

# Supervisors in the UK spend more than half their working day on meetings and admin...leaving little time to manage performance

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New research shows how supervisory staff across industries spend their working day and the impact on productivity

READING, November 07, 2019 – Frontline supervisors in the UK are spending much of their working day on unproductive tasks such as meetings, admin and email, according to a new study out today from consultancy Managementors (<http://www.managementors.co.uk/>).

The biggest drain on time was meetings and doing 'stuff' - undefined and unspecified tasks - with almost three hours spent on this every day on average. One hour and 26 minutes were spent on email and admin, while almost two hours were spent each day on doing the tasks of those that report into them.

Supervisors spend less than half an hour each day on active management, the planning, strategy and active direction of staff that is so important to productivity and achieving business goals. They also spend around 50 minutes each day on passive management, dealing with issues that employees bring to them looking for help with.

"The reality is that supervisors are doing very little active management of employees in the field, and even worse are spending a major portion of their working day on a variety of tasks which, potentially should be done elsewhere in the business," said David Beggs, practice director, Managementors. "Such tasks do need to be done, but for supervisors to be doing them raises important questions about productivity and what constitutes leadership in modern business."

Interestingly, the time actually spent by supervisors on various tasks does not correlate with what they think they spend on those tasks. When questioned, supervisors believed they spend around two hours 10 minutes on active management each day and ideally said they would spend almost three hours on such tasks. In reality, they spend on average only 27 minutes on this.

The research also encompassed how management wanted time to be spent. This too revealed a desire to spend more time on active management and less on administrative tasks. Managers felt that their supervisors should be spending around 40% of their time on active management each day.

Recent analysis from the Office for National Statistics

(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/bulletins/labourproductivity/apriltojune2019>) revealed that productivity in the UK fell at its fastest annual pace in five years in the April-to-June quarter. Figures are calculated by output per hour and fell by 0.5%, following zero growth in the two previous quarters.

"There's a clear disconnect between what people think they spend their working day doing and what they actually do," continued David Beggs. "Productivity depends on many things, such as strong leadership and providing clear direction and training to employees, but this is not happening as much as

it needs to. People are spending far too long on meetings which have little output, email, admin and even stepping down to carry out the work of the people they are meant to be managing and it's time for UK businesses to have a hard look at how they operate.”

“There’s a longstanding issue with UK productivity and while some of that can be put down to how productivity is measured, it’s also true that as a collective economy we need to improve our outputs. A good way of starting this process is to look at the role of business leaders and assess how their time can be more productively spent.”

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#### About the research

All data is based on an average working day of 7.5 hours and is taken from interviews with, and observations of the working practices of over 100 supervisors and managers in a range of UK businesses and public sector departments.

#### About Managementors

Managementors is a UK-based independent business operations consultancy. Working in partnership with its clients, it delivers customised solutions that resolve their most significant performance challenges and leave a lasting legacy of performance improvement.