Time Helps; Here's How!

LinkedIn June 29, 2021

Level	Warranted Action	One thing I can try...
Employee	Facilitate exploration of individual and group temporal culture; consider use of visual assessment tools to aid exploration. Encourage dialogue and cross-organizational sharing. Experiment with and leverage time management tools in new ways.	
Manager	Foster temporal awareness for self and others. Explore different approaches to time management for self/employees, and leverage social networks. Conduct time assessment exercises and milestone check-ins. Set temporal agreements. Map relationships over time in support of long term project management planning.	
Leader	Remain conscious of the role of time in strategic planning, and include all stakeholders to foster inclusive project planning and realignments. Practice disclosure, and discuss time collectively to foster engagement. Examine time's impact on decision-making and share awareness throughout the organization to nurture meaning-making. Maintain mindfulness of the relationship between time issues and wellbeing.	
Process	**Warranted Action**	One thing I can try...
Onboarding	Assess personal temporal perspective vs. organizational prevailing temporal customs present in the culture. Consider use of journaling to mark progress and reflection. Orient to calendaring protocols and temporal language. Employ the buddy system and mentoring to introduce new hires to the culture and its time-related feautres.	
Project Teaming	Offer up-front discussion of time preferences and seek input on best practices. Allow for time planning and adjustment throughout the process, particularly at project mid-point. Monitor delays versus hastenings; explore impact of same on employee engagement.	

Time-Related Actions Can Help Us Embrace the New Normal. (Riegler, 2019)

Time in the Post Pandemic Workplace

Do you feel lately like everything seems a bit weird when you think of your own relationship to time and work? As things return to a newly defined and ever-evolving "normal", employee productivity remains a critical issue for organizations going forward as they recover from the profound disruption of the recent past and face uncertainty and a range of risks in the future (The Predictive Index, 2021). Time is a major resource and contextual factor in workplace productivity and represents both a problem *and* a solution in our ever-changing world of work. Here's how…

The Experience of Time at Work

Time is a universal concept that people all over the planet may connect with. Thus, special attention to the experience of time can contribute to building employee engagement (Riegler, 2019). Building trust with employees and teams can be fostered by exploring individual and group time personality and the acknowledgment of the impact on time on the experience of work.

There are many facets of individual time perception. For instance, one may be a "morning bird" or a "night owl". Such individual preference is termed a "chronotype", which can affect one's sleep and preferred pace of work. Internal features of identity and external stimuli may also influence a person's preferences and experience, which may be generally like others but nuanced, as well.

When individual time perception is carried into the workplace, it may alter an employee's experience of work activities and social networks.

Employees' unique individual temporal preferences contribute to the cultural norms which underlie the efforts undertaken in pursuit of deliberate change. Today's work environment involves a prevalence of self-managing teams which face intense pressure to complete assignments given often uncertain or shifting timeframes. Furthermore, change may occur on multiple levels; leaders must manage multiple streams of time-based actions and timelines and adjust the pace of one process to synchronize with that of others.

Temporal customs play an important role in the life of any workgroup, and individuals may encounter "time" in different ways due in changing work roles and priorities post-pandemic. Resulting temporal issues ranging from new norms and a faster work pace may undermine wellbeing at the individual and system level, which may be costly for both an employee and the organization. Moreover, culture plays a part in connection at the group and organizational level and can determine why an initiative may succeed spectacularly in one organization and fail miserably at another. In short, though time may be a problem, time can also be a useful key to unlock that culture and pave the way to wellbeing and productivity.

Time Tools Make a Difference

Research has shown that underlying administrative systems, age, and leadership style differences may influence the understanding of time and change (Riegler, 2019). Further, social and material resource constraints may curtail individual management capacity and generate a loss of time and increased stress. However, those who practice active listening and self-reflection may surmount complexity and limited resources. Self-awareness of time may allow one to make sense of the challenges, to gain agency, and to further mitigate time-related stress.

Practices centered on time represent an easy way to enhance understanding and to generate protocols and agreements and refresh our new workplaces.

Time for Action

A few simple and low-cost actions like those displayed above can help as you attract and retain talent. For instance, ask new teams to explore their time preferences and set agreements about deadlines when starting a project and again at the midpoint of the work. Talking about time can help employees become cognizant that organizational time may have a bearing on their personal experience, so it is worth keeping the topic of time on regular meeting agendas. Those that document processes allow employees to independently orient themselves to the work, while others struggle if they lack such documentation per Noam Scheiber (DealBook Newsletter, New York Times; July 27, 2020). Thus, encouraging all to generate shared understandings of work processes can foster cohesion and provide future references for others since some may be remote, others in office.

The Future is Now

While some may have embraced and adopted new technologies and flexibility, others may not. How will remote work be incorporated with in-person work? How will rearranged work teams, temporary staff, or new workers handle remote work and related time issues? How will time away policies change going forward? Clear communication regarding the time-related aspects of work is beneficial, particularly when things are changing. One employee may wish details in the short term while another is comfortable with a more long-term view of actions. Such acknowledgment of temporal diversity within an organization's culture also fosters connection at a juncture when embracing diversity is critical to a robust future in any workplace (Agovino, 2021; Schwartz, 2020).

Time management is important for success post-pandemic, but time awareness *even more so.*

"Temporal Awareness" (Riegler, 2019) is a leadership competency that will benefit anyone leading in the post-pandemic atmosphere. How might you take a time-related action in your organization? Is there one action mentioned here that might help you and your clients or customers? Now is the time!

I study how we experience time at work and consult with individuals and organizations regarding work issues. Do you need a sounding board to explore your own time issues? Would a workshop on time support your new and existing employees as they adjust to transition? If so, please contact me; I am glad to help!

Website: **susangriegler.com** *(new time tips featured every month)*

References:

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