We include a few examples here in your notebook for you to use as references, but the important thing is for you to draft or adapt a tool which suits your particular purposes. Generally speaking, the following list contains the basic ingredients of a project plan. Sometimes, if the project is small, "goals" and "objectives" may be combined into a single component. Sometimes, the term "activity" is used in place of "task." Whatever the planning format you select, it should contain enough clear information so that you and others can determine if what you intend to do is realistic and attainable.

Goal:	Overall broad statement of what is to be accomplished within a specified time frame
Objectives:	Specific, measurable, time-phased results; taken together, the objectives achieve the project goal
Tasks:	Major steps or activities which contribute to the achievement of your plan; each task includes a statement of <i>who does what by when</i>
Resources:	Human, physical, and/or monetary resources you will need to be able to accomplish your plan
Monitoring/ Evaluation:	Checkpoints for measuring your progress on tasks and your overall success in reaching the goal
Contingency Planning:	Planning what to do if your original plan does not work
Ambiance/ Context:	The organizational environment and other outside factors/agencies that influence how you accomplish your goals, objectives and tasks

ACTION PLANNING



INTRODUCTION

Throughout this workshop, you have been encouraged to think about what you have learned in the sessions and how you could use this information in your work. In this session, you are encouraged to go further and develop a plan for using the information you've gained or the skills you've developed and plan how to improve yourself as a supervisor. The session has been designed to assist you in getting the most benefit from your participation in the workshop by giving you the opportunity to develop a concrete action plan for improvement or change when you return to your program. In this way, the ideas that you have developed here can be integrated into your on-going program activities immediately upon your return.

As a first step, review your Self Assessment (from Session 2) and your Reflection Sheets (completed at the end of most sessions). Pay particular attention to the personal goals you wrote down on the back of your Self Assessment. Then use the planning instrument included here to develop a three to six month plan to follow-up on your goals and ideas for self improvement. This includes identifying:

- o What changes or improvements you want to make in your supervisory skills (goals and objectives);
- o What steps you will need to take in order to accomplish your goals (tasks/activities) and by when these need to happen (scheduling/timelines);
- o What problems you may encounter and what you can do about them (contingency planning);
- o What resources you will need to access in order to meet your goals (resources)
- o How you will measure your progress and know when -- and how well -- you achieved your goal (monitoring and evaluation).

Time will be provided during this session for you to discuss your plan with others as you think appropriate. You are encouraged to discuss your ideas to obtain additional information, receive feedback, test the feasibility of the ideas, or brainstorm solutions to problems.

You will probably not be able to develop a fully detailed action plan during this session. You will be able to get a good start on identifying what needs to be done and on developing a strategy for how to get there.

Action Planning

Goal:

What one improvement would I like to make in how I supervise my AmeriCorps members?

Objectives:

Specifically, what do I need to do to bring about the above change?

Tasks:

What steps do I have to take to achieve the above objectives? When will I complete them by? How will I evaluate effectiveness?

Task:
Who:
By When:
Checkpoints:

Task:
Who:
By When:
Checkpoints:

Task:
Who:
By When:
Checkpoints:

Task:
Who:
By When:
Checkpoints:

Task:
Who:
By When:
Checkpoints:

Task:
Who:
By When:
Checkpoints:

Contingency Plans

What challenges am I likely to face as I move toward my goals?

What can I do to avoid the problems I can anticipate? What options can I plan in advance so I will be ready to make changes if my initial plan is not successful?

Organizational Ambiance/Context

What organizational/institutional factors do I need to be aware of in developing and implementing my plan?

Resources

How might members be able to help in successfully completing the plan?

Which other colleagues (or my boss) here or elsewhere can help me reach my goal?

What community programs, people and materials could assist in achieving the plan?

Project Planning

Goal:

What would we like to work on with our project(s)?

Objectives:

Specifically, what do we need to do to bring about the above goal?

Tasks:

What steps do we have to take to achieve the above objectives? When will we complete them by? How will we evaluate effectiveness?

Task:
Who:
By When:
Checkpoints:

Task:
Who:
By When:
Checkpoints:

Task:
Who:
By When:
Checkpoints:

Task:
Who:
By When:
Checkpoints:

Task:
Who:
By When:
Checkpoints:

Task:
Who:
By When:
Checkpoints:

Community Agency Plans

What challenges are we likely to face as we move toward our goals?

What can we do to avoid the problems we can anticipate? What options can we plan in advance so we will be ready to make changes if our initial plan is not successful?

Organizational Ambiance/Context

What organizational/institutional factors do we need to be aware of in developing and implementing our plan?

Resources

How might members be able to help in successfully completing the plan?

Who else on our program staff can we use to help with the plan?

What community programs, people and materials could assist in achieving the plan?

NCPC SUPERVISORY WORKSHOP
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Evaluation Form

1 Overall, how would you rate the training? _____
(on a scale of 0-5 with 0 = poor and 5 = excellent)

2 Please rate the effectiveness of each session using the 0-5 scale. Circle 0 for "not effective at all" up to 5 for "extremely effective." We would also appreciate your comments and suggestions for how we can improve sessions which were less effective for you.

Session One - *Workshop Welcome; AmeriCorps & the Service Ethic* 1 2 3 4 5
Comments:

Session Two - *Orientation to Home Groups* 1 2 3 4 5
Comments:

Session Three - *AmeriCorps Supervisor Roles and Styles* 1 2 3 4 5
Comments:

Session Four - *Communication Skills: One-on-One with Members* 1 2 3 4 5
Comments:

Session Five - *Building a Cohesive Team* 1 2 3 4 5
Comments:

Session Six - *Prioritizing and Organizing Your Work* 1 2 3 4 5
Comments:

Session Seven - Special Interest Session: _____ 1 2 3 4 5
Title of session you attended

Comments:

Session Eight - Action Planning 1 2 3 4 5
Comments:

3 Please describe the strongest or most important aspects of the training for you.

4 How well did the content and methodology of the workshop meet with your expectations and needs? Please explain your answer.

5 How useful are the participant materials?

6 How effective were the trainers in facilitating your learning?

7 Do you have any specific recommendations for us to improve this workshop before we deliver it again?

8. Finally, would you recommend this workshop to your colleagues? Why or why not?

