

# Work Smarter with the Gamonnet Method

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## Explore The History of Time Management



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The history of time management starts with the industrial revolution. The concept has evolved slowly but steadily to the modern notion of time management, such as doing things effectively to gain control over one's life.

### In the Pre-Industrialized World

Until the mid-18th century, most people led simple one-dimensional lives as small-scale farmers, anglers, or artisans, and their work output depended on natural forces such as the sun and the wind. The concept of time management depended on agricultural tempos, tides, weather, and seasons. For instance, daylight hours determined work hours, inclement weather determined holidays, and productivity depended on the vicissitudes of the growing season. The sun and the moon determined timekeeping.

The industrial revolution and subsequent developments enabled humans to harness nature for their ends. Big machines in factories ended the dependence on the weather, and the invention of electricity and deployment of artificial lighting rendered the concept of daylight hours insignificant.

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The invention of mechanical clocks made it possible to manage time, but the notion of time was still different from what it is today. The earliest of clocks could keep time to the second, but most early clocks came only with an hour hand and indicated time to the closest quarter hour. People in the early industrial revolution still did not consider accounting for their time to the second to be important or necessary.

## In the 19th Century

The concept of time management started to gain impetus in the 19th century because of many factors:

1. The advancements in the Industrial Revolution led to a shift from an agrarian economy to an industrial trade-based economy and raised the need to manage time well. Success in the new world order depended on the timely trading of goods.
2. The development of a postal service, the arrival of the telegraph, and the subsequent spread of railroads all required precise time keeping and raised the importance of time-related values of productivity and speed.
3. The enlightened views of scholars and scientists such as Isaac Newton began to gain ground. Isaac Newton's ideas about the disciplined working of the universe strongly influenced the thought and science of the age, and people began to discipline their lives likewise.

Credit for establishing the importance of time management goes to Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. Thomas Jefferson installed a clock that had a dial with three hands to indicate hours, minutes, and seconds to schedule indoor household chores. Benjamin Franklin's famous views on time and management included advice such as "Time is money," and "Time is the stuff of which life is made."

Inspired by such leaders and enlightened thought, society then began to consider timeliness as a sign of maturity, and the wearing of a watch symbolized a child's entry into the time-conscious world of grownups.

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By the 1830s schools started to enforce punctuality, organizing school hours and lessons by the clock, punishing lateness, and awarding certificates for punctuality.

The pre-19th century workmen balanced work and home-based duties by doing them intermittently, akin to the approach based on FlexTime and telecommuting today. The spread of factories and standardized work hours led to work and home becoming two distinct entities. With lesser time available for home chores, the concept of managing time better received impetus. Catharine Beecher's "A Treatise on Domestic Economy," published in 1847, deals with household habits designed not to waste time and became a bestseller of the times.

While the 19th-century workmen had rigid schedules, the 19th-century businessmen were flexible in managing their time. Their typical time scheduling involved three hours of business duties, with the rest of the day spent on government, church, and other social obligations.

## In the Early 20th century



The history of time management in the early 20th century ran parallel to the evolution of management science. Taylor's scientific approach to management, aimed at shop management, centered on the principle of effective time management. He laid the cause of inefficiency to his workers' tendencies to work slowly, without any incentives to work fast. He advocated establishing specific work targets and paying workers for the tasks and goals met. This mandated better usage of time and became the basis for modern time management approaches.

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The subsequent emphasis on multi-tasking, workplace flexibility, and dual-income families mandated striking a balance between work and home responsibilities. All these considerations raised the importance of time management as a critical discipline.

## Modern Approaches

Today, there are hundreds of time management approaches, and the exigencies of multi-tasking and balancing work and home give time management more emphasis than ever before.

Stephen R. Covey, author of the bestseller "First Things First" has categorized the post-World War II modern-day evolution of time management into four generations:

4. **First generation:** The first generation of time management is the traditional and rudimentary approach based on clock-based reminders and alerts.
5. **Second generation:** The second generation of time management approaches focuses on planning and preparation of work schedules and events, including setting time-based goals.
6. **Third generation:** The third generation of time management approach aims at prioritizing various tasks and events, and controlling tasks using schedulers.
7. **Fourth generation:** The fourth generation of time management approach is the contemporary approach. This approach, like the third generation approach, aims at prioritizing various tasks and events, but aims at prioritization based on importance of the task rather than the urgency. This approach also concentrates on the efficient and proactive use of the various time management tools.

The traditional time management approaches advocate doing things effectively to gain control over lives. While this held true in the past, Stephen Covey advocates a principle-centered approach to time management by doing the right things rather than doing whatever is in front faster.

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