

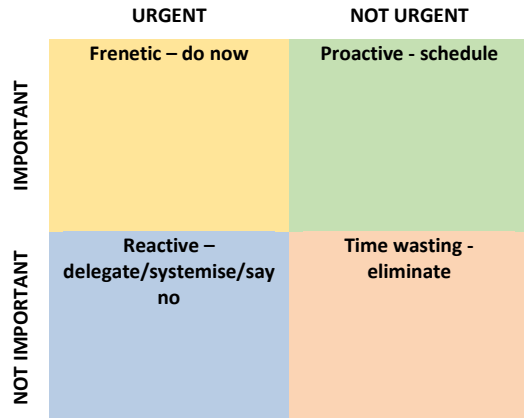
TIME MANAGEMENT

If you want to achieve more and successfully conquer the overwhelm of modern, fast-paced life, the following steps will help you to achieve your goals, while maintaining effective work-life balance.

1. Prioritise

In his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey advises us to “begin with the end in mind”. This means having a plan to achieve the goals that are important to you (both work and personal) and being able to say “no” where appropriate.

Everything we do fits into one of the boxes in the following matrix:



Effective time managers spend most of their time in the green quadrant, planning and executing activities that enable them to achieve their long-term goals.

Proactive, non-urgent/important activities include:

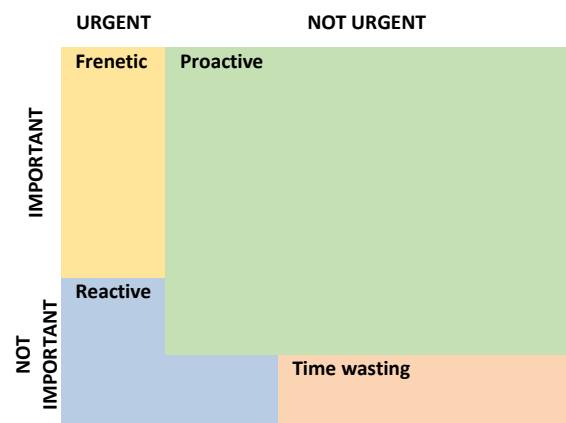
- Strategic/business planning
- Relationship building
- Pursuing new opportunities
- Preventing problems
- Upskilling
- Recreation

The yellow quadrant represents urgent/important tasks and, inevitably, we all have to deal with some unexpected crises or problems. Stress arises when people spend most of their time working on frenetic, urgent activities. Activities from the green quadrant can end up here if not actioned in a timely manner. If you work proactively, you can minimise the amount of time you have to spend in this space.

Sometimes interruptions put us into a reactive mode (the blue quadrant), taking the focus off our important priorities. This often happens when other people try to create urgency around work that they want us to do. Try to delegate, systemise or say no where possible.

The orange quadrant represents non-urgent/non-important work, which is simply a waste of time and should be avoided. We often slip into this mode when we’re procrastinating about challenging tasks by doing something that is fun or distracting, but doesn’t contribute to our long-term goals.

Think about how you spend your time and commit to scheduling non-urgent/important activities that create long term success (set a goal of achieving 80% of your time in the green quadrant). The diagram below represents effective time management:



2. Work to a plan

Once you've created a strategy and established your long-term goals, taking a disciplined approach to managing your daily activities will help you to stay on track. You can do this by making a to do list at the end of each day with only your top 6 items for the following day. Prioritise them from 1-6 and work through them in order of priority. When interruptions occur, write them down and assess their importance against the items you already have on your list. If you can't delegate, systemise or say no, re-prioritise your to do list. Carry forward any outstanding items at the end of the day.

3. Manage your well-being

If you put yourself first, you'll always be able to perform at your best. Healthy nutrition, exercise, adequate breaks away from your desk, routines for decompressing at the end of the day and getting a good night's sleep are essential. Some tips are:

- Take a walk outside at lunch time
- Set a recurring timer for mini breaks from your computer screen
- Create a healthy eating plan with a nutritionist
- Meditate
- Do yoga
- Avoid the use of electronic devices for 2 hours before going to bed

"If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail". Benjamin Franklin.



"Efficiency is doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right things". Peter Drucker.



REFERENCES

1. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey
2. *Live Well, Work Well*, Lauren Parsons