HOW NOT TO BE MANAGED

BY YOUR INBOX AND MAKE

MORE OF YOUR TIME

For many, it seems that there's just never enough time in the day to get everything done. This ebook will help you take control of your time and get more done.

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How often do you find yourself running out of time? Weekly, daily, hourly? For many, it seems that there's just never enough time in the day to get everything done. Although many of us like to think that we're 100% effective, the truth is that most of us have strengths and weaknesses that impact our effectiveness.

This is where we can benefit from improving a few of our skills and adopting some new practices, so that we can be even more effective.

Perhaps you've always excelled at time management. But how much time do you put into learning new skills, or effectively using the latest tools available to you to ? Or, maybe you're adept at managing the many demands you face day-to-day. But, when things get really hectic, your planning and prioritisation skills start to suffer as stress levels begin to rise.

Being truly effective at work can pay off now and throughout your career. Effective workers get exciting projects, win important clients, and are well respected by their colleagues and bosses. But how can you become more effective, and make sure that you don't miss out on these great opportunities?

When you know how to manage your time you gain control. Rather than busily working here, there, and everywhere (and not getting much done anywhere), effective time management and time management tools can help you to choose what to work on and when.

This is what we'll be exploring in this ebook. We'll look at the 5 core skills you can develop to become more effective at work, and we'll review the tools and resources that you can use to increase your effectiveness.

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1 system. 1 bill, 1 system, 1 group of people.

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1. Goal Setting

To start managing time effectively, you need to set goals. When you know where you're going, you can then figure out what exactly needs to be done, in what order. Without proper goal setting, you'll fritter your time away on a confusion of conflicting priorities.

People tend to neglect goal setting because it requires time and effort. What they fail to consider is that a little time and effort put in now saves an enormous amount of time, effort and frustration in the future. By knowing precisely what you want to achieve, you know where you have to concentrate your efforts. You'll also quickly spot the distractions that can, so easily, lead you astray.

Here are some effective ways to ensure that your goal setting goes smoothly and it's not a huge monster that you fear to face head on.

Set Goals that Motivate You

When you set goals for yourself, it is important that they motivate you: this means making sure that they are important to you, and that there is value in achieving them. If you have little interest in the outcome, or they are irrelevant given the larger picture, then the chances of you putting in the work to make them happen are slim. Motivation is key to achieving goals.

Set S.M.A.R.T. Goals

A useful way of making goals more powerful is to use the SMART mnemonic.

S - Specific
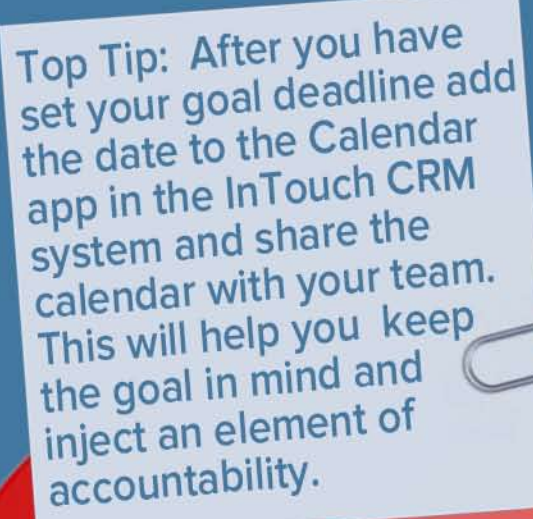M - Measurable
A - Attainable
R - Relevant
T - Time-bound

Set Specific Goals - Your goal must be clear and well defined. Vague or generalised goals are unhelpful because they don't provide sufficient direction. Make it as easy as you can to get where you want to go by defining precisely where you want to end up.

Set Measurable Goals - Include precise amounts, dates, and so on in your goals so you can measure your degree of success. Without a way to measure your success you miss out on the celebration that comes with knowing you have actually achieved something.

Set Attainable Goals - Make sure that it's possible to achieve the goals you set. If you set a goal that you have no hope of achieving, you will only demoralise yourself and erode your confidence. However, resist the urge to set goals that are too easy. By setting realistic yet challenging goals, you hit the balance you need. These are the types of goals that require you to "raise the bar" and they bring the greatest personal satisfaction.

Set Relevant Goals - Goals should be relevant to the direction you want to take. By keeping goals aligned with this, you'll develop the focus you need to get ahead and do what you want.

Set Time-Bound Goals - Your goals must have a deadline. Again, this means that you know when you can celebrate success. When you are working on a deadline, your sense of urgency increases and achievement will come that much quicker.

Top Tip: After you have set your goal deadline add the date to the Calendar app in the InTouch CRM system and share the calendar with your team. This will help you keep the goal in mind and inject an element of accountability.

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2 Prioritisation

2. Prioritisation

The Urgent/Important Matrix, (shown below) developed by Stephen Covey helps you think about your priorities, and determine which of your activities are important, and which are, essentially, distractions.

> Important activities have an outcome that leads to the achievement of your goals.
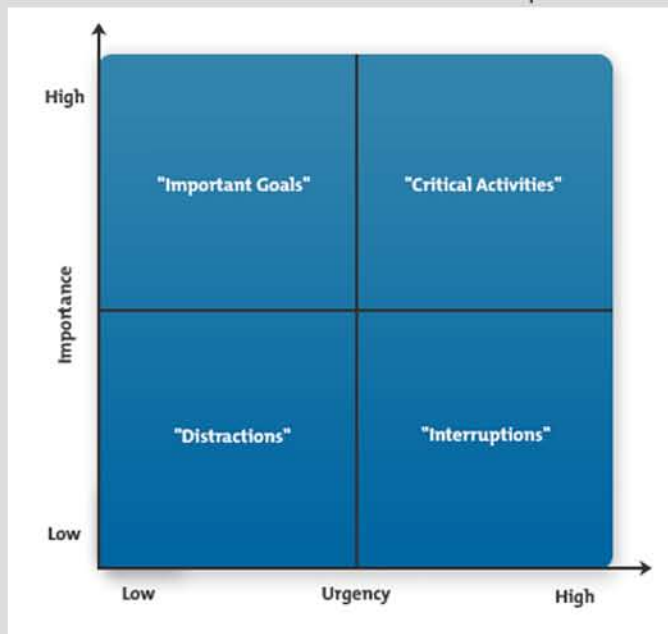
> Urgent activities demand immediate attention, and are often associated with the achievement of someone else's goals.

Prioritising what needs to be done is especially important. Without it, you may work very hard, but you won't be achieving the results you desire because what you are working on is not of importance.

Urgent activities are often the ones we concentrate on; they demand attention because the consequences of not dealing with them are immediate.

Most people have a "to-do" list of some sort. The problem with many of these lists is they are just a collection of things that need to get done. There is no rhyme or reason to the list and, because of this, the work they do is just as unstructured.

How to Use the Tool - The Urgent/Important Matrix is a powerful way of thinking about priorities. Using it helps you overcome the natural tendency to focus on urgent activities, so that you can keep clear enough time to focus on what's really important. This is the way you move from "firefighting" into a position where you can grow your business and your career.

To work efficiently you need to work on the most important, highest value tasks. This way you won't get caught scrambling to get something critical done as the deadline approaches.

The matrix can be drawn as shown above, with the dimensions of Importance and Urgency. Follow the steps below to use the matrix to prioritise your activities:

Time stressors are the most pervasive source of pressure and stress in the workplace, and they happen as a result of having too much to do, in too little time. Without prioritising your tasks you'll end up being managed by the time stressors rather than your priorities.

1. The first step is to list all the activities and projects that you feel you have to do. Try to include everything

2. Next, on a scale of 1 to 5, assign importance to each of the activities. Try not to worry about urgency at this stage.

3. Once you've assigned an importance value to each activity, evaluate its urgency. As you do this, plot each item.

4. Now study the matrix using the strategies described on the next page to schedule your priorities.

Strategies for Different Quadrants of the Matrix

Urgent and Important

There are two distinct types of urgent and important activities: Ones that you could not foresee, and others that you've left to the last minute. You can avoid last-minute activities by planning ahead and avoiding procrastination. Issues and crises, on the other hand, cannot always be foreseen or avoided. Here, the best approach is to leave some time in your schedule to handle unexpected issues and unplanned important activities. (If a major crisis arises, then you'll need to reschedule other events.)

Urgent and Not Important

Urgent but not important activities are things that stop you achieving your goals, and prevent you from completing your work. Ask yourself whether these tasks can be rescheduled, or whether you can delegate them. A common source of such interruptions is from other people in your office. Sometimes it's appropriate to say "No" to people politely, or to encourage them to solve the problem themselves. Alternatively, try scheduling time in your public calendar when you are available, so that people know that they can interrupt you at these times.

Non Urgent but Important

These are the activities that help you achieve your personal and professional goals, and complete important work. Make sure that you have plenty of time to do these things properly, so that they do not become urgent. And remember to leave enough time in your schedule to deal with unforeseen problems. This will maximise your chances of keeping on schedule, and help you avoid the stress of work becoming more urgent than necessary.

Non Urgent and Non Important

These activities are just a distraction, and should be avoided if possible. Some can simply be ignored or cancelled. Others are activities that other people may want you to do, but they do not contribute to your own desired outcomes. Again, say "No" politely, if you can. If people see you are clear about your objectives and boundaries, they will often not ask you to do "not important" activities in the future.

Top Tip:
Edit the categories in the Tasks app of your IntouchCRM system to match the categories from the Urgent/Important Matrix

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Edit your Categories? ✖

Select a category from the list to 'Update' or 'Delete' (don't worry, deleting a category will NOT delete any tasks). Alternatively, enter a category name in the field below and click 'Add New' to create a new category.

Not Urgent and Not Important
Not Urgent, but Important
Urgent and Important
Urgent and Not Important

⊗ Delete »   ⊘ Update »   ⊕ Add New »

⊗ Finished, Close Window

Having a plan and knowing how to prioritise it is one thing. The next issue is everyday interruptions at work that can be a key barrier to managing your time effectively and, ultimately, can be a barrier to your success.

3. Managing Interruptions

Because your day only has so many hours in it, a handful of small interruptions can rob you of the time you need to achieve your goals and be successful in your work and life.

More than this, they can break your focus, meaning that you have to spend time re-engaging with the thought processes needed to successfully complete complex work.

The key to controlling interruptions is to know what they are and whether they are necessary, and to plan for them in your daily schedule.

"Available" and "Unavailable" Time is a simple yet effective technique for managing interruptions. Let people know when you are available. and when you are not. Add your time slots to your public calendar and they can plan their time with you easily. Make sure that people know that during your "unavailable time", they should only interrupt you if they have to.

You and your co-workers can also agree on a signal that everyone in the office can use when unavailable, like turning the nameplate on the door around, or simply closing the door.

This alleviates interruptions and can avoid hurt feelings. There are interruptions that, no matter how hard you try, you simply cannot control.

Most people are happy to schedule a more convenient time, but when this does not work, quickly set the parameters by saying something like, "I only have five minutes to talk about this right now," and stick to it.

Do not ask the interrupter to sit down and do not engage in small talk. Encourage the interrupter to get right to the point and if a solution cannot be reached before the allotted time runs out, set a time for getting back to them and, again, stick to it.

PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB

The Ritz

4. Procrastination

If you've found yourself putting off important tasks over and over again, you're not alone. In fact, many people procrastinate to some degree but some are so chronically affected by procrastination that it stops them fulfilling their potential and disrupts their careers.

In a nutshell, you procrastinate when you put off things that you should be focusing on right now, usually in favor of doing something that is more enjoyable or that you're more comfortable doing.

The key to controlling this destructive habit is to recognise when you start procrastinating, understand why it happens and take active steps to manage your time and outcomes better.

Here are some useful indicators that will help you know when you're procrastinating:

- Filling your day with 'Not Important' tasks from your Tasks List.
- Reading e-mails several times without starting work on them or deciding what you're going to do with them.
- Sitting down to start an important task, and almost immediately going off to make a cup of coffee.
- Leaving an item on your Task list for a long time, even though you know it's important.
- Regularly saying "Yes" to unimportant tasks that others ask you to do, and filling your time with these instead of getting on with the important tasks already on your list.
- Waiting for the "right mood" or the "right time" to tackle the important task at hand.

Why you procrastinate can depend on both you and the task. But it's important to understand which of the two is relevant in a given situation, so that you can select the best approach for overcoming your reluctance to get going.

One reason for procrastination is that people find a particular job unpleasant, and try to avoid it because of that. Most jobs have unpleasant or boring aspects to them, and often the best way of dealing with these is to get them over and done with quickly, so that you can focus on the more enjoyable aspects of the job.

Another cause is that people are disorganised. Organised people manage to fend of the temptation to procrastinate, because they will have things like prioritised tasks lists and calendar schedules which emphasise how important the piece work is, and identify precisely when it's due.

Procrastination is a habit – a deeply ingrained pattern of behaviour. That means that you won't just break it overnight. Habits only stop being habits when you have persistently stopped practising them, so use as many approaches as possible to maximise your chances of beating procrastination.

These general tips will help motivate you to get moving:

- Make up your own rewards. For example, promise yourself a tasty snack at lunchtime if you've completed a certain task. And make sure you notice how good it feels to finish things!
- Ask someone else to check up on you. Peer pressure works! Share your tasks in the system with colleagues and ask them to keep you on track.
- Identify the unpleasant consequences of NOT doing the task.

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5. Scheduling

So far in this ebook, we have looked at your priorities and your goals – these define what you aspire to do with your time. Scheduling is where these aspirations meet the reality of the time you have available.

Scheduling is the process by which you look at the time available to you, and plan how you will use it to achieve the goals you have identified. By using a schedule properly, you can:

- Understand what you can realistically achieve with your time.
- Plan to make the best use of the time available.
- Leave enough time for things you absolutely must do.
- Preserve contingency time to handle 'the unexpected'.
- Minimise stress by avoiding over-commitment to yourself and others.

How to Use the IntouchCRM system for scheduling:

There are many good scheduling tools available, including diaries, calendars, paper-based organisers, PDAs but as an IntouchCRM user you have the use of a fully integrated system. The key things are to be able to enter data easily, and to be able to track your progress.

Scheduling is best done on a regular basis, for example at the start of every week or month. Go through the following steps in preparing your schedule:

1. Start by identifying the time you want to make available for your work. This will depend on the design of your job and on your personal goals in life.

2. Next, block in the calendar actions you absolutely must take to do a good job. They be the things you are assessed against.

3. For example, if you manage people, then you must make time available for dealing with issues that arise, coaching, and supervision. Similarly, you must allow time to communicate with your boss and key people around you.

4. Review your task list and schedule in the important urgent activities, as well as the essential maintenance tasks that cannot be delegated and cannot be avoided.

5. Next, block in appropriate contingency time in your calendar. You will learn how much of this you need by experience.

6. Obviously, you cannot tell when interruptions will occur. However, by leaving space in your schedule, you give yourself the flexibility to rearrange your schedule to react effectively to issues as they arise.

7. What you now have left is your "discretionary time": the time available to deliver your priorities and achieve your goals. Review your Prioritised task list, evaluate the time needed to achieve these actions, and schedule these in to your diary.

You can allocate different colours to the various time segments in the IntouchCRM system and repeat those regular time blocks such as contingency time and discretionary time to ensure they always remain in your diary. The system also allows you to share certain blocks of time with your team so the office knows when you are interruptible.

Conclusion

Remember that one of the most important ways people learn to achieve success is by maximising the 'leverage' they can achieve with their time. This is where the power of a fully integrated system such as IntouchCRM can help free your time up to achieve your goals.

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complete sales and marketing system

InTouchCRM brings your whole sales & marketing for your business together in one powerful system.

- Capture
- Communicate
- Converse
- Convert
- Collaborate

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- **organisation** management
- **lead** management
- **event** reminder
- **task** management
- **calendar** management
- **customer service** management
- **email** marketing
- **auto** responders
- **survey** marketing
- **sms** marketing
- **web** forms
- **document** management
- **data** reporting
- **web/cms** page management
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