

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN STRESS MANAGEMENT AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Ioana Cătălina GHIȚĂ¹

Abstract. *We are living in a society in which time, or better said, the lack of time has become one of the main causes of stress. Deadlines, "flash" communication, increasingly busy agendas of the managers (doubled by their lack of will to modify them), for sure they all need a new approach. The support elements, which come from an uprising science, "Time Management", are really useful in reducing the stress level and in preparing oneself against the effects of the exogenic factors.*

Keywords: time, stress, behaviour, human resources, time management, stress management

1. Introduction

Almost one hundred years ago, the author who has set the basis of the scientific management, Frederick Taylor, was postulating the principle of "keeping strict evidence of time and labor quoting", making a giant step towards the increase of the efficiency within an organization. Management means efficient and forcible leadership for a certain activity. From this perspective, the manager cannot do profitable business for the activity he is responsible if he does not know how to efficiently manage his resources. And time is a valuable, assertive, and irreversible economic resource.

Time compression is a more and more frequent topic of discussion, and the argument through which this theory stands up is the lack of time to successfully carry out all the activities we have set ourselves for a given day.

The bigger and bigger changes occurring around us every day which bring about greater and greater challenges through the adaptations they require create the impression of time compression.

There truly is a continuous flow of time, the way we handle this dimension can generate the impression of time flowing at an immeasurable speed. The fact that we cannot control time makes us more and more stressed as well as more and more frustrated.

¹PhD, Valahia University of Targoviste, Romania (ghita.i.catalina@gmail.com).

2. Time – the most valuable resource

The time is our most valuable resource: whatever we do, we need time; time cannot be enhanced; time cannot be storage; time cannot be bought; success depends in a high degree on the way we manage our time.

We spend a great part of our lives going to work, solving the tasks required by our job before going home and handling problems generated by time, trying to solve all our duties outside our professional life.

Time management helps us obtain, to a certain extent, control over both our professional and personal life. It is essential to focus on the results as, in this way, we will be able to identify the activities which contribute to our efficiency and also the activities which waste our time and distract us from our attaining goals.

Is there any connection between time and stress?

There can only be one answer: YES.

3. Time – an important, stress generating resource

Time is the most important source of stress. It has been demonstrated that there are important connections between the presences of 'stressors' generated by time and lack of professional satisfaction, as well as a series of illnesses like: high blood pressure, premature ageing, high cholesterol levels and so on. In the case of faulty time management, stress manifests itself in subtle yet various manners, people subjected to stress tending to accentuate their usual behavior: the more shy individuals become shier and more uncommunicative, and the ones who prefer solitude will be more avoidant of social interactions. The ones, who work late, will work much later overtime. Aside from these, there may appear also sleep disfunctionalities, isolation from the other members of the organization, substance abuse. All these lead to the decrease of efficiency and an even worse time management.

Temporary presence of time 'stressors' can be, in some cases, an important motivating factor, the individual wanting to accomplish his or her tasks, their accomplishment bringing greater satisfaction than in the instance where stress-causing factors would be lacking. [1].

The studies elaborated along the years like Mintzberg in 1973, Vinton in 1992, Stalk&Hout in 1990, Kahn&Byasiere in 1992 [3], have pinpointed the most common sources of stress: time, meetings, unwanted situations and anticipation. The four categories of stress-causing factors are illustrated in the table below:

Table no. 1

The four time-related stress sources

Stress-causing factor	Sources of stress
Time	Over strung work, losing control over the time
Meetings	Role conflicts, conflicts between the debates, actions
Situation	Bad work conditions, sudden changes in the organizational climate
Anticipation	Pleasant surprises, fear

Source: Whetter, D., Cameron, K., 2002, 113

Stress, a problem and responsibility of both employer and the employee, is considered the second most frequent health problem connected to one's work in Europe, the most frequent being illnesses of the bones and muscles. The costs connected to the mental health disorders covered by the Companies surpass 200 billion Euros per year. Faultily conceiving, organizing and managing the activities, as well as inappropriate social context within the workspace hold psychosocial risks and can have negative effects on a psychological, physical or social level, as well as stress within the workspace, exhaustion or depression [6].

4. Which are the causes which bring about stress within the workspace?

Stress affects individuals differently, but there are but there are a number of situations which normally lead to occupational stress:

- incompatibility of values: this appears in the case of individuals who build a career which contradicts their own beliefs or values;
- overload: employees are constantly under the pressure of compensating the lack of personnel or the low performance of their colleagues;
- lack of time;
- lack of control: lack of autonomy, lack of the authority to correct the procedural errors;
- lack of work recognition or lack of proper compensation for the well-done job;
- the activity is dull and lacking challenges;
- failure to promote the team spirit.

The three **methods of time streamlining** and, implicitly, of **stress reduction** are: Organization, Prioritization and Planning. The planning techniques, mentioned

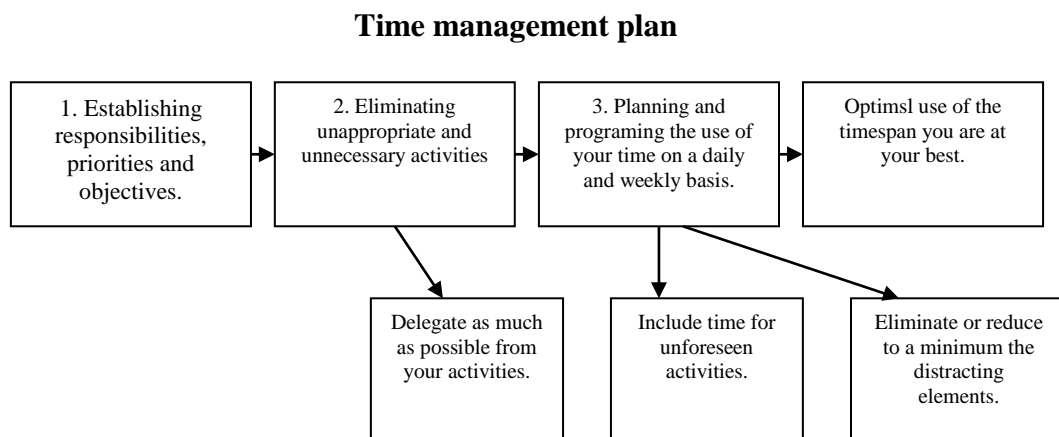
above, involves a series of methods and techniques, from which the most important are:

- Mind mapping (A mind map is a [diagram](#) used to visually organize information. A mind map is hierarchical and shows relationships among pieces of the whole. It is often created around a single concept, drawn as an image in the center of a blank page, to which associated representations of ideas such as images, words and parts of words are added. Major ideas are connected directly to the central concept, and other ideas branch out from those) [5];
- Spreadsheet (columns for key areas / timelines / deadlines / costs / other details)
- SWOT analysis for the evaluation of the objectives.

5. Presentation of time management plan

Presentation of time management plan requires the following characteristics: give up the strive to plan absolutely everything. The attempt to plan each minute can become a waste of time and can become counterproductive; do not overtake to many tasks at once; delegate; be creative; be flexible; take breaks; be ready to give up your list; use the technology at hand as much as possible.

Figure no. 1



Source: Linkgroup, Center for career development. Time management

According to all presented above, we consider as solutions to prevent stress and create a good psychosocial work environment, the following:

- Ensure workers have enough time and autonomy to manage their work;
- Clarify roles and tasks, providing regular constructive feedback;
- Inform workers about change and involve them, in decision-making;
- Implement policies to prevent harassment and violence;
- Ensure fair work distribution and reward;
- Facilitate open and two-way communication.

Also, a few pieces of advice for making the best of the time available are the following:

- Make time for work, it is the key to success;
- Make time for thinking, it is the source of power;
- Make time for playing, it is the secret of eternal youth;
- Make time for love, it is the pleasure of life;
- Make time for reading, it is the fountain of wisdom;
- Make time for friends, it is the road to happiness;
- Make time for laughing, it is the music of the soul.

Conclusions

Stress is a multi-faceted phenomenon with multiple causes and requires a systematic approach to its identification and management. It is a growing issue in the workplace especially due to the current economic downturn but it is also an issue that can be prevented and reduced so it does not become detrimental to workers' health. Employers will gain in performance improvements if employees are able to give their best and do not feel under constant unbearable pressure. Ample guidance and stress risk assessment tools are freely available to employers to support them in managing stress effectively.

I personally consider that, in the current conditions and with the attention channeled upon this syndrome, the problem of stress in the workplace will be diminished over time, it is important that each of us helps in this endeavor, adopts a more positive attitude and try to reduce stress at a personal level, as change begins with oneself.

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