

advancing women in business

every
woman
NETWORK



WORKBOOK

MANAGING YOUR TIME

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ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

EVERYWOMAN IS AN ORGANISATION that works to advance women in business. Through our work with individuals and organisations, we know that time management is an issue that affects everyone, at some point in their career.

To use this workbook effectively it is important that you take the time to do a proper audit of how you spend your time, so that you can identify where to make improvements. Once you discover key areas that steal your time, you can move to the section that covers that area.

Each section will suggest activities to help you get started and there are short exercises that will point you in the right direction for real change.

It can be tempting to simply read through the workbook, but by completing the activities you will turn the theories into reality and incorporate them into your day-to-day working life.

Take some time to think, reflect and decide what you can do to make a difference to how you spend your day and the impact you make on your business.

PS. Time Management is a key leadership skill; if you would like to develop your leadership skills, please download our 'Stepping into Leadership Workbook' at www.everywoman.com/network.

INTRODUCTION

IN OUR BUSY 24/7 WORLD, making the best use of our time is vital. We need to be working smart, on the right things. The development of usually useful technology means there is no longer a clear divide between work and personal time. So, everyone needs to find ways to balance their time to reflect what is important to them. This is easy to say but much harder to do.

Be aware, poor time management can permeate to others. If we are stressed, we stress others out, if we panic because of imminent deadlines, we panic others. You owe it to yourself and your team to be the best manager of time you can be. There will always be unexpected crises or vital interruptions and how you deal with these will set the culture for your department, team or business.

The biggest trick with time management is taking the time to figure out what is working well for you and where you need to improve.

There are two key things to consider; the tools you use to support yourself, and your attitude towards managing time. Knowing what holds you back is the key to moving forward, so it is important to make the time to really discover what changes you can make to see a real difference.

Action

Take a few moments to list what good time management means to you in your life, e.g. being able to take a lunch break, having the time to develop yourself, being prepared for meetings.

1.

2.

3.

SECTION 1. UNDERSTANDING HOW TO SPEND YOUR TIME



Understanding how to spend your time

THE ESSENTIAL FIRST STEP of managing your time more effectively is to understand how you currently spend your time. Everyone is busy, but it is easy to be busy doing non-essential activities or just to keep the treadmill going.

What tasks are you actually performing and how much time do you spend on each activity?

Use the Time Audit overleaf to record your activity at work for a few days. Ideally, set an alarm for every half hour so that you can record what you are actually working on. You can do it retrospectively; however, memory is usually much kinder than reality. You may prefer to use an electronic device to track your activity; there are many useful apps ('Toggl' and 'Hourstracker' to name two). The key thing is that it should be easy to review.

If you're struggling with time before or after work, then add in these time frames - we often have few precious hours at home to get things done, so these tasks need to be time managed too.

Don't record unnecessary information; it is the activity, the time you spent on it and whether it was effective that is important for this exercise.

This Time Audit will be referred to throughout the workbook and accompanying online seminars so make it as realistic as possible.

EXERCISE

Time Audit

TIME	ACTIVITY	PROJECT/PURPOSE	EFFECTIVENESS (HIGH/LOW)
08:00 - 08:30			
08:30 - 09:00			
09:00 - 09:30			
09:30 - 10:00			
10:00 - 10:30			
10:30 - 11:00			
11:00 - 11:30			
11:30 - 12:00			
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16:00 - 16:30			
16:30 - 17:00			
17:00 - 17:30			
17:30 - 18:00			
18:00 - 18:30			
18:30 - 19:00			
19:30 - 20:00			

Linking the Time Audit to Productivity

WRITE DOWN THE FIVE TOPICS you expect to discuss at your next performance review. If you don't have objectives agreed with your line-manager, think about five things you should be contributing to your organisation.

e.g. Increasing business development activity

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Look at your Time Audit and compare it to your list of objectives and highlight the tasks on your audit that have a direct link to your list. This is an exercise to get you thinking – if what you do on a daily basis is not contributing to your objectives or the organisations goals and visions, you may need to rethink your activity or speak to your line manager.

How much time have you spent on things that have little or no consequence to your performance or to the overall goals of the business?

What can you do with this information?

This tells you how you spend your time; the rest of the workbook will help you figure out how to make sure the time you spend is effective. Use this information to work through the rest of the workbook and identify ways to use your time as effectively as possible.

What can I learn from this?

Reflective learning is an essential part of development and to make the most of your time audit, reflect on what it is telling you and decide on the best ways to be more effective.

One Final Thought

Linking time spent to your priorities is a good self-checker; later in the workbook we will look at how to prioritise urgent and important tasks.

SECTION 2. MANAGING YOUR TIME



Uncover your 'Time Thieves'

NOW THAT YOU HAVE DONE THE TIME AUDIT you can see what saps your time.

Be aware of your 'Time Thieves' – the tasks or people that seem to steal your precious time without realising it. And once it's gone, it's gone.

The top time thieves are:

- Lack of organisation of work space - [Page 11](#)
- Working only on urgent tasks and ignoring the important ones - [Page 12](#)
- Unclear goals - [Page 15](#)
- Lack of planning - [Page 18](#)
- Interruptions - [Page 21](#)
- Not delegating when you could - [Page 22](#)
- Saying 'Yes' to everything and everyone - [Page 24](#)
- Procrastination - [Page 25](#)

Look back at your time audit and identify your 'Time Thieves'.

EXERCISE

My top 'Time Thieves' are:

1.

2.

3.

You can continue to work through this book in order, or push forward to tackle your most relevant 'Time Thieves'.

Resolve your 'Time Thieves'

NOW THAT YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED YOUR 'TIME THIEVES' it is important that you work to address them.

Your work environment

There is a correlation between an organised desk and an organised mind. You need the two to complement each other – not work in opposite directions.

What can you do?

Your work space doesn't need to be perfect and clear – it does need to be useful though. Think of driving your car, your desk is the driver's seat and you should only have around you what you need to get the present job done. For example: the folder for the project, your diary and tools you use daily like a stapler or hole punch. Anything you might need above and beyond getting from A to B should be filed properly and easily accessible.

Top tips

1. Only have things on your desktop (real or virtual) that you use daily
2. Put important reminders at eye level
3. Hold onto professional articles - hard or soft, for a week. If you haven't read them by then, it's likely you never will
4. Be ruthless with things you will never read - e.g. throw out magazines that are older than the current month
5. Most documents or information can be re-sent or found on the internet, so don't hold onto articles or emails that you can easily replace
6. The more logical your filing system, the easier to find things. So file your paperwork or electronic documents in a proper filing system, with folders that say what they are and put folders into folders when it gets too big to find something quickly
7. Separate items you need easy access to and ones that need filing
8. Have a place to keep your key items i.e. keys, phone, security pass etc
9. If you personalise your desk with photos or memorabilia, each time you add one take another away

Action

What two things you can do right now to start organising your environment?

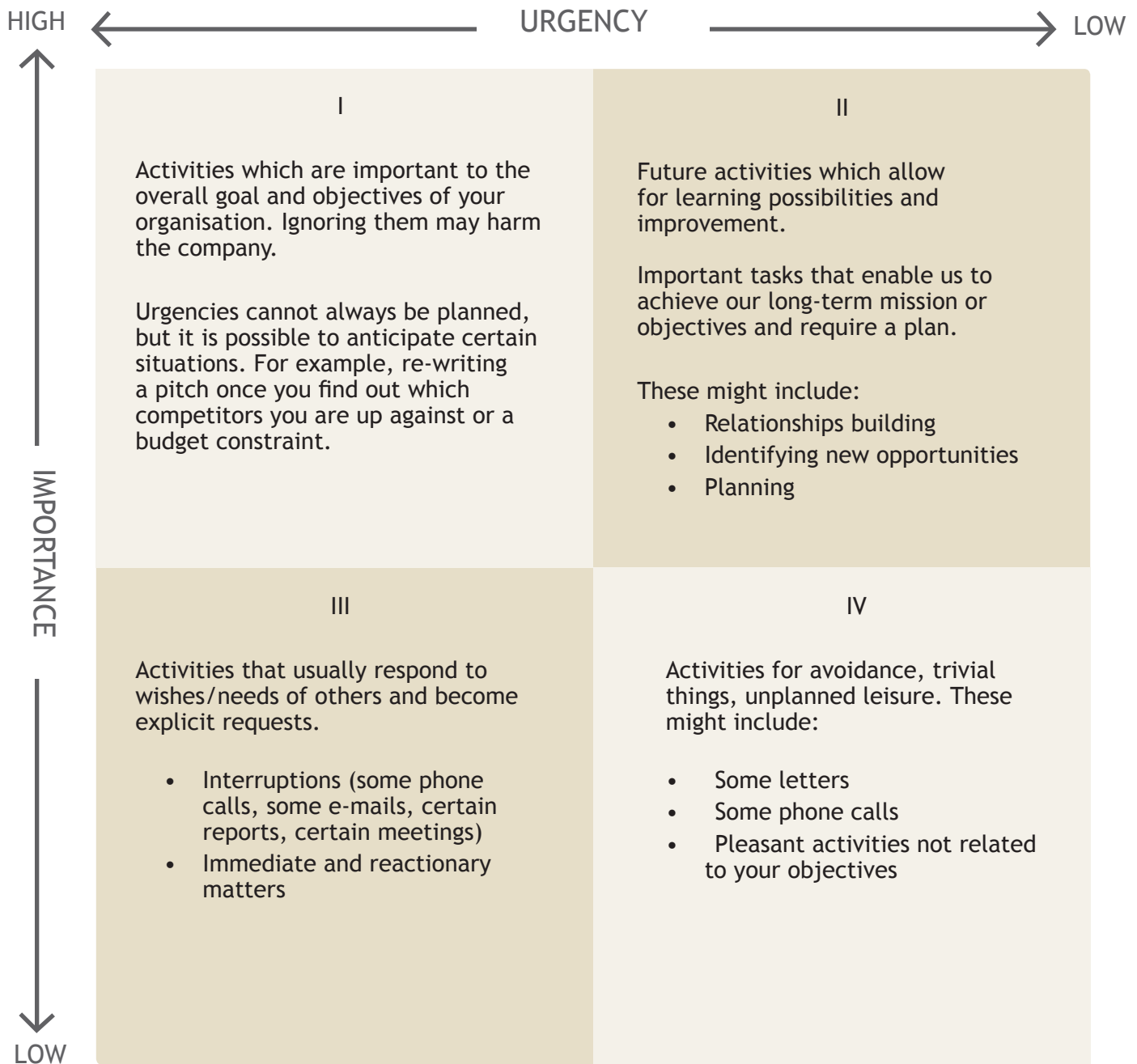
- 1.
- 2.

Final thought

A de-cluttered workspace will help de-clutter your mind. It will help eliminate distractions and allow you to focus on the job at hand.

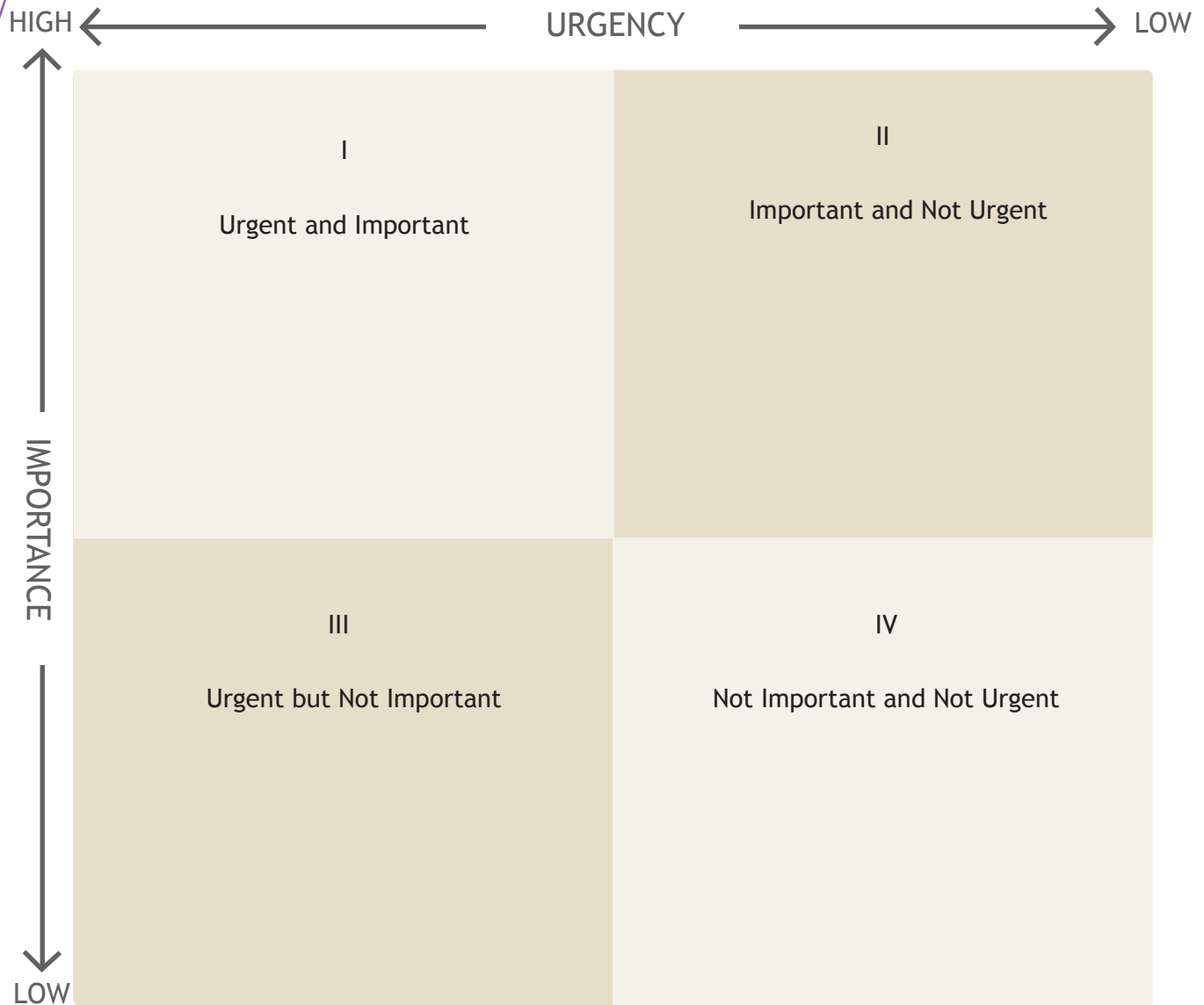
Urgent versus important

STEPHEN COVEY, AUTHOR OF MANY USEFUL MANAGEMENT BOOKS including 'The 7 habits of Highly Effective People' built a framework used worldwide to help people prioritise tasks on a short-term and long-term basis. He recognised that we often get things done that appear to be urgent at the risk of never getting to the important tasks. By assessing the urgency and the importance of a task, we can prioritise what needs to be done.



EXERCISE

Now plot your own using your time log. Or perhaps start thinking about the day or week ahead.



The best use of our time is in quadrants that focus on IMPORTANT things.

Important	The more we focus on II, the more effective our time will be.
Not Important	<p>III and IV are not classified as IMPORTANT and, therefore, are not aligned with our own objectives. These take time and use various resources.</p> <p>It is important that we attempt to eliminate those activities which are not directed towards achieving our objectives. These are the main 'Time Thieves.'</p>

Ok so now you have plotted your tasks, how do you deal with them?

1. Urgent and Important

Manage

"The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot."

MICHAEL ALTSHULER

These tasks will demand your instant attention. Make sure you prioritise the tasks within this quadrant. There are bound to be some tasks that you could not have anticipated but for the others do take time to think about how you could have planned better to give yourself a longer lead time and reduce the urgency.

2. Important and not urgent

Focus and plan

These are tasks that should relate to your goals and objectives. Often they only happen once they move to quadrant 1. Avoid this by planning these tasks into your day. Break them down into manageable chunks if necessary.

3. Urgent but not important

Deal with or pass back

These will derail your direction and distract you from meeting your own goals. Often they are client demands that must be met but push back when you can and do not let someone else's lack of planning become your emergency. You should work towards only spending 5% of your time in this quadrant.

4. Not important and not urgent

Avoid when at all possible

Use the four D's - Just DO it. Delegate it. Defer it (take it off your to-do list.) or Dump it.

Stephen Covey suggests many of us spend about 90% of our time in the Urgent and Important quadrant to the detriment of finding time for Important and Non-urgent tasks. You should aim to spend 5% or less of your time in IV, and the majority of your time in II - Important and Not Urgent.

One final thought

This is a great tool to use with your team. Often people don't know where to start with the number of activities they need to accomplish and this is a useful visual tool. It will also allow you to see if your team is aligned with your own thinking in terms of what is urgent and important!

Setting goals

Why set goals?

There is a simple reason why you need a goal: you need a direction to work towards, no matter what gets in the way. When we look at how we spend our time, we need to know that what we are doing is helping us to get where we want to be.

Goals come in all shapes and sizes. You can have lifetime goals and dreams, such as retiring to a house in the country, or five-year goals, such as becoming an everywoman award winner, becoming a leader or perhaps even a short, sharp goal, such as updating your client contacts. Before embarking on this workbook, you may have had the goal of becoming better at managing your time.

"In absence of clearly defined goals, we become strangely loyal to performing daily acts of trivia."

ROBERT HEINLEIN

How to set goals

Ask yourself...

- What is going on?
- What do I want instead?
- How can I get there?

Four steps to achieving a goal:

- Identify what is important to you at work or on a personal note and articulate those goals in real terms
- Write down your goals and follow them. Once they are down on paper, you will feel more accountable to yourself
- Create a timeline and assess your progress regularly
- Celebrate success along the way; congratulate yourself, even if no one else does

It can help to share your goals with others. This may be in terms of business objectives and your personal development plan. Find time to discuss the challenges and positive things you are learning along the way. This is an ideal way to start a mentoring relationship - sharing your goals with your mentor will help them direct their advice and guidance.

Another way of making goals more powerful is to make sure they are SMART.

SMART stands for:

- S – Specific (or Significant)
- M – Measurable (or Meaningful)
- A – Attainable (or Action-Oriented or Achievable)
- R – Relevant (or Realistic or Rewarding)
- T – Time-bound (or Trackable)

2. MANAGING YOUR TIME

1. UNDERSTANDING HOW YOU SPEND YOUR TIME

Examples.

- Spending an hour a week updating my client contacts
- Clear out any redundant files by the end of the month
- Presenting my research at next year's conference

Be aware, though, that this is just the first step. Once the goal is created, you need to back it up with action.

- How will you update the contacts?
- How will you find the time to clear out years of unused files?
- How will you make sure you are able to present at the conference?

Goals get waylaid when there is a lack of 'how to' associated.

Ask yourself:

- What can I do?
- What else can I do?
- Who can help me?
- What might stop me?
- Is there a goal within the goal? For example, if you want to present at a conference, maybe your goal is really about gaining presentation skills or more about making sure you get the research done on time.

EXERCISE

Look back at your Time Audit. What do you want to get better at in terms of time management?

1.

2.

3.

How will I do it?

What can I do, starting today?

What do I need help and support with?

How will I know I am successful?

If personal development time is an issue for you, revisit this exercise and ask yourself 'What do I want to make time for outside of work to develop myself?'

Final Thought

Consider what you really want to achieve and where you really want to be and decide whether or not what you are doing on a day-to-day basis helps achieve this!

Planning your time

WILL SPENDING TIME PLANNING delay me from getting on with what I am really supposed to be doing? Won't I be 'spending' part of the resource when I should actually be 'working'?

Does any of this sound familiar? Is it a paradox to plan time? No!

It is a fact that planning takes time. However, not planning leads us to work without an order or a structure, which will result in wasted time.

Setting objectives, priorities and milestones will help you avoid constantly fire fighting and will enable you to focus on the really important tasks.

To plan means to save time because you can anticipate:

- Results to be achieved
- Activities that may be omitted
- Obstacles that may arise along the way
- People that need to be involved
- Information that should be gathered

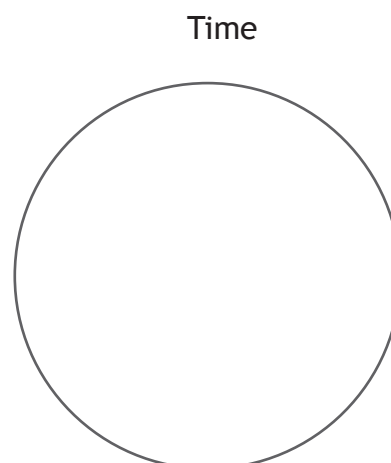
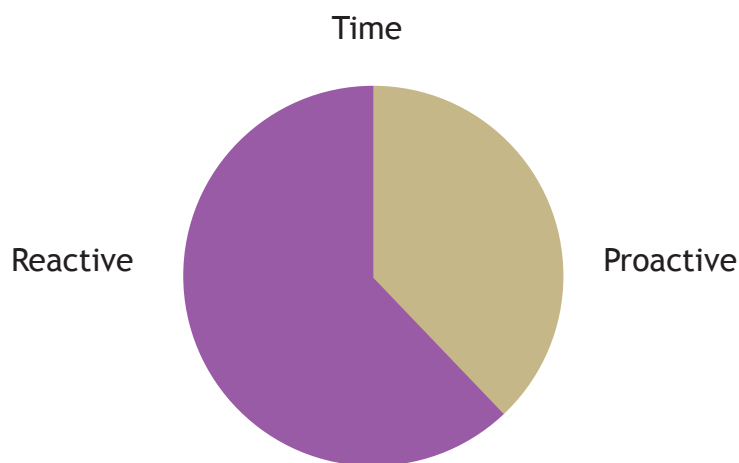
I don't have time to plan!

Fail to plan - plan to fail

Be realistic

Look back at your time audit and try to gauge how much of your time is spent being proactive versus reactive. The nature of many businesses is the need to react quickly and efficiently to customer needs, so it is unrealistic to be able to plan every moment of every day.

Use the blank circle to shade in a rough approximation of the time you spend being proactive versus reactive.



Of the reactive time, approximate how much was due to your lack of time management versus the nature of the business. Once you have a rough idea, then use that to help you plan your day and week.

If you know 60% of your day is spent reacting, then only fill 40% of your day with planned activities. If you have prioritised effectively and you start to have some extra time on your hands, you can start working on the next important task.

Have some quick tasks to cover short periods of time

Often we have a few minutes before a meeting starts or a little time before an important call. Keep a list of short tasks you can do to make the most use of this time. Those 5 minute bursts can add up to hours of lost time over a month. Ideas might be:

- Timesheets
- Clearing your inbox
- Updating a contact
- Signing documents
- Updating budget estimations

Rational versus Reactive thinking

Planning requires rational thinking. Take time to think, decide and then act, rather than have a reaction to an external event. The more you react, the less you plan.

Work through projects backwards to see what needs to be planned

It is easy to skip planning detail items within a larger task or goal. Begin with the end in mind and ask yourself what task needs to happen just before the end goal. Continue with this until you get to the start of the task. This will show you all the activities that need to be planned for and how critical they are to the success of meeting the goal.

Example: Launch party

ACTIVITY	DEADLINE	WHO'S RESPONSIBLE
BOOK VENUE		
DESIGN INVITATIONS AND COLLATERAL		
BOOK AND BRIEF SUPPLIERS: PHOTOGRAPHER/ PRODUCTION/FLOREST		
PRINT COLLATERAL		
SEND INVITATIONS		
BOOK SPEAKER		
SECURE GIFTS		
FOLLOW UP FINAL RSVP'S		
BRIEF KEY STAKEHOLDERS		
LAUNCH PARTY	10 JULY	

Have a planning tool

Everyone has a favourite planning tool – but make sure it is the most effective one. If you put everything into the calendar on your phone but never sync it with your work calendar then that system may not work for you.

Look around your office – you will probably see holiday planners on the wall, outlook calendar in your PC and the odd hard covered diary. Pick a system and make it yours. Use colours and images to enable you to get most of the information you need, at a quick glance.

One Final Thought

Don't be too rigid with your plans or you may miss opportunities and challenges that could help push your business or career forward.

Managing interruptions

BEING IN CONTROL OF YOUR TIME IS ALWAYS TOUGH, and it is made more difficult every time you are interrupted. Be aware, the more you allow people to interrupt you, the more they will. Be realistic about the need to be available versus the need to halt your task to deal with someone else's task.

Being in control

- As soon as you are interrupted, you lose your train of thought for the important email you are writing, or what you just promised the person on the other end of the phone. Saying something like 'let me just write a note to myself about the phone call', or 'Give me one minute to do a final check and send this email and then I will be with you', allows you to stay in control
- If you only have two minutes, say 'I only have two minutes, what can I help you with in that time?' Or offer an alternative time when you have more free time
- If a thought pops into your head about a different task than the one you are on - write a note in your calendar when you think you can deal with it
- De-clutter your work area; look for things that interrupt your day

Use technology wisely

- Put calls directly to voicemail for specific periods of time
- Use your 'out-of-office' for short periods of time, not just days out of the office
- Don't use email alert pop-ups unless you are able to ignore them. Plan to check email at set times throughout the day
- Don't get pulled into the internet black hole, where you lose track of time clicking on every link whilst searching for something specific

Have some phrases that will deflect the interrupter asking 'Have you got a minute?'

- Yes, but really just a minute as I am on a tight deadline
- I will have time in 10 minutes
- I am in the middle of sorting a major issue. Can I come seek you out in about an hour?
- I do have time, but not right now. How about I come to you at x o'clock?
- I need to get this done before my next meeting; can I come find you after that?
- I am really busy now but am free (after normal work hours). You will often find they sort the problem for themselves

One Final Thought

Most people would rather be listened to fully than half listened to while you are emailing away. Either focus on the person or give them an alternate meeting time.

The art of delegation

EVERYONE LOVES THE IDEA OF DELEGATING and we all know the merits of delegating but can come up with many excuses why we don't delegate, such as thinking it will be quicker to do it ourselves, or don't want to be seen as 'dumping' jobs on someone.

How do you delegate effectively?

Understand that delegation takes time and effort. Learn to look at and understand the opportunity costs i.e. if I take the time now, how will it benefit me in the future?

Invest time delegating the task to ensure a successful outcome, the first time around. The key factors to consider when delegating:

What

- What task are you delegating?
- What is the context?
- What are your ideal outcomes?
- What level of authority does the person you are delegating have e.g. are there limitations to what they can they sign off?

Who

- Who will you delegate the task to?
- Who will support them?
- Whose skills development will be enhanced by this opportunity?

When

- When will you delegate the task to them?
- When will you have milestone meetings to check progression and manage challenges?
- When is the deadline for completion?
- Give the examples of when they should refer to you on decisions and which decisions they can make themselves, e.g. I have budgeted £50 per head for the office party, within that budget you can choose any menu, but if you need to go over, I need to know before you commit to a supplier

How

- How will they carry out the task?
- How will you measure success/achievement?
- How much control do they have?

EXERCISE

Look back at your 'Time Audit' and for each activity or task think about how much of the task you could have delegated – all, some or none. If you say that all of your tasks could not have been delegated then well done, however for most of us there is definitely room for improvement.

Example

Task:

Develop PowerPoint slides for pitch

Time:

4 hours

Delegate:

Some

What?

Title slides, template and branding and proofing – 1.5 hours

Now... think what you could have done with that extra time? Use this to plan tasks you can delegate going forward.

Three tasks I will delegate are:

1.

2.

3.

What will I do with the time I gain back?

Revisit the key success factors above and ensure you use them.

Final thought

Delegation is a key developmental tool. By avoiding delegation you are inhibiting the development of your team. And when you delegate to others you are freeing yourself up to do tasks that will develop yourself.

Saying 'no' when you need to

THERE IS A HUGE PRESSURE TO SAY YES TO EVERY REQUEST, because we often feel that is what is expected of us. At different stages of your career and life, you will have different priorities.

For many of us, we say 'yes' because it is in our nature to be helpful and we are often happy to go that extra mile. What is vital, is to understand what the knock-on effect of saying 'yes' to one action will have on other tasks and deliverables.

So what can you do?

- Earn the right to say 'no'. Say 'yes' when you can so that when you must say 'no', it isn't considered your stock answer
- Know your strengths. Even if you have the time is it something you are able to do?
- Enforce boundaries. If you are making an exception once, to stay late on a night you normally must leave on time, make sure the other person knows it is an exception
- Ask the person who is making the request to help you prioritise other tasks in order of importance. Say something like 'Yes I can help, can you help me decide what I can push back in order to get this new job done?'
- Offer to do part of the request, the part you are comfortable with and can do effectively.
- If it is a timing issue, see if you can change the milestones so you can help with the task

"Recently I was asked by a client to pull together a workshop for someone else to deliver. The timing was tight, so I said I could do the content, but asked if they could get someone who was a format expert to make it look professional. They happily agreed."

SARA PARSONS
EVERYWOMAN EXPERT

EXERCISE

Practice makes perfect. Think about situations you find yourself in where you wish you had said no, and think about what you could have said instead.

The situation

What I should have said or done

Final thought

Remember that if you say yes, you are responsible for getting the job done. If you can't finish another task because of it, you are still responsible for that task as well.

Avoiding Procrastination

I'LL DO IT TOMORROW OR GET TO IT LATER has led to the downfall of many a good employee. Inevitably we rack up the numbers of things that we want to do later or at a more convenient time so that in the end any task appears seemingly insurmountable. Procrastination is so tempting and often the easy way out it is not a time management issue perse, it's about mind-set and behaviour issues; it is about the habits you form.

What does procrastination look like?

At work you might find yourself getting stressed about deadlines and commitments, you might find yourself completing tasks at the last minute or often asking for extensions. And the worst-case scenario is you find yourself working at a time when you had planned to be at dinner with friends. In your personal life procrastination can be things like waiting until the last-minute to do Christmas shopping waiting to get a final demand until you pay a bill or perhaps missing out on something exciting like a flight bargain or concert because you didn't get around to booking it. What we know is, whatever the situation it's detrimental to us and actually can and often does manifest itself in health issues relating to stress we don't need in our lives.

"Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday."

DON MARQUIS

According to Joseph Ferrari, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at De Paul University in Chicago, real procrastinators tell themselves five lies:

- They overestimate the time they have left to perform tasks
- They underestimate the time it takes to complete tasks
- They overestimate how motivated they will feel the next day, the next week, the next month - whenever they are putting things off to
- They mistakenly think that succeeding at a task requires that they feel like doing it
- They mistakenly believe that working when not in the mood is suboptimal

So what can you do?

"Procrastination is one of the most common and deadliest of diseases and its toll on success and happiness is heavy."

WAYNE GRETZKY

Procrastination is a learned behaviour so the good news is, it can be unlearned. It is more than just wanting to stop procrastinating, it is about changing your attitude and how you work. Look back at the goal setting section. Develop goals to carry out the tasks on which you are currently procrastinating. Look at your behaviour and make a commitment to tolerate short-term discomfort to achieve the longer-term goal. Set a goal to stop procrastinating.

What else can you do?

- Avoid distraction tasks
- Don't look at emails as they pop up
- Avoid quick internet searches that turn into hours
- Avoid saying 'yes' to tasks which support other people's objectives rather than your own

- Get rid of tasks you are never going to do
- Estimate time to complete tasks realistically
- Acknowledge your emotions around a task i.e. you may be worried about failure or don't know how to start. Work on that rather than avoiding the task
- Give yourself rewards for a task completed
- Learn to make decisions
- Break down tasks into manageable chunks (look at the planning section)
- Set realistic and achievable goals (look at the goal setting section)
- Know yourself and your parameters. For example don't plan a three-hour writing session without breaks or seeing another person if you are a people person

EXERCISE

What three things should have done in the past week that you have procrastinated over?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Think about the reasons why people procrastinate, identify what has caused the procrastination.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Looking ahead, what can you realistically do to avoid procrastination on similar tasks in the future?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Final Thought

Sometimes, the thing we can put off the most is having difficult conversations. If you are avoiding a difficult conversation, download the useful everywomanNetwork workbook 'Managing Tough Conversations'.

Next steps

WORKING THROUGH THIS WORKBOOK IS ONLY THE FIRST STEP to improving your time management. Take what you have learnt and put it into practice.

On a weekly basis revisit some of your exercises and see how you are doing in reality. If you go off course, try another Time Audit. Inevitably you will have improved and often new areas for development arise. Take time out to reflect and learn and you will see how the effort makes an impact!

Well done for making the journey.

This workbook has been produced and edited by everywoman, with content commissioned from associate expert Sara Parsons. It is part of the everywoman portfolio of resources that have been specially created to support and develop women as they advance their careers and businesses.

everywoman Expert



Sara Parsons has been an everywoman Associate for 10 years and has worked in the field of Personal Development globally for 16, with clients such as; Paramount Pictures, The RSA, Ipsos MORI, RNLI, Oxford University Press. She holds an honours business degree and is a qualified expert in many professional assessments including Belbin and MBTI - the Myers-Briggs profile. Sara is passionate about inspiring and supporting women to reach into the potential they often don't know they possess.

Further reading

- Stephen Covey - *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*
- Michael Heppel - *How to save an hour everyday*
- Brian Tracey - *Eat That Frog!: Get More of the Important Things Done, Today!*
- David Allen - *Getting things done, how to achieve stress free productivity*

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