



Time Management of Slovak Managers

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Abstract: The following article deals with the problem of time management in the life of the manager. Time is very valuable commodity and lot of managers feel that they do not have enough time to do their jobs to their full potential. The use of time must be explicitly managed, just like money. The goal of our research was the examination of the efficient use of the main principles of time management in the life of the manager. Research was done among 253 managers from different companies operating in Slovakia. The theoretical part of this article is concerned mainly with concepts such as the generations of time management, the relation between satisfaction and performance, satisfaction as the goal of the fourth generation of time management. The result of the research of the given problem is a collection of practical recommendations for efficient time management.

Keywords: Time Management, Self-Knowledge, Self-Management, Techniques of Time Management, Efficiency, Priority

1. Introduction

The success of the subjects of management depends largely on how capable they are of managing time use. [40] Modern companies are aware that only a worker who is efficient in the long-term is the road to success for the whole company. Such a worker has to know their priorities and be able to manage the use of their own time in all spheres of their life. Therefore, the topic of time management is exceedingly current. Current theory of time management introduces us to a new outlook on the management of people in time. It is not just a constant effort to do things accurately and on time or to carry out more activities in the shortest possible time anymore. The aim of modern time management is a satisfied person performing well in the long-term, a manager who fulfills their own priorities by everything they do. However, this simple sentence hides a long-term process which the manager should go through. We are talking mainly about the process of self-knowledge and thorough self-reflection, which is the starting point for the correct setting of priorities and subsequent successful self time management. Efficient time management starts inside every person. Only on the basis of correctly set personal priorities can the manager set the right goals, both in the personal and professional lives. They can use the techniques of time management as tools for the realization of these goals.

Efficient time management requires discipline, order, and

the determination to change one's habits. The manager's job is an extremely turbulent area with constant pressure on time, costs, and performance. All the greater are the demands on the manager's efficient time management. The manager must know the value of their time and use this limited resource rationally.

2. Current Approaches to Time Management

2.1. The Definition of Time Management

Time management, i.e. the management of time use, is key for every manager. Time is the basic asset of the manager's job. Success is largely determined by how they can manage their own, as well as their subordinates', time. Time management is the basis of every work methodology, as well as successful management itself. [42]

Time management is about controlling demands placed on the time which we have at our disposal. It includes making sure that we use our time – a very limited period of time – in such a way that it suits our personal goals and needs as much as possible. [9]

Time management can be trained, and it is possible to constantly improve one's skill in this area. Everyone who wants to succeed in correct time management must at first go through the process of self-knowledge and self-management.

These phases are necessary for the manager to be able to answer the following questions: what is important to them, what they want to achieve in life, what brings them a feeling of satisfaction, which resources they can use.

2.2. Generations of Time Management

Gradually, throughout the years, four generations of time management developed. The following table 1 presents their overview.

Table 1. Generations of time management – comparison.

Generation	Strengths	Weaknesses
First generation	Flexibility. Time is not overplanned. Less stress. Better relationships with other people. Detailed account of everything which needs to be done.	There is no structure of time, there is only a list of things which need to be done. Because there is no priority assigned to tasks, the precedence belongs to that activity which follows in the timetable.
Second generation	Timetable. Efficiency thanks to precise preparation. Planning, respecting of priorities, and precise control.	Time begins to be more important than people. A person is either an instrument to or an obstacle in achieving the goal. (people as tools) What follows in the timetable is the most important.
Third generation	Tasks are given a priority. Aimed at the performance and productivity of a person. Brings system and order. Increases the productivity of the manager's work based on daily planning. Time comes second.	Everything is determined and planned precisely. The flexibility and spontaneity in the manager's job is decreasing. Daily planning is focused on urgent matters. In daily planning, the opportunity to see "the bigger picture" is lost.
Fourth generation	Interpersonal relationships and life values come to the fore. Thorough self-reflection of the manager. What is important is the overall feeling of satisfaction with one's own life. Goals are assigned to priorities, and tasks are assigned to goals.	Severe stress. Frustration from unfulfilled tasks. A very long process, demanding on willpower, determination, and discipline. Requires a change of habits. There is a risk that life priorities are not defined correctly.

Source: Our own work.

The current, so-called fourth generation of time management makes use of the strengths of the previous generations. It puts emphasis on individual values, the feeling of satisfaction, relationships, and the personality of an individual. Time comes second. The fourth generation begins with self-knowledge and thorough self-reflection, with a person's individual values with an emphasis on their personality, their good feeling, mental balance, satisfaction, feeling of happiness, fitness, good interpersonal relationships. Achieving a good feeling by understanding the strategic task and one's mission and priorities is key. [41] Unlike in the previous generations, in which priority was assigned to tasks, in this generation goals are assigned to priorities and tasks are assigned to individual goals. The managers of the fourth generation are aware that what must come first are the people, not the timetable. The concept of life priority comes to the fore. Both goals and partial tasks must be subordinate to priorities. Only in the context of fulfilling our own priorities can we live a happy and satisfied life, learn to love life, and learn to be content. A manager of the fourth generation should, above all, work in peace, with good mental balance and joy. However, the fourth generation of time management is criticized for its implementation being extremely time-demanding. It requires the manager to go through the process of acquiring self-knowledge, create a

thorough self-analysis, and, based on that analysis, set their priorities and then goals. The fourth generation requires a change of old habits. It offers a great number of tools which help the manager to make their work more efficient – the Pareto principle, the helicopter view, the Eisenhower principle, prioritizing using the ABC analysis, the elephant technique, Getting Thing Done, speed reading, delegation, etc. An important role is also played by the technological development, which makes time management easier for the manager to a great extent.

2.3. Relation between Satisfaction and Performance

According to Kališ [25] time management is about organizing our own professional life so as to increase our efficiency and success. The result of good time management is not just increased personal efficiency and performance, but also higher satisfaction with one's own life and oneself.

The aim of the fourth generation of time management is a satisfied person. Satisfaction is a very subjective category. We can define it as a circumstance in which one's ideas and expectations are fulfilled in a situation one is currently living through.

Employee and manager satisfaction is about keeping a balance in important aspects of professional and personal lives. If we think about success, relationships, health,

economy, or finance, we will always arrive at the requirement of a certain balance: [28]

- private life – job
- wealth – modesty
- work – rest
- costs – profit

Satisfaction can be understood as an experiential phenomenon based on the assessment of the current as well as the overall life situation of an individual. The key moment for the resulting feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the assessment of the reality and one's expectation. This assessment is based mainly on one's personal value system. [39] Henry Ford said: "*A satisfied employee will do more than three unsatisfied ones.*" Satisfaction is also a necessary condition for efficient use of the work force. [38] In this sense, "*a satisfied person*" as the goal of the fourth generation of time management has large economic significance.

3. Research Goal and Hypothesis

The main goal of our research is the examination of the efficient use of the main principles of time management in the manager's life.

In accordance with the goal of our research, we defined the following hypotheses:

1. There is a difference in time management between the sexes.
2. With increasing age, managers make greater use of the tools and principles of efficient time management.
3. Managers who do not experience stress due to lack of time efficiently use the principles and techniques of time management.

3.1. Results and Discussion

We distributed a questionnaire with 35 questions among managers from domestic and foreign companies operating in Slovakia. Based on the findings of the real state of affairs and its comparison with similar researches carried out at home or abroad we tried to form conclusions and recommendations for efficient use of the principles and techniques of time management in managers' self-management in time. The results also led to the evaluation of our hypotheses.

Our questionnaire was completed by a total of 253 managers. Their division according to their sex, age, and hierarchic management level is given in table 2.

Table 2. Division of respondents according to age, sex, and management level.

Sex:	Age:	Management level			Total number
		Top level of management	Middle level of management	Lower level of management	
Male	under 30	6	8	22	36
	30 to 40	7	21	15	43
	40 to 50	13	9	7	29
	over 50	15	7	2	24
Male total		41	45	46	132
Female	under 30	1	6	18	25
	30 to 40	4	34	15	53
	40 to 50	7	6	8	21
	over 50	12	4	6	22
Female total		24	50	47	121
Overall total		65	95	93	253

The first group of questions pertained to the evaluation of one's own time management quality – we asked the managers about their satisfaction with their own time management, about the amount of stress, and about the balance between their private and professional lives.

The second group of questions led to the examination of the positive and negative habits in individual time management:

- the amount of overtime and bringing work home,
- the area of recreation and rest,
- the use of the main principles of time management – (delegation, speed reading, using the available technological means, etc.).

The third group of questions pertained to the quantification of time spent in the individual quadrants of the time management matrix.

Our research detected big differences between the individual age groups, as well as between the individual levels of management in almost all categories, and we can

assert that the best results were achieved by top level managers and managers over the age of 50.

When evaluating the individual groups, we came across an interesting problem – in a part of the most important questions the biggest difference was not found between the lower level of management and the top level of management, but between the middle and top levels of management. As an example, we cite the following results, in which middle management achieved the lowest results, while top management achieved the highest:

1. 27% of the members of middle management but only 3% of the members of top management stated that they feel permanent stress due to lack of time.
2. 80% of the top level managers but only 34% of the middle level managers stated that their personal and professional lives are in balance.
3. 88% of top management but only 39% of middle management stated that they are satisfied with their own time management.

4. It is also interesting that despite several evident problems with time management, only 33% of the middle level managers underwent time management training. On the other hand, such a training was undergone by 57% of the top level managers. The importance of this type of training is certainly great, which is confirmed by the fact that 85% of managers who underwent it confirmed that their own time management improved afterwards. Based on these data, it is clear that time management training is important and has an influence on the manager's life. The principles and techniques of time management can be learned.

It is surprising that we identified the biggest problems from among the age groups in the group of 30- to 40-year-old managers, i.e. people who, paradoxically, already have certain experience (we anticipated that their results would be better than those of the managers under the age of 30; this, however, did not prove to be so). On the other hand, this group of managers is probably under the biggest amount of pressure family-wise – this is the age at which most people start a family and raise children. We must say, however, that this age group achieved significantly worse results in time management quality. As an example, we cite some of the achieved results:

1. 37.50% of managers from the group of 30- to 40-year-olds work between 5 to 10 hours of overtime a week – for comparison, in the group of managers over 50 years of age it is only 19.50%. Almost 21% of managers below 40 years of age work more than 10 hours of overtime, while in the oldest group in our research it is less than 11%. If we paraphrase these data, we can assert that more than one half of 30- to 40-year-old managers work one working day per week more. A lot of studies also show that the productivity and quality of work decrease with every hour of overtime.
2. Nearly 24% of 30- to 40-year-old managers almost

always bring their work home (at the weekends or in the evenings), but only 6.52% of managers over 50 years of age do so.

3. The abovementioned data clearly show that with such work commitment 30- to 40-year-old managers will have just a minimal amount of time available for their leisure activities. However, it is striking that as many as 45% of them admitted that they have no hobby or a regular activity during which they could relax.

It is uncertain what is the cause of such an excessive workload of 30- to 40-year-old managers. We can also mention the current fashion of busyness and workaholism, excessive demands from the superiors, understaffed departments, etc. Nevertheless, our research confirms that it is this group of respondents who least respect the principles of correct time management, which, at the same time, have an impact on the overall unbalance between professional and personal lives, and confirm to the greatest extent the excessive stress due to lack of time and the inability to find time for the much needed rest, which is clearly underestimated by this group.

Furthermore, we want to stress that the groups of people who achieved the best results in terms of subjective experience – top management and people over 50 years of age – were also the best at using theory-recommended principles and tools of time management, such as:

- delegation,
- ability to say "no",
- keeping one's e-mails or work environment in order,
- performing one task after another,
- regular rest, etc.

Our study also shows interesting statistical indicators of planning tools use – the dominant tools are the classic ones like cell phones, calendars in e-mail clients, and the so-called to-do lists. We negatively assess the fact that only 54% of managers synchronize their planning tools. Figure 1 illustrates the use of different tools.

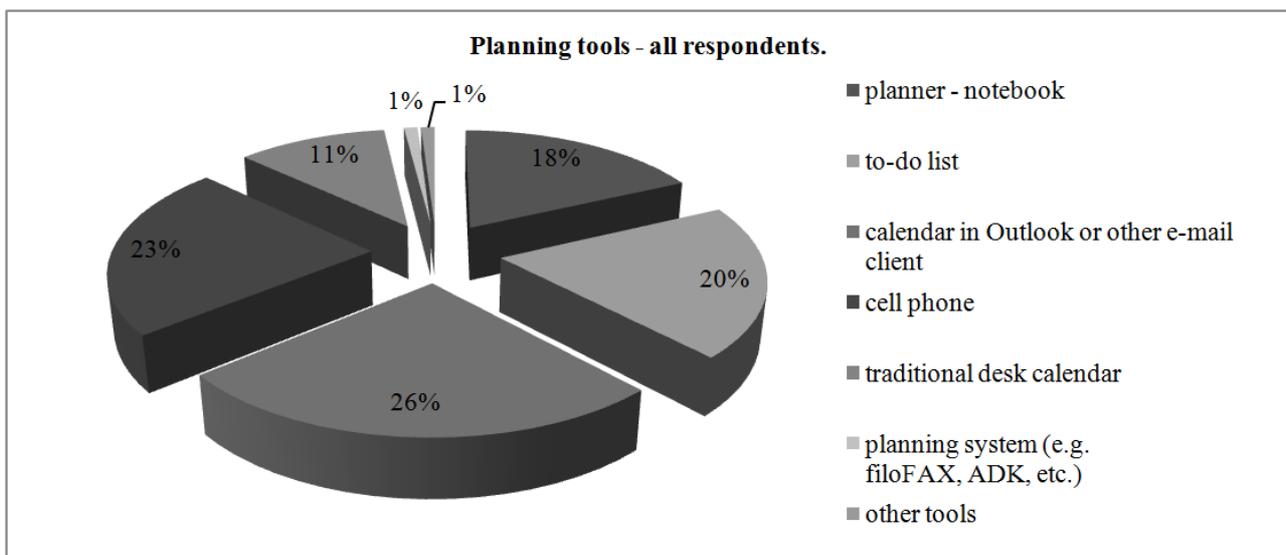


Figure 1. Planning tools used in managerial practice – all respondents.

We also want to point out the data on the thieves of time. At the forefront are unnecessary meetings, inability to delegate, and being disturbed by other people. All these thieves can be dealt with efficiently. The starting point is for the manager to detect them, identify them as personal thieves of time, and begin to combat them efficiently. Table 3 contains an overview of individual thieves of time.

Table 3. Overview of thieves of time – all respondents.

Thieves of time	All
unnecessary meetings	12,87%
mess	6,51%
I postpone things for later	10,33%
I forget	6,51%
I do tasks which I could delegate	12,31%
talking with colleagues	4,95%
someone is always disturbing me	10,89%
I solve other people's problems	10,04%
long journeys	4,95%
long waiting (e.g. at the doctor, at Offices ...)	5,80%
long telephone calls	6,93%
surfing the Internet, social networks (Facebook, Twitter)	3,68%
TV	2,55%
playing computer games	0,85%
other	0,85%
Total	100%

3.2. Evaluation of the Validity of the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. There is a difference in time management between the sexes.

This hypothesis was proven valid. The following are the most important differences discovered:

- stress due to lack of time was confirmed by 66% of women but only 46% of men,
- satisfaction with one's own time management was confirmed by 61% of men but only 45% of women,
- ability to say "no" was confirmed by 73% of men but only 53% of women,
- knowledge of the e-mail client functions was claimed by 80% of men but only 61% of women,
- 82.57% of men confirmed that they keep their e-mails in order; the same was confirmed by only 71% of women,
- 71% of men delegate their tasks sometimes or often, while only 64% of women do the same, etc.

Hypothesis 2. With increasing age, managers make greater use of the tools and principles of efficient time management.

We cannot validate this hypothesis fully because even though our research confirmed that the oldest group of managers, i.e. managers over the age of 50, uses the tools and principles of efficient time management the most, it was not the managers under the age of 30 who had the lowest results in this category, but the managers from the age of 30 to 40. The most important differences were found in the following categories:

- 71% of managers over the age of 50 never, or very rarely, bring work home; in the group of 30- to 40-year-olds it was only 50%,

- only 19.57% of managers in the oldest age group have no leisure activity, while it is almost 45% in the group of 30- to 40-year-olds,
- only 26% of the oldest managers claimed unbalance between their private and professional lives, while it was as many as 65% in the group of managers in the 30 to 40 age group,
- the amount of delegation does really increase with increasing age – frequent or occasional delegation was confirmed by only 25% of managers under 30, but by as many as 70% of managers over 50,
- the ability to say "no" was confirmed by 87% of the oldest managers, but by only 52% of the 30- to 40-year-old managers, etc.

When searching for an answer to why this is so, we can argue that this is the age at which most managers start families and raise children, while they also have a feeling of big responsibility at their job, which they want to keep, and this also puts pressure on their time management and can, to a certain extent, cause a conflict of values. However, this is precisely the time for them to realize what their priorities in life are and to use the principles of the fourth generation of time management as much as possible.

Hypothesis 3. *Managers who do not experience stress due to lack of time efficiently use the principles and techniques of time management.*

To confirm this hypothesis, we offer a few results obtained from the contingency table in which we selected those managers who confirmed that they experience stress due to lack of time only very rarely or sometimes. We observed their use of individual principles and techniques of time management:

1. Using delegation as a tool of time management Out of 112 respondent who did not experience stress due to lack of time, as many as 95 used delegation (sometimes and often), which is 85% of the studied sample.
2. Weekly planning Nowadays, it is advised to plan for the following week. Weekly planning provides an optimal time horizon and is used by almost 79% of the studied sample.
3. Being late for meetings The following data confirm that people who do not experience stress due to lack of time also respect the agreed-upon deadlines. 83% said that they are never, or very rarely, late for meetings or with completing their tasks.
4. Keeping order Almost 92% of managers in our selected sample confirmed that their work environment is kept in order (answers "strongly agree" and "agree").
5. Using planning tools for private activities The use of planning tools to plan private activities as well is a sign of comprehensiveness in planning, when the principles of time management are not only used at work, but also in private. Time management is a complex process, it is impossible to apply it to just one area of the manager's life. Almost 69% of our selected sample use this principle correctly.

6. Ability to say "no" The ability to say "no" was confirmed by 80% of managers who do not experience stress due to lack of time.
7. Multitasking 59% of managers who do not have a problem with stress due to lack of time confirmed that they follow another time management principle – performing one task after another. That means that they do not multitask.
8. Looking for important things Almost 77% of managers from our sample confirmed that they do not waste time by looking for important things, which again confirms the principle of keeping one's things in order.

We confirmed the validity of the third hypothesis that managers who respect the principles of efficient time management do not experience stress due to lack of time. This finding is also an appeal to managers who complain about "lack of time" to start using the principles of effective personal time management.

4. Recommendations for Practice

The results of our research show that real leaders (members of top management) achieve remarkable results in time management quality. It is obvious that those who are the best at managing themselves can also manage other people very well. On the other hand, we were surprised by the low quality of time management in the middle level of management and among managers from 30 to 40 years of age.

We definitely recommend that the middle managers start to approach time management comprehensively. For managers, correct time management is indispensable. There is a need for a comprehensive approach to time management, which has to start with a thorough process of self-knowledge, self-assessment, and self-management. This step cannot be skipped. It is impossible to establish correct time management without the manager knowing their personal priorities and being able to answer the question what is really important to them. The manager should devote time and space to studying and getting to know oneself – one's own biorhythm, attitude towards time as such – to find out whether their prevalent approach to time is monochronic or polychronic. This approach influences our behavior and management of time to a great extent.

We recommend that all managers find time and space to perform the so-called time-tracking, which is the only way to reveal the reality about where and how they use their time. Managers often have misconceptions about how they spend their time. It is only a precise record and a several day measurement that can give them the correct answer, based on which they can solve their possible time wasting and identify the main thieves of time.

It is extremely important to know which activities steal the manager's time. There is an efficient weapon against every thief of time, but it is important to identify the thief first and then implement a plan to combat it. We recommend combating the individual thieves of time one by one.

An exceptionally suitable tool in the process of self time management is the so-called six-step life model, which uses simple steps to recommend what needs to be done in correct time management. We agree with the fourth generation of time management that the planning process should be carried out on a weekly basis, which allows for plan modification within one week, but, on the other hand, also encourages achieving goals in accordance with the priorities and life roles of an individual. In doing so, however, the process of careful self-control should not be forgotten.

We recommend that the manager choose a correct planning tool, which they should master perfectly (including all of its available functions, which can make the planning process significantly easier). If the manager uses a number of planning tools, we definitely recommend that they be able to synchronize them with one another. That way, they will not make the mistake which managers frequently make – they plan two different activities in two different planning tools for the same date and time.

Furthermore, we advise managers to adopt tools of time management, which can save a substantial amount of time. The most interesting methods are the Eisenhower principle, the Pareto principle, the method of speed reading, delegation, etc. Each of these methods is very effective and, what is important can be learned and included in the manager's everyday life.

If, for example, a novice manager is not able to deal with the process of self time management alone, we recommend using the opportunity to attend a time management course or training introducing the principles of the fourth generation of time management. These courses are of consequence, and, as our research showed, most participants confirmed that their self time management improved afterwards. Therefore, companies themselves should promote participation in such courses. After all, they are the ones who should care the most about long-term efficiency of their own employees.

Our research showed that a considerable number of managers still underestimate the importance of rest as a regular part of every individual's life. We definitely recommend that all managers find an activity which will become their hobby and by engaging in which they can recharge. It is suitable if mentally working people choose a physical activity to be their hobby. The manager should be able to "sharpen the saw". The term "to sharpen the saw" is a metaphor describing energy which is spent on improving our personal skills in four fundamental areas – physical, social, mental, and spiritual. We are often so busy "sawing" (trying to achieve a result) that we forget to "sharpen our saw" (to maintain or improve our ability to achieve similar results in the future as well). [44]

For the manager, correct time management is a necessity. It is a process which we implement in our everyday lives – not only professional, but also private. The philosophy of the fourth generation of time management offers an exceptionally comprehensive guide for correct self time management. We definitely recommend that managers familiarize themselves with the philosophy, tools, techniques,

and principles of the fourth generation of time management, and begin to use them in their lives.

In conclusion, we provide the overview of the most important principles of efficient and effective personal time management for managers:

1. Based on the time-tracking data, create an overview of all activities you perform.
2. Assign priority to every activity and, when performing them, use the "first things first" motto, i.e. do the most important things first.
3. Delegate everything which can be delegated.
4. Perform one task after another, do not multitask.
5. Semi-finished tasks need to be finished.
6. Avoid frequent interruptions.
7. Return back to the unfinished task as soon as possible after an interruption.
8. Plan in weekly time blocks.
9. Create the daily plan a day in advance, include time for unforeseen circumstances.
10. Include activities for pleasure as well as activities that you are not too keen on in the daily plan.
11. Know and use available planning technology.
12. When several planning tools are used, they need to be synchronized.
13. Realize that not all activities can be planned precisely; therefore, the manager cannot avoid certain spontaneity either.
14. Use the so-called marginal time (i.e. time spent waiting, travelling, etc.) and have pre-prepared activities which can be carried out in the meantime.
15. Respect individual biorhythm and plan in harmony with it; plan demanding activities for times when your performance is highest.
16. Keep things in order – in the work environment, in the e-mail client – and do not waste time by always looking for things.
17. Learn to say "no".
18. Honor other people's time as well and respect the agreed upon meeting times and deadlines.
19. Know your biggest thieves of time and try to combat them efficiently.
20. Carry out the process of self-evaluation – evaluating your plans and their implementation.
21. The manager should be able to reward themselves for completing a challenging task or implementing a challenging plan.
22. If the plan is not fulfilled, carry out a careful analysis of the causes and find out if there was a mistake in the planning itself or in your self-discipline.
23. Participate in a time management course.
24. Adopt the techniques of time management and use them actively.
25. Do not forget to rest and pursue a leisure activity during which you can relax.

Time is the manager's resource which diminishes with every passing minute, so its value is immense. Every manager should, therefore, familiarize themselves with the

theory of time management and learn to use the principles, tools, and techniques of time management in everyday life.

5. Conclusions

Time management is a part of self-management. The first step in the process of self-management is thorough self-knowledge – knowing one's own resources (which include time), knowing the motives of one's behavior, values, and attitudes. The manager should also realize that their attitude towards time management is, to a considerable extent, influenced by the culture which they come from. We recommend that the manager thoroughly analyze their use of time and thieves of time during the process of acquiring self-knowledge.

The research part of our article examined time management in managers' lives based on their sex, age, and hierarchical level of management. Our research confirmed that there are differences in time management between all of the studied categories. When it comes to the sexes, the male part of our respondents achieved more positive results. Interesting findings appeared in the age-based analysis, in which the best results were achieved by managers over the age of 50, but the worst results were, paradoxically, not achieved by the youngest managers under 30, but by those in the 30 to 40 age group. The best results in the evaluation of time management according to the level of management were achieved by the members of top management, while the worst were achieved by those in middle management. Those groups of managers who achieved the best results in adhering to the principles of time management were also the ones who confirmed low levels of stress, balance between the private and professional lives, and satisfaction with their own time management the most. The result of our research is a collection of practical principles for efficient and effective time management. This article was processed within project VEGA 1/0/316/14 Modern trends in management and their application in companies in Slovakia.

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