



This activity is an individual assessment matching your ultimate goals with your day to day activities. This activity will help you in determining if your activities will yield the type of results that you need to provide. It will also help you in the development of a firmer direction for future activities.

A Way Out of the Activity Trap

First, formulate a clear statement of the overarching goal of your group (organization or department). This is the overall mission of your group, its reason for existence. The statement of overarching goal should be written in terms of your primary focus or method of providing services that are designed to meet your clients' needs.

Second, write your three to five key objectives to accomplish for the year. These are the ends or aims toward which your activities should be directed. Consider how these objectives contribute to the overarching goal.

Third, systematically record how you spend your time in a given week. In 15 minute increments, keep a tally of your activities each day. At the end of the week, list all of the activities and how much time was devoted to each.

Fourth, align the activities with the objectives. With a clean table or desk and a pack of 3 x 5 cards, this step will take about one hour. Write the overarching goal, your performance objectives, and the activities (complete with the amount of time spent on them) on individual 3 x 5 cards. Then lay out the activity cards as subsets of the objectives, all as subsets of the overarching goal at the top.

This may reveal some surprising results. You may find that one or more of your objectives have no activity cards beneath them. You may find that you have a number of activity cards that are not related to any of your performance objectives. Or you may discover that the time allotments associated with certain activities are not consistent with the relative importance of the objectives that these activities support. Any of these findings should give you reason to ponder how you are spending your time.

Fifth, develop a plan of action for improving your time management. Identify the barriers and determine how you will overcome the barriers. Develop specific action steps that can be taken immediately. Sixth, and finally, implement the plan of action. Do not be disheartened if you are not successful in implementing all aspects of your plan immediately. Be sure to pat yourself on the back for your successes.

Reference: adapted from Williamson, J. (1986). The Leader-manager. New York. N. Y. Wiley Publishing.