

Using Time Wisely

We all want to spend our time on the most important and impactful activities. As a leader, this skill becomes even more crucial. Though we may think we are spending our time on the right things, it's important to track our time to get an accurate view of the activities that consume our time. For this activity, you will look at your own schedule to determine if you are spending the bulk of your time on the most important activities.

If you keep a detailed calendar, choose a recent week to analyze during this activity. If you do *not* keep a detailed calendar, you can use the template on page 3 to track your time over the next 5 business days or utilize an online calendar. The time allocation activity below is designed to be completed after you track activity for one week.

Time Allocation Activity

Using the color code below, categorize each activity on your calendar into Covey's 4 Quadrants.

- » **If using an online calendar** like Outlook or Gmail, you can easily select a color by right clicking on the event and selecting a category.
- » **If you use a paper calendar**, use a pen, marker, or highlighter to categorize each activity.

Once you've completed color coding your calendar, log the number of hours you spent

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	Q1 Hours spent in Q1 this week: _____	Q2 Hours spent in Q2 this week: _____
Not important	Q3 Hours spent in Q3 this week: _____	Q4 Hours spent in Q4 this week: _____

Total number of hours worked: _____

Percentage of time in Q1: _____ %

Percentage of time in Q2: _____ %

Percentage of time in Q3: _____ %

Percentage of time in Q4: _____ %

*(calculate percentage by dividing the total number of hours worked
by the number of hours spent in each category)*

Thinking Critically About Time

Were you surprised by how you are spending your time at work? What was most surprising as you took stock of your calendar?

According to Stephen Covey, highly effective people do not spend any time in Quadrant 3 or Quadrant 4 because no matter how urgent it is, it is not important. Consider some ways you might eliminate Q3 and Q4 activities while increasing the amount of time spent in Q2.

- What is one way you will commit to spending more time in Q2 this coming week?

- What is one way you will commit to spending less time in Q4 this coming week?

Tips for Managing Time More Effectively

- » Proactively block off time on your calendar for important tasks or project work. Time blocking at the beginning of the week gives you more control over your time, even as urgent tasks present themselves.
- » Turn off notifications while working on Q2 projects or tasks. Email, instant messages, and phone calls can derail important work with distractions and other, more urgent tasks.
- » Reframe Q3 and Q4 activities to increase their importance. Maybe you have tasks on your calendar that are assigned to you by a superior. Consider ways you can think strategically about these tasks to strategically increase their importance.
- » Delegate unimportant tasks to someone who reports to you or negotiate with a peer to take on these tasks. Just because an activity isn't important for your priorities or goals, doesn't mean it can't be used as an opportunity for someone else.

Time Tracking Calendar Tool

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
6:00 AM					
6:30 AM					
7:00 AM					
7:30 AM					
8:00 AM					
8:30 AM					
9:00 AM					
9:30 AM					
10:00 AM					
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