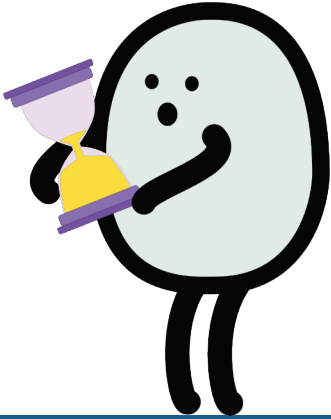


The Effective Executive Time Management

Effective executives start with how they spend their time at the front of their minds, not tasks.

Time is a non-replenishing resource, so knowing where you spend your time is a critical ingredient for being effective. Follow the process below and take back control of how you spend your time.

Track Your Time



You need to find out what tasks that you spend your time on. Create time-logs regularly, review and action them to keep time under control.

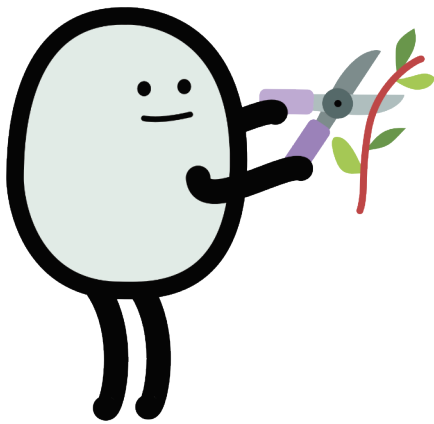
1. Time-log: write down the names and descriptions of the tasks you complete over the course of a week in a task-log. **Record** how long you spend on each of these tasks.

2. Eliminate: remove each task that is on your time-log that answers **no** to the following question "What would happen if these tasks were not done at all?".

3. Reassign: each task that could be done by someone else at least as good, if not better, reassign it to someone else. You are not **delegating** this task because you don't want to do it, you are delegating it so you can free up your time on something you can contribute more effectively to.

4. Other People's Time: never waste the time of others! Ask your people "What do I do that prevents you from being your most effective?" Once you have the answer, **remove** your action or task that causes this time waste, thereby freeing up your people's time.

Pruning Time Wasters



Look for the following time wasting symptoms.

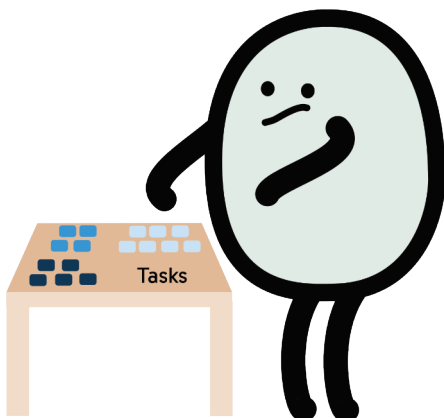
1. The Recurring Crisis: ask 'What time-wasting tasks follow a so-called recurring crisis?' Identify these tasks by looking back at what happened before - then create a **routine** for the tasks. Assign these routines to your people, which reduces or eliminates their time wasting potential. Note, recurring crises are a symptom of laziness...

2. Wrong Information: a shocking amount of time is wasted because you have the wrong information in front of you, or even worse, the information you have is in the incorrect form. Both of which lead to **delayed decision making**. Make sure the information is correct and follows a system.

3. Overstaffing: time-wastes often result from overstaffing. Drucker's rule of thumb here is if senior staff spend more than 10% of their time on work-place drama, then your organization probably has too many employees. When an organization has too many people, they get in each other's way. When it is lean, there is space to move. Don't **prune** too much though, as you may not be able to complete your tasks effectively.

4. Meetings: arguably, this is everyone's least favourite activity! Make meetings the exception, **not the rule!** Look back at your task-log to see if you have too many meetings. If you do, get out the shears, and prune those meetings back. Make meetings last only as long as they need to be. Afterall, you cannot meet and work at the same time.

Consolidate Discretionary Time



The higher you are in an organization, the less control you will have of how you spend your time. Spend it wisely by following these steps:

1. Review: go back to your time-log and identify where you have free '**discretionary**' time. Calculate how much of this time you have - to consolidate later. Don't fool yourself into believing that you can get meaningful work completed in small chunks of 15 minute slots - you can't!

2. Consolidate: know yourself and when you are at your most effective, for many it is in the morning. **Block out** this time to get the important work done. Accept zero interruptions. Don't leave the tasks until after work. You will be exhausted and will accomplish little.

3. Monitor: carefully monitor how you spend your discretionary time. Once other 'tasks' start to encroach on it, like weeds in a garden, you need to prune them back, or remove them altogether. Time management requires constant **maintenance**.

Conclusion: to continue to be effective you cannot afford to be complacent. Keep your time-logs up-to-date, and review them once a week, once a month, and yearly. Go through all of the tasks in this document. Remember that time is the **most important non-renewable resource** that you have at your disposal. The moment you let the grains of time slip through your fingers is the moment when you have lost control of it.