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Managing your Time Effectively

Effective Management of Your Time

Life and work is busy! There are lots of distractions at work that can prevent you from being effective with the time that is available to you. You cannot manage time itself ! So you must learn to manage what you spend the time you have doing, and ensure you are focussed on the right things and ignoring the things which are a waste of your time.

Quite often things that are deemed urgent, are usually urgent due to them being urgent and time critical for someone else. If it is unimportant but deemed urgent then these activities need to be managed and you need to effectively communicate with others about then pushing their urgent onto you. You should review these and try to avoid if and where possible, discussing with others and explaining politely that other people urgent tasks shouldn't become your urgent if they have failed to plan and be pro-active. It is often useful to discuss this as a team and support each other to plan effectively and encourage each other not to push urgent onto others.

You need to focus your time on Important tasks, but do not leave then so they then become urgent too otherwise you will spend your work life firefighting and reacting to your own lack of planning and being pro-active. Planning can ensure you spend your time in quadrant 2 and not so much in quadrant 1. The things that are important are the things that are part of yours or your organisations goals and objectives and you should be planning and being pro-active to address these, and not allowing them to become urgent.

The things that are not important and not urgent should be avoided where possible, they tend to be distractions, but you need to be disciplined about not letting these distractions take up your day. If they are activities which need to be undertaken but not important and not urgent then plan them in for when you are less busy or delegate to others to manage

Tasks which are neither important nor urgent may be time wasters which you should try to exclude whenever possible. Cross them off your task list or keep them on a holding list until time becomes available for them or it becomes clear that they are no longer relevant or necessary.

Also review Murphy's ten laws of time management. This principle is to plan for what can go wrong, to go wrong.

Quadrant 1 **Important / Urgent**	Quadrant 2 **Important / Not Urgent**
Requires you to act now – reactionary and fight fighting. You need to effectively manage this quadrant. Necessity – there will always be work and activity that is deemed important and Urgent - check whether it is important and urgent and try to mitigate the genuinely urgent and important buy working in Q2 more	The Quadrant of personal management - planning and preparation. This is where more time needs to be spent – on Important but not urgent activities to reduce becoming urgent and Important. This is the quadrant of focus – where you should and need to be focussed.
Quadrant 3 **Not important / Urgent**	Quadrant 4 **Not Important / Not Urgent**
This quadrant is essentially about communication, urgent calls from colleagues (someone else's urgent - not yours!) urgent requests for information, urgent emails (theirs not yours). Need to communicate effectively and where possible avoid activity here but to reduce requires you to communicate and outline boundaries.	This quadrant is another to avoid. This includes junkmail, time wasting activity, random unwanted calls, texts etc. You need to be disciplined not to spend time on activity that is both unimportant and not urgent. Ignore it and leave it!

"The Biggest sin in business or work, is doing efficiently that which need not be done at all"

Peter Drucker

For more on how you can better manage your activities and support your staff to manage their available time more effectively, contact Enable Growth Associates to include this as part of a personalised training and development programme.

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