Are You Too Busy?
Practical Tips For Better Time Management

Is this How You Feel?

What’s a Productivity Expert?

- Focuses on offices (at work or virtual / home)
- Sets up file systems and Methods to handle email
- Helps create habits and processes to make things easier
- Teaches time management and prioritization skills
- Helps you achieve work / life balance with better organization
Topics We’ll Cover

- Tips for Time Management
  - Prioritizing
  - Planning Your Day
  - Handling Emails (Dealing with the Inbox)
  - Managing Interruptions & Distractions
  - Making Meetings More Effective
  - And more!
- Some Exercises / Thinking

A great way to look at time

You cannot manage time, but you can manage yourself!

What you need to know...

- There is no magic formula
  - The 48-hour day does not exist
- Life is about your values and big goals, not about filling every second of the day with tasks
- We all have more to-do’s than we’ll ever get done
Use the Eisenhower Decision Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>URGENT</th>
<th>NOT URGENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMPORTANT</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT IMPORTANT</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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</tbody>
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Eisenhower Matrix Examples

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<th>URGENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>IMPORTANT</td>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT IMPORTANT</td>
<td><img src="image7.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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How Can We Say No?

- **Plan how to say No**
  - Create and practice a script that works for you
- **Hard No**
  - "I wish I could help, because I know it’s important to you. I’m tied up with some other things, and I can’t help this time."
- **Soft No (negotiate for a win-win)!**
  - When it’s due (deadline)
    - "I can’t do it today, but how about by end of day tomorrow?"
  - Who’s going to do the work
    - "I can’t do it, but I’ll ask Bob to get it done for you."
  - It’s not our department, but I think Mary in H.R. might be able to help"
  - Amount you’re agreeing to do
    - "Of course I’m willing to help. I’ll need X from you & we can get started."

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**Saying No To the Boss**

- Always be negotiating so it's a win-win!
  - Remember Soft No options
- It's a skill you can learn (with practice!)
- Reprioritize w/ Boss - Get their help
  - "I can help with that, but we'd need to look at the impact on X. Which one would you like for me to focus on?"

**Use Your Calendar Strategically**

- You control your calendar, i.e. your time
  - You need time to do your work
  - Others need to know when you are available
- Block Time (if you don't, other people will schedule your day!)
  - Set aside time to make progress on your projects
  - Set aside 25% time for emergencies (Don't over schedule your day)
  - Recognize that you have admin tasks (Allow time for them)
  - Work in chunks - 45 mins (concentrate), 15 mins (easy), 45 mins (concentrate)
- Remember your priorities (don't be dragged down by daily minutia)
  - Quad 1 / Quad 2 items

**Plan Every Day**

- Plan before you leave work, don't wait for morning, because you will…
  - Check email
  - Get involved in meetings and tasks
  - Allow someone to interrupt you
- What does planning involve?
  - Check your calendar
  - Make a to-do list and number it!
- Make your to-do list visible
  - Helps you focus & stay on track
  - Helps you avoid distractions / interruptions
- Understand & plan for your peak energy
Map your energy

- Peak Energy

Make Weekly Planning A Habit

- Look ahead 3-4 weeks
- What do you need to block time for?
  - Meeting prep
  - Important projects – ex: Budget proposal, month-end, hiring someone,…
  - What are your deadlines?
- Travel time / catch-up time (after travelling)
- Admin tasks (monthly reports, emails,…)

- Make this a weekly habit
- Put it on your calendar!
- Plan to do so it doesn’t become urgent

- Allow for catch-up time every week

Exercise

- What makes an ineffective meeting?

- How could meetings be more effective?
Make Meetings Effective

- The “45-minute” meeting....
- Develop an agenda
  - 3-5 bullet points, sent ahead of time
  - Say No to meetings with no agenda
- Start on time / End on time
  - Keep clock / watch visible in room (keeps you on track)
  - Use a Time Keeper
  - Set a timer (so don’t spend too much on one topic)
- Create ground rules everyone can agree to
  - No phones (or phones in middle of table)
  - No texting, fines for tardiness....
  - Use the “parking lot”
  - Don’t multitask (be present)

Too Many Meetings?

- Ask what the meeting is about
- Say No to meetings with no agenda
- Block time on calendar for projects
  - So will have fewer meetings
- Make sure you’re the right person to attend
  - Are you really needed?
  - Could you review the minutes?
  - Could someone update you instead?
  - What would happen if you didn’t attend?

Don’t Let Things or People Distract You

- Distractions will happen
  - It’s how you manage them that makes the difference
- Interrupted (by others or ourselves) every 11 minutes
  - Takes 25 minutes to get back on track (if you get back at all!)
- We interrupt ourselves 40% of the time
- 1 hr of uninterrupted time = 3-4 hours of “normal” time
- We can build our concentration & focus (it’s a skill!)
What Distracts You?

- Work with 2-3 people next to you
- List Distractions & Interruptions
  - Things you do...
    - Always answer phone when rings
  - Your Env. (tech, people, etc.)
    - Temp in office (too cold / too hot)
    - Drop in's
    - Smartphone
- Brainstorm on solutions
- Take notes so you remember some ideas to try!

Let Others Know You’re Not Available

- Use visual cues – closed door, sign, or object
  - Close your door (and don’t let people in unless emergency)
  - Have office hours / “interrupting” hours (or quiet hours)
  - Lead people to the door
  - Be accessible, but not always available
  - Allow people to leave messages - phone, text, email, white board,…
  - Set a time limit with people (phone or in person)
    - Say, “I have just 2-3 mins, but wanted to take your call.”
  - Bookmark - if interrupted, write down where you were at

Handle Unexpected Meetings

- Negotiate for different time (make it a win-win)
  - Schedule longer meetings (make it official!!)
  - Use recurring mtgs for those wi/ lots of quests
  - Go to other’s office (you can leave when you want)
  - Lead person to the door
  - Remove / Block guest chair (force them to stand)
  - Have “stand-up” quick update meetings
  - Let them know you only have 10 minutes
  - Ask what the meeting is about
Handle Open Spaces

- Understand it’s good and bad
  - Great to communicate
  - Bad for focusing – lots of distractions
- Use a visual cue
- Don’t be afraid to say, “I cannot talk right now”
- Move to another office, area, conf room,…
- Decide as a group on quiet hours or office hours
  - Ex: 8-9:30 catch-up, 9:30-12 open for questions

Deal With Noise

- Noise
  - Music or Loud Talking (conversation or phone)
  - Other people’s alerts
  - Noisy printers or copy machines
  - Communicate!
    - Use Headphones, ear plugs, ear buds w/music or without music
    - Use white noise machine / smartphone app
    - Move your desk or cubicle; move the printer
    - Change locations (move to conference room)
    - Put up a sign “Please keep conversations to a minimum in this high traffic area”
    - Use your “indoor voice” / Don’t yell across the office

Help Handle Requests for Info

- How can you handle this request in the future?
  - Create a template you can email / mail
  - Create a subject-matter expert in the office so can refer this type of question to them
  - Understand the commonly asked questions
    - Streamline the process for getting an answer
    - Create Freq Asked Questions (FAQ) on website or in Word
  - Negotiate for a deadline that works for both of you
  - Use recurring mgs for those with freq questions
  - Share best practices with each other
Don’t Let The Phone Control You

• Create office hours / Quiet hours
• Use “Roll to VM” or “DND” feature
• Cover red light so not distracted by vm
• Return calls at certain times in the day
• Change vm to tell folks when you return msgs
• Return calls after hours so shorter or leave vm
• Tell people you have just 1 - 2 mins (so don’t get caught in long conversations)
• Don’t give out your cell phone number (or do so sparingly)

Deal with “Emergencies”

• Is it really an emergency or is it impatience?
  • Define “emergency” and agree on the definition
  • Give people time to solve their own problems
• We teach others how to treat us
• Allow room in your schedule (don’t overbook)
• Understand what it is and when it’s due
  • Don’t assume due immediately
• Track who is asking and Notice patterns
  • Create a way to handle common requests / questions
    • FAQ’s, checklists
    • Recurring meetings or Provide additional training

For Solutions To Common Issues

Review your handout
Use T.A.R. to Manage eMails & Paper

- Trash
  - Shred, Throw away, Recycle

- Action (Task)
  - Papers requiring you to do something
  - Call, email, go online, wait, follow-up,…

- Reference (Filing)
  - Things that do NOT need action
  - Info is important and needed later
    - Insurance policies, tax records, HR records, Tenant records, etc…

How to handle Action Items…

- Action Now
  - Do it now (under < 2-3 mins)

- Action Later
  - Determine the next step
  - Decide when to do it
  - You need a “task system”
    - A way to store future items
    - Things to do, are waiting on, need to follow up on,…

Outlook To-Do Bar
Don’t Let Email Run Your Day

• Control it, so it doesn’t control you
  • How many emails do you receive a day?
  • Turn off new email alert boxes (smartphone too!)
• Communicate! When you receive an email, tell them you’ll look into it & get back to them
• Ask to be copied on fewer emails
• Use your “Out of Office” or Signature
  “Thanks for your email, I respond to emails within 4-6 hours.”
• Unsubscribe (rather than delete)
• Use Rules on incoming emails
• Use Search feature
• Take a class “Working Smart with Outlook”

Use Advanced Search

Enter search word in box
Opens up a search tab
Choose “All Mail Items” to search all email folders
Choose “All Outlook items” to search everything (contacts, tasks, email, calendar)
Good for finding emails no matter where they are

Exercise

• What are some rules you could set up?
  • CC rule
  • Automated emails
  • Reports
  • HR Communications
  • Newsletters
  • Other?
Handling Reply All

• Don’t Reply all! (95% of the time)
• Use Ignore button
  • From inbox, Delete section
• Use Blind Carbon Copy (BCC)
  • New email, Options Tab, click BCC
• When sending email, include “Please do not reply all” at top

What Can Help You

• Work based on Important vs. Urgent
  • Decrease or minimize Urgent / Non Important
  • Be organized so you don’t cause chaos for others
• Practice T.A.R. on your email
• Attend fewer meetings / Meeting Share!
• CC fewer people / Reply All less
• Use rules more
• Get organized
  • Office, desktop (electronic files), paperwork
• Don’t let the minutia run your day

For More Assistance...

• Sign up for Monthly Productivity Tips email

• Follow on Social Media @LorenaPrime or www.LinkedIn.com/in/LorenaPrime

• Want help implementing these tips at work or home?
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