

Long-winded meetings are not the answer

Chasing timelines for executives and managers is always daunting. But not many measure the apt success criteria for these tasks assigned to them.

It is not just the time taken, but the desired outcomes that matters. In our daily work life, too many jobs are left pending as work in progress with no clear visibility about their closure or assessment of their required impact. It is a common sight in most offices where executives are huddled in meetings, deliberations and discussions with no resolution in view.

It is a problem that has assumed chronic proportions and severely affecting the performance of corporate management and boardrooms. Corporate time wastage due to delayed decision making as a result of prolonged deliberations is a burning issue echoed in most corporate corridors. Therefore, a defined time frame with due governance criteria must be followed to achieve the needed results.

One common concern people have about office time management is either the decision-makers are held up in meetings or files are in an endless wait for review. This issue is, in fact, part of an age-old office legacy, common to office routines and is a reflection of deferred and chaotic decision-making.

Organisational efficiency can be significantly improvised should the project, task, assignments handling process be done around key goals that are communicated effectively. These assignment timelines, milestones and goals should be articulated and agreed with a definite measuring criteria for the desired result.

Containing cost

Effective time management is the critical need of the hour, and especially in times of austerity, such a cost must be contained. As a caution and to stop this colossal waste, companies need to rope in their management and executives to review overall processes and tweak the work culture.

Leaving most tasks as "work in progress" with no defined review of the desired outcome is a burning issue that company managements must devise ways to reduce such a colossal wastage of time resources. Executive time is the most precious commodity and must be used prudently. There is a compelling need to evaluate the performance of various tasks based on specific mechanisms.

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Companies must do assessments of their executive productivity. They should examine between closed and outstanding tasks assigned, both collectively and individually so as to examine the overall corporate performance as well as executive productivity. How many of these are pending as work in progress versus projects that are completed and closed? Not just the work completion, but with its key results assessed.

Time, communication and resolution management are three core factors that drive any company's performance. To strengthen these, the company must introduce clear guidelines to outline their process and impact. Time and resolution management is about the principle of least time with maximum impact.

Compounding the confusion

Long meetings without reaching any resolution is indeed a waste of time that undermines the organisation's cost-effectiveness. And communications with numerous memos, emails with additional contents or addresses is another factor that compounds corporate confusion.

Project management or task assignment must have clear milestones of each task within the agreed time frame to assess results of each accomplished task. Managements must build this into the organisational culture — otherwise executives get lost and many tasks are left behind as just "work in progress".

I am often puzzled by standard answers from many executives. Whenever a question is asked about the status of any work assigned to them, I get the response "I sent the mail" or "We had a meeting to discuss this".

What does it mean? Is there any clarity in these responses? To these questions, a standard answer should be based on time of the job assigned to you, a resolution mechanism proposed and it was escalated if not solved.

Organisations need to respect the sanctity of time, build the right communication protocols and a culture of impact management.

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