

## Guide: Managing your time

### Time Management

#### *Priorities*

'I haven't got time'. How many times do we hear this one, often from our own mouths? This phrase is a cover up. What it really meant is 'I haven't got clear priorities.'

If you are not clear about what is important to you then you are likely to flutter from activity to activity, place to place, person to person.

Managing time is not always about being busy. It is not about filling up every minute of every day.

- Time management is about priorities
- Priorities result from setting objectives
- Setting objectives is about planning
- Planning is about control
- Being in control is being self empowered
- Self empowered people manage their time

The clearer you are about what you want the more control you will be able to exercise over your time.

Managing your time is about ongoing evaluation. The skill is not to make a plan and stick to it, but to make a plan and be constantly asking the question, 'Is it working?' If it is not, it is time to change it. Ask yourself 'Am I getting what I want right now?' 'Is this the best use of my time?'

#### *Daily Time Log*

If you are presently unaware of where your time goes it will be useful to keep a time log. If you think you do know where your time goes this exercise may surprise you with exactly how much time you spend (or waste) on activities. Keeping a time log is time consuming so it is suggested that you keep it initially for a week and then use it as needed when you think you are slipping back into time wasting habits or just to check that you are not.

#### *Activity Performed*

Within this column report the type of activity within the designated time intervals. A basic guideline for completing the log is to record each activity after it is completed. Never trust your memory and attempt to fill in the activity in the log later in the day.

#### *Classification*

At the conclusion of the day, take a few moments to reflect on the particular classification that the activity performed should be assigned to. Was it really an 'A' or something lower?

#### *Critique*

The final step in completing the time log is to critique the activities performed in relation to the assigned classifications.

## Daily Time Log

Time	Activity Performed	Classification (A) Top priority (B) Urgent (C) Important (D) Routine (E) Unnecessary	Critique (1) Reduce time for task (2) Delegate to another (3) Refuse with reason (4) Train for task (5) More time required
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8.15am			
8.30am			
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4.00pm			
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4.30pm			
4.45pm			
5.00pm			

This log should be divided into 15-minute intervals from the start to the finish of your day from the time you enter the workplace until you shut the door behind you on the way home.

## Time Quadrant

### *Analysing your time into four quadrants*

Another way to analyse your time is to honestly assess how much of our time we are working in an urgent mode, and how much of our time is spent on things that simply aren't important. In Steven Covey's excellent book 'First things First' he identifies four time quadrants.

## Time Quadrant Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<b>I</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crises</li> <li>▪ Pressing problems</li> <li>▪ Deadline driven projects, meetings, preparation</li> </ul>	<b>II</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation</li> <li>▪ Prevention</li> <li>▪ Values clarification</li> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ Relationship building</li> <li>▪ True re-creation</li> <li>▪ Empowerment</li> </ul>
Not Important	<b>III</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interruptions, some phone calls</li> <li>▪ Some mail, some reports</li> <li>▪ Some meetings</li> <li>▪ Many proximate, pressing matters</li> <li>▪ Many popular activities</li> </ul>	<b>IV</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trivia, busywork</li> <li>▪ Junk mail</li> <li>▪ Some phone calls</li> <li>▪ Time wasters</li> <li>▪ 'Escape' activities</li> </ul>

### The Quadrant of Urgency

Quadrant I represents things that are both 'urgent' and 'important'. Here's where we handle an irate customer, meet a deadline, repair a broken-down machine, undergo heart surgery, or help a crying child who has been hurt. We need to spend time in Quadrant I. This is where we manage, where we produce, where we bring our experience and judgement to bear in responding to many needs and challenges. If we ignore it, we become buried alive. But we also need to realise that many important activities become urgent through procrastination, or because we don't do enough prevention and planning.

### The Quadrant of Quality

Quadrant II includes activities that are 'important, but not urgent.' This is the Quadrant of Quality. Here's where we do our long-range planning, anticipate and prevent problems, empower others, broaden our minds and increase our skills through reading and continuous professional development, envision how we're going to help a struggling son or daughter, prepare for important meetings and presentations, or invest in relationships through deep, honest listening. Increasing time spent in this quadrant increases our ability to do. Ignoring this quadrant feeds and enlarges Quadrant I, creating stress, burnout, and deeper crises for the person consumed by it. On the other hand, investing in this quadrant shrinks Quadrant I. Planning, preparation, and prevention keep many things from becoming urgent. Quadrant II does not act on us; we must act on it. This is the Quadrant of personal leadership.

### The Quadrant of Deception

Quadrant III is almost the phantom of Quadrant I. It includes things that are 'urgent, but not important.' This is the Quadrant of Deception. The noise of urgency creates the illusion of importance. But the actual activities, if they're important at all, are only important to someone else. Many phone calls, meetings, and drop-in visitors fall into this category. We spend a lot of time in Quadrant III meeting other people's priorities

and expectations, thinking we're really in Quadrant I.

### ***The Quadrant of Waste***

Quadrant IV is reserved for those activities that are 'not urgent and not important.' This is the Quadrant of Waste. Of course, we really shouldn't be there at all. But we get so battle-scarred from being tossed around in Quadrants I and III that we often 'escape' to Quadrant IV for survival. What kinds of things are in Quadrant IV? Not necessarily recreational things, because recreation in the true sense of re-creation is a valuable Quadrant II activity. But reading addictive light novels, habitually watching 'mindless' television shows, or gossiping around the water fountain at the office would qualify as Quadrant IV time wasters. Quadrant IV is not survival; it's deterioration. It may have an initial cotton candy feel, but we quickly find there's nothing there.

We'd like to suggest now that you look at the Time Quadrant Matrix and think back over the past week of your life. If you were to place each of your last week's activities in one of these quadrants, where would you say you spent the majority of your time?

Think carefully as you consider Quadrants I and III. It's easy to think because something is urgent, it's important. A quick way to differentiate between these two quadrants is to ask yourself if the urgent activity contributed to an important objective. If not, it probably belongs in Quadrant III.

If you're like most of the people we work with, there's a good chance you spent the majority of your time in Quadrants I and III. And what's the cost? If urgency is driving you, what important things — maybe even 'first things' — are not receiving your time and attention?

## **The Six Principles of Time Management**

### ***Six principles***

1. Create a daily 'to do' list
2. List goals and set priorities
3. Do 'A's first
4. Handle each piece of paper only once
5. DO IT NOW!
6. Ask yourself 'Is this the best use of my time right now?'

It is important to remember to set time limits for each task and check to see that they are realistic. Then establish priorities.

Budget time for your planning, either the previous evening before you finish work for the day, or at the beginning of the following morning.

## **18 Leading Time Wasters**

### ***The leading time wasters***

1. PIA (Persistent Internet Addiction)
2. Email and text overload
3. Telephone interruptions
4. Visitors dropping in without appointments
5. Meetings, both scheduled and unscheduled
6. Crisis situations for which no plans were possible
7. Lack of priorities, objectives and deadlines
8. Cluttered desk and personal disorganisation
9. Involvement in routine detail that should be delegated

10. Attempting too much at once and not understanding the time it takes to do it
11. Failure to set up clear lines of responsibility and authority
12. Inadequate, inaccurate or delayed information from others
13. Fixing avoidable mistakes
14. Indecision and procrastination
15. Lack of or unclear communication and instruction
16. Inability to say 'NO!'
17. Lack of standards and progress reports that enable a supervisor to keep track of developments
18. Fatigue

## Time Management Checklist

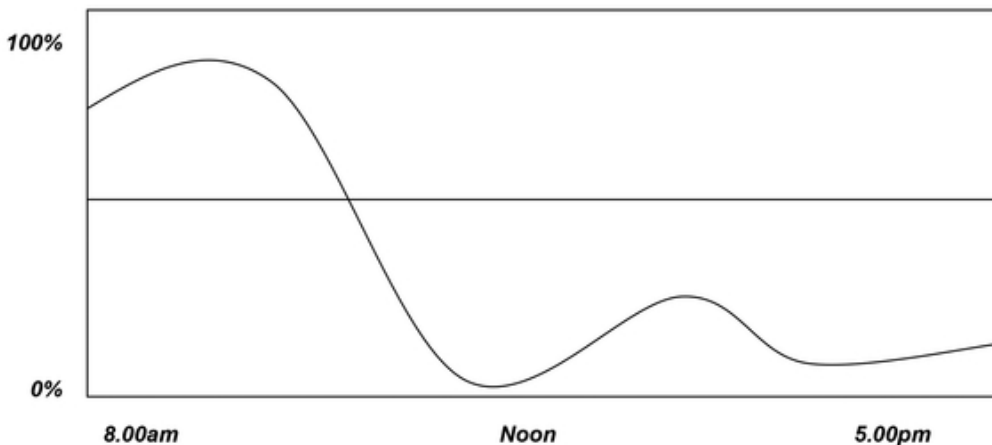
	I do this well	I need to focus on
1. <b>Start each day early</b> — fifteen to thirty minutes' planning time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Set objectives , priorities and daily plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish yearly, perhaps 5 yearly goals</li> <li>• Set objectives to attain the goals</li> <li>• Prioritise objectives</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Crisis management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out where the crises are occurring</li> <li>• Plan for the unexpected</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Socialising / drop in visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out who, when and where the problems are occurring</li> <li>• Try to plan social discussions</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. <b>Meetings</b> — (The single most effective time robber of all) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number</li> <li>• Shorten time allowed</li> <li>• Establish a firm start and finish time</li> <li>• Have a pre-planned agenda</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Delegation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise risk in delegation</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Telephone calls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resist detailed discussions</li> <li>• Plan your calls</li> <li>• Plan the content of the conversation</li> <li>• Learn how to politely end calls</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Attempting too much at one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set objectives, priorities and deadlines daily</li> <li>• Everything takes longer than you think</li> <li>• Learn to say no!</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Procrastination and indecision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set deadlines</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a decision making process</li> </ul>		
10.	<p>Paperwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handle each piece of paper once</li> <li>Do nothing that you can delegate</li> <li>Get off mailing lists</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	<p>Leaving tasks unfinished</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't set unrealistic deadlines</li> <li>Avoid overload situations</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	<p>Confused responsibility and authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define the job clearly</li> <li>Communicate to others around you the work you are doing</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Prime Time

### *Typical energy cycle*

When considering your daily schedule it's a good idea to keep your energy cycle in mind. Some people are at their best early in the morning. Others peak in the afternoon. Whenever possible, try to plan your daily schedule to match your 'prime time'. You will not always have control but consider such ideas as reading and responding to mail or returning phone calls after lunch if your 'prime time' is in the morning.



### *Your energy cycle*

On the graph provided, fill in the beginning and ending time of your day, and then draw the line through the day reflecting your typical energy cycle.



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