

## Time Management Skills for Attorneys

Developed by



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## Goals

Main Entry: **goals**

Function: *noun*

Date: 1531

>> the end toward which effort is directed

**Goal**  
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Scheduling  
Organization  
Communication  
Commit to Action

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*Effective communication is CRITICAL to achieving effective time management.*

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# Communication

Main Entry: communication

Function: noun

Date: 14th century

>> a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior

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## Effective Communication

- Ask questions to clarify project.
- Ask for possible resources.
- Ask for deadlines.
- Keep those you work with informed of progress.
- Address possible obstacles directly and ask for help.
- Provide honest assessment of your ability to meet deadlines.

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*How much authority are you willing to give up and how much responsibility do you want to maintain?*

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# Delegation

Main Entry: del-e-ga-tion  
Function: *noun*  
Date: 1612

>> the act of empowering to act for another

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*Ask yourself, what's in your client's best interest—what should you be doing and what should be done by someone else? Once you decide to delegate, follow these steps.*

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## Steps for Effective Delegation

- Investing time saves you time
- Identify what you can delegate
- Select the right person (e.g. secretary, legal assistant, copy center) and let them OWN the project
- Provide tips for achieving best results
- Warn person about possible obstacles & challenges (e.g. turnaround time, computer inefficiencies, other people, etc.)
- Meet and “touch base” ... be their coach
- Hold them accountable; trust but verify


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**Partner with Your Secretary**

- Communicate constantly, discuss procedures and organizational needs, ask for input, keep him/her involved, set expectations, and discuss problems openly.
- Communicate your weekly schedule and plan ahead with your secretary.
- Help your secretary to prioritize the most urgent tasks on a daily basis.
- Acknowledge your secretary's contributions regularly.



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**Understanding & Controlling Interruptions**

Types of Interruptions

- Phone calls
- E-mail
- Mail
- Visitors

**i** The time it takes to recover from an interruption is usually longer than the interruption itself.



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### Possible Solutions to Controlling Interruptions

- Voice-mail - Use strategically
- Phone calls - Return in "batches"
- E-mails - Answer every 30 minutes
- Respond to phone tag with a visit
- If you are in the middle of an important project, ask if you can get back to them
- Office visits - You control the length of stay
- Open mail and choose an action: throw out, file or act

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*Lawyers who ranked themselves as effective in Time Management Skills have several things in common.*

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### Tips for Success

- They **complete** the most important tasks first
- They **delegate** to secretaries, paralegals and junior associates
- They have a system for **planning** each day
- They have established **organizational systems** that they constantly maintain
- They **record** their billable hours daily
- They **block** out a minimum of 2 hours each day to do concentrative work
- They use their **resources**

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