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P = Presenter A = Agata Wisniewska

E = Eleonora Pessina M = Matthew Dickin

EM = Eben Maasdorp

P: Time is money goes the saying and this is especially true in the business world. With production targets and project deadlines to meet, effective time management is a top concern for business leaders.

Over a hundred years ago, when carmaker Henry Ford pioneered the industrial assembly line, he realised the connection between the time taken to make each car and company profits. Measuring and managing the time spent on tasks became part of a management approach known as Fordism.

Today the Fordist concept of time management still operates in some places. At many distribution warehouses, for example, workers are required to pick and pack orders at lightning speed.

Elsewhere in the workplace time management, in the sense of setting goals, prioritising and scheduling in order to maximise efficiency, is an important feature. At this publishing company there's a weekly team meeting to discuss and schedule all the jobs that have to be done. Agata Wisniewska is the Content Development Manager.

A: This week we'll probably need to deal with our second proofs first. ... My main role in the team is to organise a schedule, to allocate resources and set the goals for the team members. Time management is very important for our business because, if the team takes longer than expected, it has an impact on the budget, and therefore the company loses money. When it comes to managing the time of each of the members of my team, I do not get involved too much. I prefer them to decide how they prioritise their time and also to communicate to the rest of the team on their progress and any issues they may have.

P: One member of the team, Eleonora Pessina, is an Instructional Designer. How does she manage her time?

E: I work across many different projects. So, what really helps me is ... um ... making a to-do list at the beginning of the week ... um ... where I really jot down everything that I need to do for that week. But then I also identify key priorities, key tasks that I want to get done. I use a digital calendar and I use different colours to identify what is meeting time and what is ... uh ... desk time. Another thing I use to manage my time is post-it notes ... um ... and I use them just to remind myself of things that I wouldn't normally do, so that they're there on my desktop looking at me.

P: Time management for employees of global companies brings new challenges. Matthew Dickin is the Director of Design and Production.

M: I work with teams and stakeholders spread all around the globe. So the first thing to say is I have to be very aware of where everybody is and that I have to be very aware of what that means in terms of time zone. So, for calls with Australia, Asia, India, I aim for very early in my morning, which is afternoon or early evening for them. And then calls to America ... um ... tend to happen at the end of my day which is very early in the morning for them. Certainly there are times, particularly during busy periods, where it feels like there aren't enough hours in the day. Um ... so I have to be very careful to try and manage that within my own diary to make sure that that's not too often.

P: There's a growing demand from employees for more flexibility in their work schedules, and some people like Eben Maasdorp, a translator, are choosing to work on a freelance basis.

EM: As a freelance you actually have more time to work because you don't have to commute to work, for example. You also have more time to spend with your family because you can work in the evenings or early mornings depending on what suits you best. I do have to stay focused, so my strategy tends to be to commit myself to one hour, to see how much I can do in one hour – so, don't take any breaks before the 60 minutes are up. And then sit down the next 60 minutes and see if I can hit the same target.

P: Organising one's own time as a freelance is worlds away from the experience of workers on Henry Ford's assembly lines. But whatever the role and whatever the industry, good time management will continue to be essential to business profitability and an individual's career success.