

Time Management Mindset, a Pivotal Success Code for Engineers

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Abstract—Engineering as a course is extremely compacted within the semesters, which really makes a relatively heavy course load when compared to several other courses. This is felt by the average or sometimes even the above average students too. This is inevitable and the scenario cannot be altered much, even if the intellectual decision-making authorities are so willing to contemplate and implement. The rising global competition at the technology frontier makes it a war like situation. It is not only at the IT front but even the other core branches where the dynamic paradigm of technology trends constantly brings about a scenario of change with each passing unit of time. Hence under such prevailing unalterable situations the one life skill that could completely come to the rescue and streamline the life of an engineering student is Time Management. Unfortunately, this vital life skill is the most scarcely practiced employability skill by the student community at large which includes all fields of study. In the context of engineering studies this skill comes to the rescue while pursuing the course and more importantly once they step out of the campus to step into employment. This paper discusses the ins and outs of this vital skill of Time Management, the need and how to go about it, plan, pursue and master this skill. It also discusses how this skill adds to work life balance, ensures stress relief and guarantees success.

Index Terms—Employability skills, Engineering, job scenario, life Skills, Time management.

I. INTRODUCTION

The four years degree tenure of an engineering course is extremely compacted into the eight semesters, which really makes a relatively heavy course load when compared to several other courses. This is felt by the average or sometimes even the above average students too. This is inevitable and the scenario cannot be altered much, even if the intellectual decision-making authorities are so willing to contemplate and

implement. The reason being the rising global competition at the technology frontier making it a war like situation. It is not only at the IT front but even the other core branches where the dynamic paradigm of technology trends constantly brings about a scenario of change with each passing unit of time. Hence under such prevailing unalterable situations the one life skill that could completely come to the rescue and streamline the life of an engineering student is Time Management. Unfortunately, this vital life skill is the most scarcely practiced employability skill by the student community at large which includes all fields of study, though here when discussing the engineering students, they too often do not realize the worth of time management. This scarcely practiced skill of time management, especially by students, can absolutely bring about a massive positive change in their mindset and also amount to a substantial reduction in the stress levels of an average student. No doubt we all realize by now how detrimental the effects of anxiety and stress could be to a young mind, just preparing to take off in the professional flight to success.

The four years of an Engineering degree program demands articulations at using tools or material as well as non material mechanisms that can maximize their efficiency, productivity, and performance to meet constant tough deadlines. Meeting these requirements could inevitably amount to relaxed mental status, with reduced anxiety and stress levels. Time is, undoubtedly, a fixed resource that needs to be carefully managed to optimize results and performance, hence leading to mental agony relief for most students. Yet this precious resource has been reportedly used much inadvertently with the uttermost negligence by the student community leading to the chaos and stories of mental agony and distress which floods the social media platforms reported by the students themselves. This further aggravates the

concerns of not only the students aspiring to take up engineering but also the parents who keep themselves closely associated and take the career decisions of their children, and if not entirely so, but at the least, influence their decisions to a greater extent. By now all the corporates emphasize this pivotal skill which is a mandate for establishing work life balance.

II. TIME MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATION: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Oxford dictionary defines time management as “the ability to use one’s time effectively, especially at work.”[1] It would actually imply managing the time available for a particular or a set of tasks effectively allocating the right amount of time for each function in such a manner which allows not only the completion of the task but also resulting in the maximum positive outcomes. Effective time management allows students to assign specific time slots to activities as per their importance. Time Management also refers to making the best use of time as a limited resource. A recent review on time management literature has elaborated to provide an overview for those interested in the current progress in time management research[2] The findings of this review demonstrated clearly that precise time management behaviors relate positively to not only perceived control of time, but also job satisfaction, and its implications to health benefits were maximum, and thus also resulted in minimal stress or anxiety in individuals. A study elucidated the direct relationship of time management to grade points [3]. Another recent study elaborated the impact of this great virtue on education of students[4]. This study was based on a questionnaire given to students, in which the conclusion deduced according to the student's perception was that pre planning their studies had been beneficial for their academic performance. However, less than half of the students also agreed that they manage their time. Another detailed study evaluated the impact of managing time on the academic achievement of students [5]. This study concluded on a specific correlation between the Time management practices and academic performances of students, They also deduced an association between time management practices, academic achievements and stress reduction and anxiety lessening, the practices of time management was directly correlated with higher

academic success. Another study evaluated the effects of study and examined the effects of a time management training program on perceived control of time and sensing of stress in the students of higher education. This study positively concluded with outcomes expressing that stress levels in students decreased whereas perceived control of time increased after training. Therefore, it could be said that time management training might contribute to positive outcomes for students’ well-being. [6]. It would be unfair not to discuss the well known book “The time trap: The classic book on time management” by Alec Mackenzie Pat Nickerson [7]. This book discusses the ins and outs of managing time and how to prioritize and plan work within a time frame. This is definitely a must read for all students to set off on a career path or even professionals urging to accelerate on their road to success. A paper discussing a nine-month study of the work practices of a group of software engineers revealed how the group felt of having too much to do and not enough time to do it. In this study the theoretical and practical implications of the sociology of work time are explored [8]. An article expressed the importance of time management in construction, in design-build construction, efficient project management controls, scheduling and execution of the contract as agreed upon by the parties were the vitals of the project management. Time Management is a major area of concern to the builder and his team. It plays an important role in shaping the progress of projects and thus is decisive in determining its course. The professionals of the construction industry today are aware of the challenges ahead of them [9]. Another different experimental study elucidated quite interesting outcomes that time pressure experienced by scientists and engineers resulted in several aspects of performance including usefulness, innovation, and productivity. Higher time pressure was associated with above average performance during the five years of study [10].

III. MANAGING TIME EFFECTIVELY: A VITAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILL FOR ENGINEERING ASPIRANTS

Managing time effectively is a mindset which precedes success in almost every field of study and profession. This fundamentally imperative employability skill is imbibed in a persona with

regular practice, critical examination and testing outcomes repetitively. As this paper restricts itself to time management as a virtue and vital adaptive skill for students in the engineering segment, we will discuss this integral and much needed skill in the context of engineering aspirants. Implementing time management skills as regular practice in daily study update or professional project completion is a mindset of active individuals with a habit or desire for success in whatever they endeavor. This implies getting into the right frame of mind which is crucial for tackling any ambitious or complex project, which can be true for engineers in any field today, right from the IT Sector to the Construction, Mechanical or even Biotechnology. Solving problems in day to day projects is common everywhere, as an engineers' day comprises multitudes of different tasks, and developing effective time management strategies for the completion of projects in an efficient manner, while critically delivering high level of service for internal and external customer satisfaction. It is crucial to get into this frame of mind while pursuing the studies. In engineering academics since there are multiple things to be accomplished at the same time, a student is exposed to a new set of subjects in each semester, with projects, assignments, tests, internships and the like. It is quite common for one to focus on one functional facet more, or if we put it straight, assigning due weightage to each function would definitely mean a pressing need to practise Time Management skills with precision. Now the most imperative question is do they ever realize this while pursuing their studies? Only sometimes if they are fortunate enough to be in close proximity of a faculty, trainer or mentor who can impressively point out where they lack, or how time could be managed effectively to set the right pieces of the jigsaw for completion.

IV. CREATING A FOUNDATION FOR PRIORITIES

As a student one needs to lay the foundation of practicing Time management skills on a daily basis. For this there's a lot on the to do list. We need to prioritize our projects and assign due weightage to each. This allows us to assign the exact time frame for each task, according to completion deadlines, so that you can carefully eliminate the risks which jeopardize your success, each time. The prioritization should be

based on long term and short term goal achievement. Most of us commonly make a to-do list and go through it several times a day. Whether working on one large project or juggling between various tasks. That's why, one must surely start the day with clear goals to complete the day's tasks and this could lead to long-term success. Breaking down larger projects into smaller and more manageable goals helps manage time more effectively, as well as boost motivation for completion of the projects. After all, there's nothing more satisfying and motivating than ticking off items on your To Do list. To take an example when the student has to prepare for an upcoming examination he or she must check out the available time and the topics to be covered. And each time a topic is timely covered there is an occasion for rejoicing. This is prioritizing short term goals and completion. At the same time the long term goals need to be set. More importantly, each goal be it short term or long term should always be time bound, which means, we set a deadline of time for completion of the project undertaken.

V. WHAT HELPS AND HOW TO GET STARTED

Time management is the practice of organizing and planning the available time, assigning appropriate time for various activities, according to set priorities. This eventually facilitates working smarter, less harder, maximizing work done in less time. It has been seen that highest achievers manage their time exceptionally well.

Time Management plays a vital role in the corporate sector and helps employees to finish off their assignments on time. This implies doing the right thing at the right time is called Time Management. But let's not forget that since it is a vital employability skill in the corporate sector hence should be practiced during college. Though this is an important topic in Management studies, but in other academic spheres such as engineering, Time Management has not been stressed upon. Moreover intentional practice of this imperative skill has not been done hence, engineering aspirants are sometimes poor planners which results in lagging behind while completing projects and assignments. Even during placements their performances are not up to the mark. Planning plays the most pivotal role in time management. An aspiring engineer as well as one who has already landed up in a job or even into a job for quite long, needs to plan

his/her day well in advance to make the perfect use of time. There is no point in working just for the sake of working. Planning of the project well in advance gives an individual a sense of direction and an estimation of available time at hand, in the organization and motivates them to complete assignments on time.

It is imperative for an individual to value time as time once lost never comes back, no matter how much resources you are prepared to spend. An individual who fails to deliver results on time is not valued as a student or as an employee in other words never taken seriously at the workplace. This skill is imperative to establish work life balance. A recent study emphasized how time management helps in creating work life balance[11]. This article directly focused on the effects of time management on work-life and study-life balance. The results of this study revealed that taking a time management program set along with the behavioral modification technique seemed quite effective and helped in creating work life balance.

One way to help yourself to start thinking clearly and solving problems more quickly is to begin practicing mindfulness and meditation, which have proven to be powerful tools in time management. In fact, mindfulness can promote divergent thinking in engineers, to plan projects and implement them in a time bound manner. Now to do it, experts often list various points which could be:

- Create a Time management mind set
- Perform a comparative analysis of how you spend your time now versus where you want to reach
- Work out your goal
- Prepare a To-Do list
- Creating a daily schedule and adhering to it
- Prioritize projects
- Learning to delete the unimportant
- Assign time limit for each project
- Perform a recheck on time after completion of each project
- Focus on result oriented tasks
- Eliminate distractions

Effective time management skills ensure:

- Meeting deadlines and appointments
- No Procrastination and increased focus
- Professionalism
- Efficient workflow and high work quality
- Reduced work stress
- High professional reputation

- Better workplace relationships
- Better Financial outcomes
- Better work -life balance

VI. CONCLUSION

Time management which is one of the integral topics of management studies and hence much emphasized while project work and case studies but in other streams this is limited to being just a topic of theoretical study. Engineering studies which stresses a lot on technical aspects, and the vastness of curriculum often poses limitations in practicing time management and other employability skills. Time management, especially by students, can absolutely bring about a massive positive change in their mindset and also amount to a substantial reduction in the stress levels of an average student. No doubt we all realize by now how detrimental the effects of anxiety and stress could be to a young mind, just preparing to take off in the professional flight to success. But nevertheless it is proposed that this skill of Time management is not only prioritized but practiced and reviewed from time to time during engineering studies both individually and institutionally so that students acknowledge the relevance of time management to success and career growth in all facets of life and result in stress reduction and further amount to creating a work life balance.

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