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Managing People

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A Chief Executive must spend the time to effectively manage staff and maximise productivity in the workplace. Effective people management will vastly improve your own productivity and therefore company success.

A typical Chief Executive interacts with staff members via:

1. Group meeting
2. Scheduled one on one meeting
3. Unscheduled conversations

How do you get the best out of these three areas? Here are some tips. Not earth shattering, but you will be surprised how many don't happen: -

Group Meetings

Received wisdom is that many meetings waste time. Yes they can, but adhering to the steps below should deliver a better outcome.

- **An agenda.** This will focus the meeting and ensure that it is worth having. Why meet for minor items that can be cleared up on the phone?
- **Start and end on time.** Schedule time for each agenda item. Keep to the plan. Guillotine any discussion that overruns
- **Ensure everyone participates.** If they are not, they don't need to be there!
- **Delegate minute taking.** Circulate with clear action points/agreed assignments (assigned to individuals) and timing deadlines
- **Check costs of the meeting.** (The cost of the time spent by everyone at the meeting). Has it been worth it?

Finally, a good tip is to limit attendance to 6 people or less, if you are planning to take decisions. Studies show that any more than that limits effective decision-making. If the meeting is for information only, this rule need not apply.

In larger meetings, however, try to limit to 6 or less those in the meeting who are decision makers

One on Ones

These are an invaluable way to keep track of your direct reports activities. Plan regular sessions at an agreed frequency, which will allow both of you to give your undivided attention to the issues under discussion- No interruptions! Consistent application and the full commitment of both of you will make this a very productive session. No longer than 45 minutes!

- **An agenda.** This should be done by your direct report. The purpose of the meeting is to update you! Items on this agenda should include:
 - Progress report and update since last meeting
 - Issues that need your advice, counsel and /or agreement
 - Anything you need to delegate
 - Any other business
 - Keep a record of the meeting and agreed actions and deadlines

Unscheduled Internal Conversations

The single most common reason for unproductive executive time. Too many of these and the day never gets going, leading to frustration and dissatisfaction. Time taken on these interruptions also eats into the time you have for the planned activities e.g. Projects, group meetings & so on. Guess whose daily to do list will be incomplete at the end of the day?

A couple of tips:

- Set up guidelines with your staff as to what constitutes an acceptable reason to interrupt your day. Urgency and importance may be 2 potential factors. You decide
- Find out a little more about the reason for the interruption. If urgent and important, accept the unscheduled discussion. If not, arrange for a more appropriate time or reply to the issue later via voice, email or letter.

Note: A customer, client or supplier is never treated this way. They are urgent and important and should be dealt with immediately.

Finally, it is probably a good idea to take an unscheduled call from your boss or your Chairman!