

How Do You Make the Most of Time?

“The answer is right in front of our eyes!”

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

The equalizer for everyone is TIME. We all have twenty-four hours a day; nobody has more or less. The success of our band programs is greatly based on how we use that TIME. It is rare to hear anyone in the profession say, “I don’t know what to do with all this extra TIME!” In fact, it is usually quite the contrary; “I am running out of TIME; if I only had some more TIME!”

While there is no way to s-t-r-e-t-c-h the clock, there are ways to prioritize the various responsibilities to make the best use of TIME in a positive fashion. What is the best use of your TIME?

1. Initially decide what is on the TO DO LIST that only YOU can do, and put them at the top of the agenda. (Score study, communication with administrators/parents/community leaders/colleagues, making budgetary decisions, choosing repertoire, communicating with students about their contribution to the musical environment, serving as the leader in making decision that impact the future director of the program, being the musical go-to person.)

2. De-select the various time-consumers that can be assigned to others. (Filing music, keeping the facilities in tip-top shape, taking roll, stuffing the folders, refreshing the bulletin board, taking inventory of the fund-raising products, collating papers, putting up notices announcing the upcoming concert.)

And the obvious inquiries are:

* Who does all this work if it is not YOU?

* Who comes to the rescue to make sure the daily chores are handled in a first-class fashion while YOU (the director) invests TIME in preparing to garner the most from the all-too-short rehearsal TIME?

* Who can you TRUST to take on these various tasks, knowing they play a critical role in the outcome of the group’s success?

May I suggest it could well be the musicians who are the heart-and-soul of the ensemble? Herein lies an unlimited source of human potential eager to become involved in the entire blueprint of “their” band program. They want to contribute, they can contribute, and they have the TIME... thus unleashing TIME for you to do what ONLY you can do.

Whether you label these people as student leaders, band staff, music aids, etc., it creates a new paradigm for the entire band culture. Plus, it postures YOU to truly be the musical guide as well as the program visionary. This is where your value is most wanted and needed.

It all sounds so simple, doesn’t it?

Select a group of dedicated students, create a menu of responsibilities, describe your expectations, and then go about your merry way. Unfortunately it requires far more than a mere,

“Here’s what you need to do, now go do it,” assignment. Developing a team of first-class student leaders warrants an ongoing learning-growing-becoming communication from YOU. While it seems we simply added more to your already overloaded work schedule, it is quite the opposite. Recall the adage, “Feed a man a fish...” Meta-

phorically we are “teaching our students how to fish.” We are giving them the tools to THINK FOR THEMSELVES, and discover the countless ways they can personally contribute and take ownership of the ongoing success of THEIR band.

Having spent four decades helping develop student leaders, it has become ever-apparent there are certain steps to be taken in the development of these wonderful hearts and minds. In addition to putting together a team of caring-sharing band assistants, you are also developing the leaders of tomorrow

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by creating habits of success they can transfer to each and every aspect of their personal and professional lives.

Before jumping on the student leadership bandwagon, be aware of some of the pitfalls certain to be experienced:

- Their initial enthusiasm gives way to tedious and time-consuming work to be done; they simply give up.
- They fall short of the standards you have for your own work.
- They take on more than they can accomplish. When they fail to meet their goals, frustration and disappointment sets in.
- Time management is an ongoing challenge. They start too late, then they are out of time to complete the tasks.
- One has to extend constant reassurance to fuel the forward motion.
- The work ethic gives way to the teenage logic, etc., etc., etc.

It would seem far easier to simply DO IT YOURSELF and avoid all the potential conflicts. Also, you then know things will be done exactly the way you want them to be

done! However, you have gone in a circle and using your valuable TIME in a less than wise fashion.

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Student leadership is a never-ending journey of personal understanding. It's not a quick-fix formula, but rather a way of being, a style of thinking, a personal choice to go the extra mile on behalf of all those who are part of the band family. There is no absolute template of success, or magic potion, or a fail-safe set of instructions that can guarantee the participating student will end up a worthy contributing leader. However, there are leadership skills that can be learned via a sequential curriculum designed to open the awareness of the eager young candidate to the understanding of “what student leadership is all about.”

Above all, it gives OWNERSHIP to the students; they now have a vested interest in everything from the appearance of the band hall to the recruitment of new members. It reaffirms your confidence in their contribution and it demonstrates the fact it is THEIR BAND.

Everyone wins. IT'S ABOUT TIME!

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser is a trusted friend to anyone interested in working with young people in developing a desire for excellence and a passion for high level achievement. His career involves ten years of successful college band directing at Northern Michigan University, the University of Missouri, and New Mexico State University. Following his tenure at the university level, he spent three years with McCormick's Enterprises working as Executive Director of Bands of America. In 1981, he created Attitude Concepts for Today, Inc., an organization designed to manage the many requests for workshops, seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the area of positive attitude and effective leadership training. Over two million students have experienced his acclaimed student leadership workshops over the last three decades. Dr. Tim presently serves as Vice President of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc., Senior Educational Advisor for Music for All and NAMM (The International Music Products Association) and is an adjunct faculty member at Ball State University (Earl Dunn Distinguished Lecturer), Indiana-Purdue/Ft. Wayne University, and Butler University. In addition, he serves on The Midwest Clinic Board of Directors and the Western International Band Clinic/American Band College Board of Directors.