

Nine Time Management Skills and Tools

based on Pat Brans' "Twelve Time Management Habits to Master"
and Alan Bass's "Math Study Skills"

- 1) **Calendar.** Complete a detailed calendar scheduling all of your available time. Be honest and realistic with yourself about what you want and why you do what you do. You need to include time for sleep, eating, and exercise in your calendar. When scheduling study time for your class outside of class time, use the following rule:
 Number of study hours outside of class per week for a particular class = $\left(\text{Number of credit hours of the class} \right) \cdot \left(\text{Difficulty level from 2 (easy) to 4 (hard) of the class for you} \right)$
- 2) **Avoid Management by Crisis.** Deal with problems on the horizon as soon as you can rather than letting them develop into a major crisis. Managing by crisis leads to poor quality decisions and work.
- 3) **Get Your Priorities Straight.** Select a maximum of two or three things as your highest priorities (i.e., family, school, and job). Most of your available time needs to be aimed at one of those priorities. It is important to set short and long term goals that match your priorities.
- 4) **What to do.** Make a daily "to do" list and mark items on your list with either A – urgent, B – important, but not urgent, or C – neither important nor urgent. Work on completing all the A's first, then the B's, and then the C's. For repetitive tasks, look for ways to improve how you do them and which ones you can combine into one task.
- 5) **Break it up.** For huge tasks, break them into a series of smaller, more doable tasks that you focus on completing one at a time.
- 6) **Good Relationships.** Build relationships with people you can trust and count on and be sure those same people can trust and count on you. Avoid people who are a major distraction from your priorities. Socialize in activities and clubs, especially the ones related to your major that support your priorities (this helps in finding a job later).
- 7) **Delegate.** Delegate a task that you do not need to do to someone else if possible so to free up time to complete more important tasks.
- 8) **Listen to Your Body.** Note how your physical and mental levels vary during the day and schedule different tasks to take full advantage of the fluctuations. Get plenty of sleep; eat a health diet and exercise.
- 9) **Just say No.** Get good at saying "No" to tasks or requests that are inconsistent or interfere with your priorities. When asked by family, a friend, your employer, etc to participate in a task, your first response should be "I must check my calendar first and get back to you."