

## Organisational Activities and Effective Time Management among Public Relations Practitioners

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### ABSTRACT

Effective time management in the work of a manager is an important prerequisite for achieving strategic goals of the organization. Time is a special and worthy commodity that is given equally to everyone regardless of age, nationality, whether public or private sector. Time is always ever present to everyone, but no one ever seems to have enough of it. In Nigeria, the need for time management in organizations especially the public service cannot be over emphasized. Time management helps in achieving individual and organizational goals in view of the limited amount of time available to man. The study therefore beams a search light on organizational activities and effective time management, as well as, the relationship between managers and subordinates as regards time management. The effective management of time and other inputs or resources in a system is behind growing productivity, while the ineffective management of these inputs accounts for ebbing productivity and, the manager is responsible for this management in the system. Reports show that 3 out of 4 ventures die every year in Nigeria. This is not unconnected with ineffective management of time and other material and human inputs or resources in the venture. Consequently, this paper examined ways of promoting sustainable productivity and employee performance through effective time management.

Keywords: Organisational, Activities, Time, Public Relations and Practitioners.

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### INTRODUCTION

Time management and strategic planning strategies are keys to success. [1] defined time management as a behavior that aims to achieve the efficient use of time in performing certain goal-oriented activities. Generally speaking, time management refers to activities that involve the efficient use of time, which should lead to increased productivity and reduced stress. Currently, there is great interest in better understanding how time management can help combat time scarcity. People are constantly struggling with the desire to do many things with too limited a resource. This has led to an increased assessment of productivity and busyness [2]. Usually, the ultimate goal in time management is to maximize activity—as many activities, tasks as possible. The second, but perhaps more important, goal is to maximize results. Time is an essential resource every manager needs to achieve the goals and objectives of an organization. It is so delicate that it cannot be saved but can

only be spent and once misused it can never be regained. Every manager is looking for ways to improve time management. Whether it is the management of an organization looking for business improvement or an individual looking for ways to better spend their time, time management is important to both. Ultimately, the efficiency and effectiveness of any organization, whether private or public sector, largely depend on the effective utilization of the available scarce resources by its employees. It should be noted that one of the greatest challenges of the Nigerian bureaucracy is non-performance of the civil service. It seems that there is never enough time in a day. But, since we all have 24 hours in a day, a question that comes to mind is, why do some people achieve much more with their time than others, especially in the public service? The answer lies in good time management. The highest achievers manage their time exceptionally well.

The perceived poor service delivery in the public service of Nigeria, due to poor time management, has provoked a series of studies geared towards ameliorating the ugly situation, which some scholars have attributed to the common challenges of the Nigerian federation [3]. As a result, time management could be considered as one of the major competitive tools that can contribute towards improved organisational performance. Time management is necessary for any organisation to carry out its operations effectively. Improved operational efficiency through time management contributes to organisational success. Studies have empirically demonstrated the relationship between time management practices and organisational performance [1]. It is in view of this that this paper intends to investigate the importance of time management and organizational productivity.

Productivity is the time an employee actively spends in the work in which he or she was employed to achieve the desired results expected from an employee's job description [4]. The golden rule of productivity is this: the best way to achieve the most is to choose one task to work on. Only focus on this task, without distractions or multitasking [5]. Increasing the productivity of managers as people who have the knowledge and skills required of each of them can be achieved through proper time management [6]. One of the tools for managing time management is training. As stated by Van Eerde one month after undergoing time management training, trainees reported a significant decrease in avoidance behavior and worry and an increase in their ability to manage time. The results suggest that time management training is helpful in lessening worry and procrastination at work [7]. Effective time management in

the work of a manager is also an important prerequisite for achieving partial goals as well as strategic goals of the organization. Within the issue of time management, three categories of people can be defined. The view of the first group is that time management is needed to succeed. The second group considers time management unnecessary, and the third group would like to change something in life but has a problem concentrating and then persevering [8].

Thus, work performance is associated with the ability of employees to know set goals, meet expectations, and achieve goals, or perform a standard set of tasks for the organization. Work performance is directly related to the efficiency of employees [9]. Urban [10] describes personal effectiveness as the ratio between the results achieved and the time spent on them. Alternatively, it is the ratio between the time devoted to "real work" and the total time of work or time spent at work. Due to low personal efficiency, there is a significant number of hours we spend on work. If we come to the conclusion that the coefficient of personal effectiveness is lower than 25%, then the person should begin to seriously consider improving his personal effectiveness [10]. The effective management of time and other inputs or resources in a system is behind growing productivity, while the ineffective management of these inputs accounts for ebbing productivity and, the manager is responsible for this management in the system. Reports show that 3 out of 4 ventures die every year in Nigeria [11]. This is not unconnected with ineffective management of time and other material and human inputs or resources in the venture. Consequently, this paper aims to evaluate organizational activities and effective time management.

#### Conceptual Framework

##### Productivity

Productivity is the rate at which goods are produced, and the amount produced, especially in relation to the work, time, and money needed to produce them [12]. It is the rate at which a worker, a

company or a country produces goods, and the amount produced, compared with how much time, work and money is needed to produce them [13]. Productivity is a reflection of degree of efficiency and

effectiveness of the utilization of human and material resources, such as capital, machines and time. Improving productivity calls for attitudinal changes and concerted efforts of all those directly or indirectly involved in production [14; 15]. The International Labour Organization, [15] itemized the practical steps to be taken by employers, managers, workers' organizations, and management in conjunction with workers to raise productivity.

Public relations is a field of study concerned with the management function of creation, development, and carrying out of policies and programmes to

#### Time Management for Public Relations Administrators

Time is of essence in every function, including that of the public relations manager. It is a common denominator for measuring all factors. There are 7 days in a week. A lunar month has 28 days and a calendar year has 365 days or 52 weeks or 12 months. A leap year has 366 days. These are constant quantities, and none of them can vary. Nobody can add to or subtract from time or its component. And, none can create or destroy time. Time continues to tick at a fixed rate. It does not wait for anyone. No human can delay it or fast track it. Every second, minute, day, week, month or year that passes, counts in relation to the output of a system. Unfortunately, people are hardly mindful of this hard fact, and while away irretrievable time that cannot be created or replaced by them. Although, there are 24 hours in a day for everybody, it is not everyone that effectively and efficiently utilizes and accounts for them. All the 24 hours are available to everyone, but it is only the hours that are well utilized and judiciously accounted for that will translate to productivity in the system and functionality of the user of the time. The hours that are wasted translate to lower productivity and indict the prodigal person. No doubt, everyone is on the move: some are moving forward, others backward and yet some others are moving nowhere in particular. Most people waste the greater part of the 24 hours in a day in frivolous activities. Workers lavish time in:

influence public opinions or public reaction about an idea, a product, or an organization. The field of public relations has become an important part of the economic, social, and political pattern of life in many nations. It includes advertising, publicity, promotional activities, and press contact, and co-exists in business with marketing and merchandising to create the climate in which all selling functions occur. Public relations activities help individuals and organizations to achieve their aims in the public relations sphere by building prestige and promoting products, as well as images [8].

- lateness to work,
- perambulation and disorderly movements in workplace
- unnecessary discussion while at work,
- long telephone discussion during office hours,
- entertaining visitors during work hours,
- overstaying the break period, and
- time spent for illness and maternity.

Workers also extract time from establishments by closing prematurely at weekend to visit the village and coming to work late the Monday morning on the excuse of coming directly from the village. Excuses are no replacements for performance. No matter how cogent they may appear, excuses do not build the system, but their attendant non-performance contributes to the downturn of the system. Workers should rather have reasons to perform than excuses to fail to perform. This involves cultivation of positive work attitudes, burning with desire to perform, and to go the extra mile. Unfortunately most workers hardly have enough love for their work and job satisfaction to cultivate the positive work attitudes; they rather distance themselves from job ethics. Strategic time measurement and management has become very imperative for the success of organizations. On the average, a worker has 52 weeks of workdays or 260 workdays a year, 5 workdays of 8 hours

each or 40 hours a week to work. If he wastes one hour a day in one or more of the aforementioned ways as is commonly obtained in an ineffectively managed establishment, then he works only for 35 hours - instead of 40- in a week. This is 87.5% of the time he should put in. By the same token, he serves for only 1,820 hours -instead of 2080-in a year or 45.5 weeks- instead of 52. He has wasted 6.5 work weeks, and thereby incurred huge loss to the establishment. Thus, if that worker is entitled to a 3-week annual leave, he needs to forfeit his leave and add extra time of service equivalent to 3.5 work weeks or 28 man-hours in order to make good his wasted work hours in a year. In the alternative, he needs to put in one hour service after the close of work to recover the one he had wasted. But, in most cases he will be the first worker to count that extra hour of service as overtime and demand for the pay, shoving aside his defrauding the establishment of one hour in lateness or other ways.

The greater the number of workers that share poor work attitudes, the deeper the serious trouble for the establishment, as the amount of man-hours lost to excuses will be colossal and dangerously staggering. Worst still, there is a ripple or chain or multiplier effect. The prodigal person can influence other workers. Besides, a piece of work may be carried out only when another one has been previously done. In this case, a worker waits for the slower worker, leading to burning the candle from both ends. People cook up all shades of excuses and justifications to disrespect time over which they have no control. There are wrong values placed on time. Workers appear to forget that their employer thrive on the quality and duration of their services., and, that each worker has a lifespan within which he ought to perform and give a good account of his life, be fulfilled or otherwise. This span is said to be 49 years for a Nigerian [6]. The epitaph of every man has two important dates - the birth and the death dates. Between them is a hyphen, which represents his activities in

his lifetime. Research shows that over 90% of this time is spent on retrogressive activities involving: disagreements, strife, gossip, drinking, immorality, foul thoughts/words, wickedness, wars, etc. While less than 10% is spent on peace and productive activities and projects. Workers ought to examine on daily basis how much of their pay they have justified and actually deserve by proving faithful in rendering the quality and duration of the service expected of them [6]. In the all-important activities of public relations, which help individuals and organizations to achieve their aims in the public relations sphere, includes: building prestige, promotion of products, and winning elections or legislative baffles, time is of a paramount essence. Each of these activities is time-bound, and hardly all-life or life-long affair. Building of prestige is expected at a particular time and for a particular purpose. In the lifespan of a product, promotion is required at some points, not necessarily at others; Elections are seasonal and have much to do with time. Public relations work involves various functions including the following [8]:

- planning - that is, analyzing problems and opportunities defining goals, determining the public to be reached, and proposing and formulating a campaign of activities;
- writing and editing materials such as press release, speeches, stockholder reports, product information, and employee publications; placing information in the most advantageous way;
- Organizing special events such as press functions, award programmes, exhibits, and displays; setting up face-to-face communication including the preparation and delivery of speeches;
- Providing research and evaluation using interviews, reference materials, and various survey techniques;

- And managing resources by planning, budgeting, and recruiting and training staff to attain these objectives.

Accordingly, each of these functions is very much related to time. A public relations manager is the one who shows the way, guides, directs, commands others to carry out the above public relations functions to achieve results and the desired goal or vision. He provides visions and goals, and gets subordinates to be committed to achieving them [6].

Although an average man is republican by nature, public relations managers are of key importance for the success of public relations ventures. Effective management is indispensable for meaningful progress in the public relations industry. Management is the most important single factor in determining business success or failure

#### The Way Forward toward Organizational Effective Time Management

The methods and techniques used in planning and organizing one's own work forms an important component of a manager's professional competence. Effective technology should make it possible to eliminate unnecessary work, and thus shorten the loss of time, reduce stress, reconcile work and private life, increase personal productivity, and work with greater self-realization [9]. Hence, Skorková states in her publication that up to 66% of managers take their work home and 41% of managers do not feel a balance between private and professional life. The work-life balance theme is implemented in their procedures by many successful companies, which have understood that a satisfied employee is much more efficient and productive. Reconciling the work and private life of a manager is an important measure to ensure the rational setting of goals, the fulfillment of tasks, the fight against

in our competitive, turbulent, fast-moving globalizing economy. The quality of management is the decisive strength or weakness of an organization. The ability to provide the necessary management is the key determinant of achievement in all human activities. And, there has never been a greater need for effective management in all spheres of human endeavour than there is today [6]. Strategic work measurement and study needs to be used by the public relations manager who aspires to beat the overbearing poor work attitudes of workers. Hourly, daily, weekly, monthly and annual work targets need to be designed for each worker. Strong supervision apparatus needs to be put on ground. Properly timed evaluation also needs to come into play, if the public relations manager must smile at productivity [6].

disruptive factors, and ensuring work efficiency [4]. Poulouse and Sudarsan describe work-life balance as the harmonization of work and non-work life, trying to penetrate into every area of each employee's life. Work-life balance either improves the conditions for the employees themselves or improves the productivity of the company [9]. According to a 2015 survey of small and medium-sized companies in 16 European countries, in a sample of 5500 respondents, up to a third of employees in Europe admitted that they do not have enough time for their personal lives and almost a quarter say that it is difficult for them to create space for personal life at all. Workplace relationships and management styles have a pervasive impact on the quality work life (QWL), not only mitigating the adverse effects of ICT, but also promoting sustainable productivity and employee performance.

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