Finding time to manage is one of the hardest parts of management. You are trying to find time to think and plan for tomorrow, for next week, for next month, and for next year.

Yet, our thinking normally runs in terms of a day; this day in particular. It is from today's multiplicity of problems, decisions, duties, and activities that you must find minutes or hours to think ahead. Just as with other management decisions, it takes planning and management to find this time.

As you look at a day--today, tomorrow or any day--you can, however, apply some subjective tests to what you are presently doing to evaluate your time. Then, you have a better basis for allocating time among different activities, including planning and management for the future. Among these tests or standards that we can apply are:
ANTICIPATE! Daily calendars or a periodic time use analysis permits you to discover repetitive patterns of activities. Once these patterns are known, it is possible to set up routine procedures for handling them. This, in turn, may furnish time for anticipating bigger events even further in the future.
CONCENTRATE!

In so far as possible, finish one job (or carry it to a logical stopping place) before starting another. Every interruption breaks the train of thought and action. Time is lost getting back on the track.
DISCIPLINE! Another aid to effective use of time is discipline. Self-discipline is necessary to see that self-imposed deadlines (or other activities) are carried out. Over all, considered judgments are superior to snap judgments. Occasionally, you must make a snap judgment, but avoid them when possible. Too, discipline helps you avoid impulse actions.
LISTEN! Employees, customers, friends, family—all have ideas, all can contribute to your success. Time spent developing the art of asking discerning questions and then listening to the responses yields invaluable information and saves time in getting it.
AGENDISIZE! In a sense, this is another word for planning. As you enter a conversation, meeting, or other activity, have in mind an agenda of pertinent topics in logical sequence. Then, so far as possible, stick to this agenda. It permits orderly movement from one topic to another and also cuts down on the number of unrelated and unimportant topics introduced.
ECONOMIZE! Simply ask yourself, "Will it cost the business less for me to do this routine job or for an employee to do it." Balance time, costs, and results in answering this question. If an employee can do an acceptable job at lower cost, delegate!
DELEGATE!

DELEGATE! Have you assigned responsibilities and authorities to each employee? Do they understand clearly within what boundaries they are free to act? Have you gone as far in delegation as you could? Delegation saves time from making routine decisions and from interruptions due to hazy understandings of when, where and how to act.
STANDALT

STANDALT!

STANDALT! Decide how a finished job should look or work. Perfection is an ideal which is costly to attain. Apply the economic principle of diminishing returns. Once you reach the point where added efficiency or results return you less than the cost of getting them, it is time to move to some other job.
DEADLINE! It is so easy to say, “I'll do it tomorrow!” One way to avoid this is to set up a daily, weekly or longer period schedule of activities to be accomplished. Make this complete with a deadline for completion.
CONFIRM

CONFIRM! Commit decisions, plans, and policies to paper. This takes time as you do it but may save many many minutes of future time by eliminating the need to rework the same ground over and over again.

PLAN

PLAN! Look ahead and visualize various opportunities for improvements. Then set up plans to take advantage of these.
ABSTAIN!

ABSTAIN! Avoid the temptation to accumulate information in your personal files that is unnecessary or simply routine. Your personal files should contain only information necessary for decision making or for planning. Routine information, tax records, etc., should be kept separately.
Time is one of the most important resources you have. It is a precious commodity. Only you can decide how it will be used in your business. You may squander it, or you may use it well. These 12 tests or standards for effective use of time, however, can help you look at your time use to find more time to manage.