



# Time Management for Transit Managers

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October 27, 2020



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration

# National Rural Transit Assistance Program

- Technical assistance center funded by FTA through Section 5311
- Managed by the Neponset Valley Transportation Management Association
- National RTAP offices are located in MA and DC
- Free training materials and technical assistance products and services for rural and tribal transit providers and state RTAPs
- Review Board – State DOT and rural/tribal transit staff
- Learn more at [nationalrtap.org](http://nationalrtap.org)



# Does this look familiar?



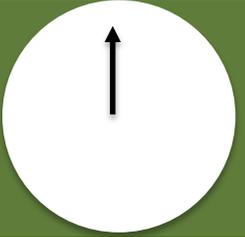
Let's take a poll.

But first, let's take 3 deep breaths.

One, two, three.

Now we're ready for the poll.

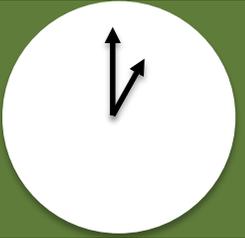
# Ask for Assistance



- National RTAP provides technical assistance in many formats – toolkits, webinars, technical briefs, etc. – and can provide direct answers via phone, email and chat.
- FTA also offers assistance through many sections of their website, including the National Transit Database and Public Transportation Agency Safety Planning.
- State DOT and State RTAP programs have specialists who can assist transit managers.
- Ask a peer – join a forum or network at a conference.

**Don't be afraid to ask – that's what we're here for!**

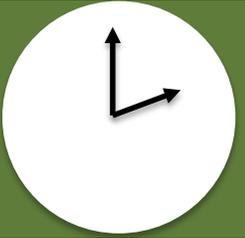
# Technology is Your Friend



- Online tools keep necessary documents in one place and track compliance and grant management processes
- Built-in computer calendars and task lists can sync with existing email, phone, and notes documents
- Use “reward” apps to track target goals and set up “friendly” team competitions
- Use email notifications for deadlines (earlier than the actual deadlines)

Like any new “friend,” you need to get to know the technology. Balance the time spent training with the time gained using it.

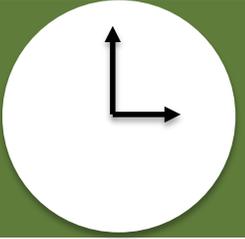
# Get Your Team On-board and On-track



- Cross-train your staff
- Delegate effectively
- Set clear expectations about what needs to be done by when and by whom
- If staff issues arise, set up a 1:1 meeting with each person involved to resolve them quickly
- Regular informal walk-arounds and check-ins with staff can save time in the long-run by catching issues that come up before they have a chance to escalate

**Your team is amazing and wants to be productive too**

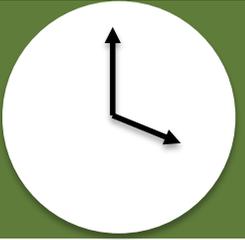
# Making Training Count



- Choose a time that is convenient for everyone (don't discount evenings/weekends)
- Provide training during all-hands meetings
- Lunchtime is often a good time for training (especially if you provide lunch)
- Offer self-paced online training, such as eLearning
- Assign a mentor to a new hire to answer questions about the nuts and bolts of the job

**An investment in transit training can provide a five to twelve times return on investment**

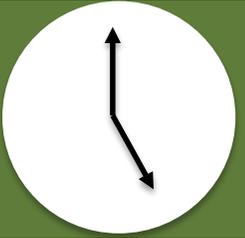
# Goodbye Data and Information Overload



- Choose the metrics that really track your performance, and pare down
- Subscribe to an electronic information aggregator for emails and/or voicemails
- Select just a few newsletters that capture the most relevant news for your agency
- Remember the earlier strategy, and ask an expert (e.g., a librarian, RTAP manager, etc.) to help pinpoint and synthesize the most relevant information
- Once you've read a document, immediately file it or delete it, depending on whether you need to access it again

**Much of the information we receive can be instantly deleted**

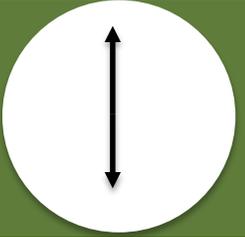
# Make Your Meetings Work for You



- 1:1 meetings anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes long, are often more effective than group meetings
- For team meetings, set a clear, doable agenda with 1-5 topics, what needs to be decided or done, and action items that will be assigned to specific individuals
- Try to keep team meetings to under 1 ½ hours
- One person should take notes, or the meeting can be recorded and transcribed
- The meeting leader should politely interrupt people who rant and ramble

**If nothing has happened since you last met, cancel the meeting**

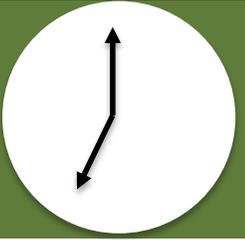
# Email Communication Timesavers



- Write shorter emails – 5 sentences or less
- Have some brief stock answers, such as “Great – thank you!”
- If you’ve had 5 back and forth emails without any resolution, try a different method of communication (phone or in-person)
- Emails don’t stop when you’re at conference or on vacation
  - Set a time that’s best for you once a day to go through them, **OR**
  - Triage your Out-of-Office so a trusted staff-person or colleague can help

**Don’t forget to delete!**

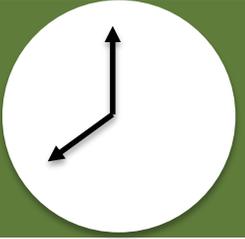
# More Effective Project Management



- Large projects should be broken down into shorter, manageable steps
- Don't "reinvent the wheel" – tools like National RTAP's Transit Manager's Toolkit, that already has project management steps and templates for many projects
- Set aside blocks of uninterrupted time every few weeks for large projects
- Try scheduling 15-30 minutes each morning for projects with approaching deadlines
- Prioritize projects by due-dates
- Ask for a project extension – a day or two can make a difference

**Tell yourself that a project will probably take a lot longer than you anticipate**

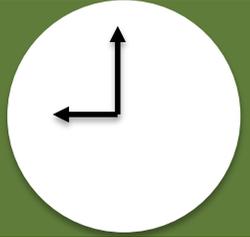
# Prepare for the Unexpected



- Have a well-designed emergency management procedure in place
- Use checklists
- Make time for opportunities that come up suddenly that are advantageous
- Prepare for situations that make a long-term impact on your operations
- Make sure you have the infrastructure and resources to make critical decisions quickly
- Remember your mission – passenger safety first

**Something you didn't expect will probably happen every day**

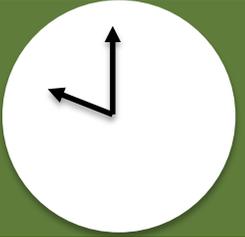
# How to Find More Time



- If it is an option, take transit to work. An hour on a bus or a train can be spent reviewing a document without interruption.
- Consider outsourcing some agency functions unless they are necessary to retain in-house.
- Keep a time diary of daily average activities. At the end of a week, decide which time-consuming tasks can be delegated or handled in a different way.
- Just say “No” to new requests if time and attention are needed elsewhere.
- Multitasking doesn’t necessarily save time. Let’s take a test.

**Don’t schedule every minute of every day**

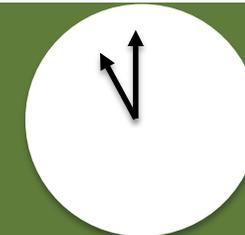
# Make It Work for YOU



- Everyone has a different work approach.
- Low-tech time savers can help too.
- Are you an “early bird” or a “night owl”? Establish specific times when you will respond to communications and/or meet with people.
- If you admire people who seem to “get everything done,” ask them for some tips.
- If something’s been on your to-do list for more than a few days, make a decision to start it, schedule it, delegate it, or delete it if it’s no longer needed.

**The bottom line is more time**

# Questions?



# Thank You

## National Rural Transit Assistance Program

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