

“I just didn’t have enough time!”

Bob ‘Idea Man’ Hooey

The harsh truth is “*we have all the time there is!*” Each of us has the *same* 1440 minutes in our day. What makes the difference is how we allocate and leverage those minutes. Or, how we allow others to use or abuse these minutes for us.

Despite a massive selection of seminars, notebooks, To Do lists, computers, and assorted electronic and paper organizers, we still find ourselves *too busy* and *overwhelmed* with commitments, obligations, and deadlines. **As leaders, being too busy to invest in working with, coaching, and leading your team can have drastic consequences for everyone, including us.**

We mean well, we really do! We even plan to buckle down and manage or schedule our time more effectively. Unfortunately, our human nature works against us, unless we make a disciplined effort to keep our lives and priorities on track.

The TRUTH – WE (not anyone else) are responsible for the gross mismanagement of our time and the amount of time WE allow others to waste. **We need to learn to say NO to the distractions and the actions that take us away from what is our most important functions, the best use of our expertise, skills, and energies.**

- What are we the **‘best’** at?
- Why are we not focusing our energies on that **priority**?

We have all the *reasons* why we didn’t use our time more wisely or should we say all the excuses. Sometimes the harsh reality gives us a wake-up call when we miss an important deadline because we procrastinated, overcommitted, or underestimated the time needed to finish a project and ran out of time. Sound familiar?

I’ve heard it said, **“Someone who lacks the will to say ‘NO’ will always be at the mercy of the time wasters”**. There are always people who will take your time. They will steal it, waste it, poison it, and rob you of the very essence of your life; unless you take control and decide for yourself who gets how much time and for what purpose. **Remember it’s your time and it’s your choice!**

Today, you can decide to fight and take back control of your time and life! It takes planning and discipline, but it can be done!

One effective technique learned to help recapture my time and life was to **set aside regular time to ‘plan’ future activities**. A few minutes spent planning each day, before starting, will save you hours! It is amazing what having a *daily focus* on the most important or critical activity can do to help free-up your time and stop saying yes as much!

Similarly, invest regular time weekly and monthly to layout and schedule your priorities (vs. prioritize your schedule), block out specific times, and allocate resources to reach your personal and professional goals. This will make a profound difference in your leadership, life management, and the results of your time investment. It did for me, professionally and personally.

Learn to **PLAN Monthly, SCHEDULE Weekly, and Lead Daily!**

Where are you on your personal timeline?

0 _____ X _____ 10

0=way far behind

10=doing very well

Take a moment and give yourself an honest evaluation of how well you are doing in managing yourself in relation to the time you have to lead, live, and create a lasting legacy. **Then ask yourself:**

- What obstacles stand in your way of moving closer to 10?
- What do you have to do or say no to doing to move your productivity and leveraged use of time closer to 10?
- When are you going to act?

Here is something adapted from our ***'Running TOO Fast? Idea-rich strategies for the overwhelmed'*** that might be a good investment of your time; especially, if you want to be a more effective leader in working with your teams.

For this brief exercise think through your daily interactions with the people on your team. Use the behaviour lists here (or adapt your own) and determine how much time (percentages) you invest on each one. In the next column put down the ideal allocation of time you would like to invest (again in percentages)

Behavior or action	% of time you invest now	% ideal time to invest
Directing		
Informing or explaining		
Clarifying or defending		
Persuading (nudging)		
Collaborating (teams)		
Brainstorming (envisioning)		
Reflecting (quiet thinking time)		
Observing (checking in)		
Disciplining (correcting)		
Resolving interpersonal conflicts		
Encouraging or praising		

Ask yourself:

1. Is there a gap between how I should invest my energy and time and how I actually invest it?
2. Are there actions/behaviours that take up too much of my time? Why?
3. Are there strategies I can employ that would move me closer to my idea investment of time and action?

Use the answers to these questions to help build a success strategy to leverage your time and actions for increased productivity: for you and your team. **When you take the lead, they will follow your example.**

© 1999-2021 Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey *excerpted from Prepare yourself to WIN!*

Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey, DTM, PRA, CKD-Emeritus, Accredited Speaker, 2011 Spirit of CAPS recipient is an inspirational leader, speaker, and a prolific author whose works include **'Legacy of Leadership, Strive for significance – lead on purpose!'**, **'Speaking for Success'** and **'The Courage to Lead!'** His articles have been featured in a multitude of North American trade and global consumer publications. He is a respected leader who has been honored by CAPS, NSA, Toastmasters, and the United Nations for his leadership contributions. His creative Ideas At Work have allowed him to travel the globe sharing insights, encouragement in 61 countries, so far. With Covid-19 he has been zooming around the globe to share his ideas. His **innovative Ideas At Work!** have been successfully applied by global leaders as well as Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies.