

# 3 Critical Ways Every Leader Must Spend Their Time

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Time is one of the greatest assets of any leader. In my experience, every leader has three critical segments where they must invest their time on a regular basis. Learning to balance a leader's time effectively is often a key in determining the level of success the leader attains.

It also seems to me leaders tend to do one of these especially well, so by default they spend most of their time on that one – often to the neglect of the other two. All three are needed.

Learning to balance a leader's time in each of these three areas will greatly enhance the leader's productivity, so the leader must discipline for the other two.

Here are the 3 critical ways every leader must spend time:

## **Time reflecting on past experience**

If as a leader you don't evaluate where you have been and what has been done, you will soon be disappointed with where you are going. Leaders must spend ample time in personal, team member and organizational evaluations. This includes celebrating success. People need this too.

Evaluation should be done after each major event but also on a regular basis evaluating overall activity of the organization should be considered. As leader, we can't get frozen on this one though – always thinking of what has already happened. At some point it's time for us to move forward.

## **Time focusing on current obligations**

As a leader, you must be disciplined to take care of the immediate needs of the organization. The busier a leader becomes, unless a leader is naturally wired for this one, the more he or she tends to naturally neglect routine tasks. Things like returning phone calls and emails in a timely manner, for example, remain critical at every level of leadership. This may also include simply catching up with co-workers, even in social conversation.

Therefore, I find personally if I don't operate with some scheduled time for current obligations I will get dreadfully behind and end up not being effective for anyone.

## **Time dreaming about the future**

As a leader, you must spend time dreaming about the future. If a leader doesn't, no one else will either. This is critical to an organization's success. I believe the larger an organization grows, or the leader's responsibilities expand the more time must be spent on this aspect of time management.

This comes natural for some leaders and not for others. Personally, I love this one. So, again, if it's not natural it must be scheduled. Perhaps planning a few hours, a week to read, brainstorm, interact with other creative leaders can make a big difference. Several times a year it may be important for you to spend a day or more away from the office with the sole purpose of dreaming of what's next.

The season you are in will often determine which of these get the greatest attention at the time, but none of them can be neglected for long periods of time. Again, a leader learning to balance these three components of time is a key aspect in determining the ultimate success of the leader.