

Personal Project Management Techniques workshop

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Pre-workshop questionnaire

1) Think about how you keep track of the tasks you have to do.....

- I always remember them
- Most of the time I remember them
- I write them down on any piece of paper
- I write them down on a list
- Other: (describe)

2) How do you keep track of the tasks you ask other people to do for you?

3) How do you redefine the priorities of the pending tasks, when priorities change every day?

- I always do the oldest request, and from then on solve the remaining ones
- I always attend to the most important request.
- I always do the easiest request first
- I always do the most recent request first
- I do what I remember I have to do
- I do what my most important client or supervisor asks of me
- Other?

4) Any of these phrases applies to you?

- I never forget a task
- I sometimes forget a task
- I have problems defining priorities

5) What do you do with the tasks you have to do but you don't like doing?



Personal Project management techniques

To be able to administer our own time, manage the tasks we delegate on others, and to change priorities according to the changing reality is a **BASIC SKILL** to be successful professionals and also to manage a team of professionals.

- Tasks all around you: tasks can originate in: your supervisor, other team members, clients, suppliers, hardware, software, natural disasters, technology changes, etc.
- Question: How do you proceed when you have a task to do?
- Tasks change priorities and are affected by other tasks, by what other people do, and by the reality affecting the factors in these tasks.
- But most of all: tasks are part of team work. Maybe you **don't see the BIG picture**, only part of it. It's your responsibility to keep track of your tasks.

Tasks characteristics:

Every task has some basic characteristics:

1. Objective of the task
2. Subtasks
3. Related tasks (that others have to do). These tasks can precede our task, be concurrent (parallel), or start when we finish our task.
4. Responsible person or persons
5. Dates: start date -> duration -> due date
6. Requirements, resources and needs
7. Priority related to other tasks, to reality, and to our own limitations (time, knowledge, etc.)

Exercise: what control do we exert over each of these characteristics?

Common issues:

- Do I understand exactly what I have to do?
- Do I have everything that I need to do it?
- How long will it take me to do this task?

- Do you know the date it is due? Is it possible to do it by that date? What other tasks are affected by my task?
- How do other priorities and tasks affect this particular task?

Discussion: How do we know when we are not going to finish a task on the due date? By when do we have to know this, the same date its due? How do we proceed?

Priorities

- Reality changes, and so do the factors that affect our tasks. Thing that were urgent are no more, other more critical issues appear.
- How do you prioritize?

Exercise: criteria to prioritize work at our office

Discussion: Sometimes low priority tasks never get done. Why and how can we avoid this?

Conclusions:

- **Know yourself and know team members:** people are more productive at certain time of the day, or certain days of the week. Balance challenging and exhausting tasks with easy, simple, mechanical tasks
- Design your own way of keeping track of your tasks, adapted to your personality, but do it in such a way that things are **done!**
- **PROACTIVITY:** The clients expect US to keep track of their request. We don't have to expect **them** to remind **us** of it.
- **ACCURACY:** Do not forget tasks! If you cannot make them on time, let the other people know!
- **PRIORITIES:** learn to prioritize according to what is needed and ICTs general priorities.