Stephen Covey's Time Management Matrix

**Quadrant I**
- Represents things that are both “urgent” and “important” – we need to spend time here.
- This is where we manage, we produce, where we bring our experience and judgment to bear in responding to many needs and challenges.
- Many important activities become urgent through procrastination, or because we don't do enough prevention and planning.

**Quadrant II**
- Preparation
- Prevention
- Values clarification
- Planning
- Relationship building
- True re-creation
- Empowerment

**Quadrant III**
- Interruptions, some phone calls
- Some mail, some reports
- Some meetings
- Many proximate, pressing matters
- Many popular activities

**Quadrant IV**
- Trivia, busywork
- Phone calls
- Time wasters
- "Escape" activities
- Irrelevant mail
- Excessive TV
Quadrant II

- Includes activities that are “important, but not urgent” - 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
- Ignoring this Quadrant feeds and enlarges Quadrant I, creating stress, burnout, and deeper crises for the person consumed by it
- Investing in this Quadrant shrinks Quadrant I

Quadrant III

- Includes things that are “urgent, but not important” - Quadrant of Deception.
- The noise of urgency creates the illusion of importance.
- Actual activities, if they’re important at all, are important to someone else.
- Many phone calls, meetings and drop-in visitors fall into this category
Quadrant IV

- Reserved for activities that are “not urgent, not important” - Quadrant of Waste
- We often “escape” to Quadrant IV for survival
- Reading addictive novels, watching mindless television shows, or gossiping at office would qualify as Quadrant IV time-wasters

Is it bad to be in Quadrant I?

- Are you in Quadrant I because of the urgency or the importance?
- If urgency dominates, when importance fades, you’ll slip into Quadrant III.
- But if you’re in Quadrant I because of importance, when urgency fades you’ll move to Quadrant II.
Where do I get time to spend in Quadrant II?

- From Quadrant III
- Time spent in Quadrant I is both urgent and important - we already know we need to be there
- We know we shouldn't be there in Quadrant IV
- But Quadrant III can fool us

MAJOR TIME WASTERS

- Procrastination
- Afraid to Delegate
- Not Wanting to Say "NO"
- Low Self-Esteem
- Problems With Objectives/Priorities
WHAT CAN STOP YOU?

• Negative Thoughts
• Negative People
• Low Self-Esteem
• Fear of Failure
• Fear of Rejection / Criticism

“SMART” GOALS

• S - Specific & Self
• M - Measurable
• A - Achievable & Positive
• R - Realistic & Rewarding
• T - Time Bound
TIME IS MONEY

• You can make money; you can’t make time.
• An inch of gold cannot buy an inch of time (Chinese proverb).

WHY TIME MANAGEMENT?

• To utilise the available time in optimum manner to achieve one’s personal and professional goals.
TIME FOR EVERYTHING

• Take time to work, it is the price of success
• Take time to think, it is the source of power
• Take time to play, it is the source of youth
• Take time to read, it is the source of wisdom
• Take time to love, it is the privilege of Gods
• Take time to serve, it is the purpose of life
• Take time to laugh, it is the music of soul

TIME AWARENESS – TIME TRACKING

• Peter Drucker: “Make sure you know where your time goes.”
• Don’t depend on memory. Keep a time log.
• See that your time is spend as per your priorities or your core responsibilities.
MANAGERS TIME

• Planning is key managerial function but research shows that less than 5% of management time goes on planning.

• Pareto Principle: Twenty percent of your time will produce 80% of your productive output. Can you afford not to manage at least that 20%?

• Parkinson’s Law: Work expands to fill the time available for it. Beware!

EFFICIENCY vs EFFECTIVENESS

• Often worst performers are those who seem to be working hardest and longest. They are very busy but not necessarily effective.
COMMON TIME MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS: PROCRASTINATION

• Procrastination: Putting off the doing of something intentionally and habitually.
• If you suspect yourself; ask yourself – why am I putting this off? If there is no reason. Do it. Do not confuse reason with excuse.
• PROCRASTINATION is world’s number one time waster. Banish it from your life. There is no time like present to do any work.

COMMON TIME MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS: POOR DELEGATION

• Do not spend time on a work that can be done ,to a satisfactory level, by your subordinate.
• Delegation saves your time and develops subordinates
• Delegation improves results by making fuller use of resources
• Delegation implies transferring initiative and authority to another
DIFFICULTIES IN DELEGATION

– It’s risky.
– We enjoy doing things.
– We don’t sit & think.
– It’s a slow process.
– Like to be “top of everything”.
– Will subordinate outstrip us?
– Nobody can do it as well as I can.

• Delegation is a great motivator. It enriches jobs, improves performance & raises morale of staff.

TIME EFFECTIVENESS IN OFFICES

• Time can be wasted imperceptibly if your work area is not organised well. Your desk should be clear of all paper except the specific job on hand. It invites you to think about one thing at a time. Concentration is a great time saver.

• Paper work : Recommended principle is “to handle each piece of paper only once.”

• Sort papers under : FOR ACTION/
  FOR INFORMATION/
  FOR READING/
  FOR WASTE PAPER

• BOTTOM DRAWER
EFFECTIVE WRITING

• Clarity, simplicity and conciseness are essentials of good writing.
• Think, List and then Arrange.
• Do not cover too many subjects in one letter.
• Strive to write one page letters. These are more digestible.

MAKE THE TELEPHONE WORK FOR YOU

• Telephone is a great time-saving tool in right hands.
• Plan your calls.
• Set aside a period of time for making and if possible, receiving calls
• Timing for each call.
YOUR PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANT

• Transform your PA/Secretary into Professional Assistant.

• Your PA can help you save time by
  – Keeping unwanted callers at bay – by diverting them to appropriate person.
  – Minimizing interruptions; can arrange interviews suitably.
  – Dealing with routine correspondence.

COMMON TIME MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS: MEETINGS

• Meetings are potential time wasters.
• Meetings are necessary evil; distractions from one’s regular work.
• Try to say ‘No’ to a meeting where you are not required.
• Agenda should be definite. Every one should receive the agenda and relevant papers well in advance.
• There should be a finishing time for meeting.
DOs/ DON’Ts FOR
BOSS/CHAIRPERSON/ADMINISTRATOR

• Do not call a meeting unless it is necessary
• Do not call a meeting if the task can be handled by a call or by a small group through formal/ informal discussion
• Meetings are not required to:
  ✴ ‘Boss around’ or give ‘messages’
  ✴ Socialise
  ✴ Rubber stamp decisions
  ✴ Pass on information
  ✴ Promote private or hidden agenda
  ✴ Continue the habit

BOSS-IMPOSED TIME

• Time spent doing things we would not be doing if we did not have bosses.
• Keeping bosses satisfied takes time, but dealing with dissatisfied bosses takes even more time.
• Failing to invest sufficient time to satisfy bosses always results in more & more boss-imposed time. With lesser time for others.
ROLE OF SUBORDINATE

• Realise that Boss has a wider vision
• Devote time as per organisational objectives and your goals
• Go to Boss after doing your home work
• Manage the problems which can be tackled at your level

PLANNING THE DAY

• Prepare a list of priorities for the day based on urgency and importance.
• Get the timing right.
• Morning is the time for hard work.
• Interesting work, meetings and social events can take place in off-peak time.
• Have work-breaks to overcome fatigue.
• Living 100% in the present improves your work output.
OTHER TIME SAVERS

• Concentration, Avoid interruptions
• Use of committed time
• Good Health
• Do not let your subordinate come to you with problems unless they bring their proposed solutions.

PROBLEMS OF OVERWORKED MANAGER

• Why some managers are typically running out of time while their staff is running out of work.
  – They pick up staff’s job. They enjoy & are good at it.
  – They try to do things efficiently which are not worth doing at first place. Efficiency Vs Effectiveness.

• It can be explained by ‘Monkey-on-the-back’ analogy. Monkey is ‘next move’ or problem or opportunity that comes to us.
• Some ‘Monkeys’ belong to us. However, greatest proportion belongs to subordinates.
• Once we pick up ‘Monkeys’ from subordinates they get message that we want Monkeys.
• By allowing ‘Monkey’ from your subordinates on to your back you volunteered for two things:
  – Accepted responsibility for the problem from him.
  – Promised him a progress report.
• Now he will pressurise you to do what actually is his job.

• Sometimes colleagues also try to pass on their monkeys.
• Many Bosses are in habit of passing their monkeys to subordinates.
• This snowballs to upward, sideward & downward leaping ‘Monkeys’. These take our all available time with no time to work on our own ‘Monkeys’.
• So be careful. Do not accept others monkeys.
RECAP

• Yesterday is a *cancelled cheque*, tomorrow is a *promisory note*. Today is *ready cash*. Use it.
• When feasible, delegate.
• Don’t let paperwork pile up.
• Do not postpone work.
• Identify your time waster and resolve to eliminate them.
• Add times for relaxation and recreation in your schedule.

RECAP

• Identify and make use of “up” and “down” time.
• Learn to say “NO.” It is not a crime.
• Make use of committed time – travel time, waiting time etc.
• Plan the day.
• Set goals and work towards achieving them.
• Keep the Boss happy.
Why Time Management is Important

• “The Time Famine”

• Bad time management = stress

• This is life advice
The 80/20 Rule

• Critical few and the trivial many
• Having the courage of your convictions
• Good judgment comes from experience
• Experiences come from bad judgment

Planning

• Failing to plan is planning to fail
• Plan Each Day, Each Week, Each Semester
• You can always change your plan, but only once you have one!
Using Time Journal Data

• What am I doing that doesn’t really need to be done?

• What am I doing that could be done by someone else?

• What am I doing that could be done more efficiently?

• What do I do that wastes others’ time?

Procrastination

“Procrastination is the thief of time”

Edward Young
Night Thoughts, 1742
Balancing Act

“Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion”
Parkinson’s Law
Cyril Parkinson, 1957

Avoiding Procrastination

• Doing things at the last minute is much more expensive than just before the last minute

• Deadlines are really important: establish them yourself!
Challenge People

• People rise to the challenge: You should delegate “until they complain”

• Communication Must Be Clear: “Get it in writing” – Judge Wapner

• Give objectives, not procedures

• Tell the relative importance of this task

Meetings

• Average executive: > 40% of time
• Lock the door, unplug the phone
• Maximum of 1 hour
• Prepare: there must be an agenda
• 1 minute minutes: an efficient way to keep track of decisions made in a meeting: who is responsible for what by when?
Randy’s Magic E-Mail Tips

• Save all of it; no exceptions
• If you want somebody to do something, make them the only recipient. Otherwise, you have diffusion of responsibility. Give a concrete request/task and a deadline.
• If you really want somebody to do something, CC someone powerful.
• Nagging is okay; if someone doesn’t respond in 48 hours, they’ll probably never respond. (True for phone as well as email).

Recommended Readings


Action Items

• Get a day-timer (or PDA) if you don’t already have one
• Start keeping your TODO list in four-quadrant form or ordered by priorities (not due dates)
• Do a time journal, or at least record number of hours of television/week
• Make a note in your day-timer to revisit this talk in 30 days (www.randypausch.com). At that time, ask yourself “What behaviors have I changed?”

The Seven Habits

From “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic” by Stephen R. Covey, Simon and Schuster, 1989

1. **BE PROACTIVE:** Between stimulus and response in human beings lies the power to choose. Productivity, then, means that we are solely responsible for what happens in our lives. No fair blaming anyone or anything else.

2. **BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND:** Imagine your funeral and listen to what you would like the eulogist to say about you. This should reveal exactly what matters most to you in your life. Use this frame of reference to make all your day-to-day decisions so that you are working toward your most meaningful life goals.
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3. PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST. To manage our lives effectively, we must keep our mission in mind, understand what’s important as well as urgent, and maintain a balance between what we produce each day and our ability to produce in the future. Think of the former as putting out fires and the latter as personal development.

4. THINK WIN/WIN. Agreements or solutions among people can be mutually beneficial if all parties cooperate and begin with a belief in the “third alternative”: a better way that hasn’t been thought of yet.

5. SEEK FIRST TO BE UNDERSTANDING, THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD. Most people don’t listen. Not really. They listen long enough to devise a solution to the speaker’s problem or a rejoinder to what’s being said. Then they dive into the conversation. You’ll be more effective in your relationships with people if you sincerely try to understand them fully before you try to make them understand your point of view.
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6. SYNERGIZE. Just what it sound like. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In practice, this means you must use “creative cooperation” in social interactions. Value differences because it is often the clash between them that leads to creative solutions.

7. SHARPEN THE SAW. This is the habit of self-renewal, which has four elements. The first is mental, which includes reading, visualizing, planning and writing. The second is spiritual, which means value clarification and commitment, study and meditation. Third is social/emotional, which stress management includes service, empathy, synergy and intrinsic security. Finally, the physical includes exercise, nutrition and stress management.