

Productivity & Prioritization Key Points

Tip: Bookmark this overview for easy reference. See toolbox on page 3. When a productivity issue pops up, use this as a cheatsheet!

Top 4 challenges:

When we look at patterns across companies we see 4 most common issues:



Today's topics

1
Chronemics

2
Prioritization

3
Organization

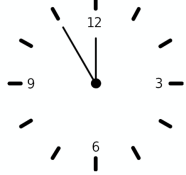
4
Focus

Helps you diagnose:

- Your issues
- Your team's issues
- Organizational issues

1. Chronemics

Time integrity



Use time language:

- In our last 10 minutes...
- Should we extend by 15?
- Estimation skills:
What's your estimate?
Was the estimate correct?

1. Chronemics

Time audit

Time	Activity	Planned?	Reactive?
8:00	Check email		x
8:15			
8:30	Create to-do list	x	
8:45	Team huddle	x	
9:00			
9:15	Check email		x
9:30	Help Ed with project		x
9:45			
10:00			
10:15	Meeting with Kate	x	

Track patterns for 1 week:

- Where is my time going?
- How much planned (vs. reactive) time do I have?

The takeaway

Push the pause button!

Q-step:

- Are we speaking clearly about time?
- What's the time estimate?
- Was the estimate correct?
- Where is our time going?

2. Prioritization

MIT Method



What are up to 3 MITs (Most Important Things) for you for tomorrow?

✖ Q-step habit:
What are the MITs?

2. Prioritization

Quadrant Method

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT		
LESS IMPORTANT		

Urgent = has time pressure
Important = adds long-term value to the org or team

2. Prioritization

Bucket Method

Later: YOUR headlines for this quarter + activities for the week

BUCKET 1	BUCKET 2	BUCKET 3	OTHER
Deliver services to clients	Create content	Onboard new employees	
Teach Prioritization workshop	Develop new workshop	Optimize first week orientation	Speak at event
Schedule call with client			Fill out tax docs
			Meet with Jan's team

The takeaway

Push the pause button! Q-step:

- What are the MITs?
- What quadrant/bucket are we in?
- What tasks should we calendar block?
- Are we aligned on what's important?

3. Organization

Open loops



Beware of the Zeigarnik Effect

Open loops take up valuable brain real estate!

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3. Organization

Consistent Capture System (CCS)

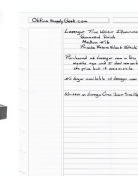
TO-DO LIST



APPOINTMENTS



NOTES



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3. Organization

Closed loop culture



Develop a q-step habit:

- Who will own this?
- Who is capturing this?
- How should we follow up on this?

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The takeaway

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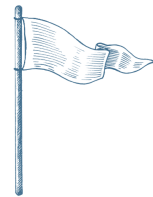


Push the pause button! Q-step:

- Where can we capture this?
- What are our open loops?
- What do we need to do to close the loop?

4. Focus

If-then cues



» List some if-thens. For example:

- Requests from others
If focused, **then** 'airplane mode.'
If request, **then** ask for deadline.
- New email in inbox
If it's 12pm, **then** check email.
If urgent, **then** write "urgent" in the subject line.

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4. Focus

Pomodoro Technique



Source: Francesco Cirillo

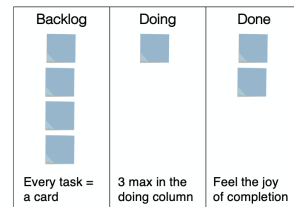
- 30 minutes:**
- 25 minutes on
 - 5 minutes off

Interrupted? Start over!

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4. Focus

Kanban



✧ Make your workflow visual.

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The takeaway

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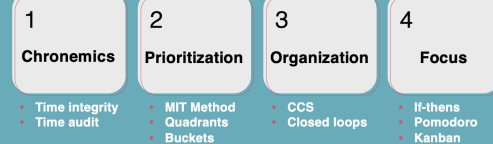


Push the pause button! Q-step:

- What are we focusing on right now?
- What if-then can reduce this distraction?
- What can help us stay focused (example: Pomodoro, Kanban)?

Today's topics

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» What will you try this week?



Productivity & Prioritization: Toolbox

Category	If you notice one of these challenges...	Then try one of these tools:
Chronemics Time awareness	☐ Losing track of time ☐ Inaccurate time estimates ☐ Showing up late ☐ Meetings starting or ending late ☐ Highly reactive work patterns ☐ Lack of start and stop work rituals	 Time Integrity: Use precise time language to elevate time awareness (“In our last 10 minutes...” “Should we extend by 15?”). Q-step: Are we speaking clearly about time? What’s the time estimate? Was it correct?
		 Time Audit: Track how you spend your time for one week to spot patterns. (Check out this sample template.) Q-step: Where is our time going? How much planned vs. reactive time is there?
Prioritization Picking highest value work	☐ Overwhelm ☐ Chronic busyness ☐ Feeling stretched too thin ☐ Overdependence on manager ☐ Lack of trade-off conversations ☐ Misalignment ☐ Constant ‘fire-fighting’	 MIT Method: Write down 1-3 Most Important Things to get done each day. Q-step: What are the MITs? What are the decision criteria?
		 Quadrant Method: Categorize tasks across the quadrants using the ‘importance’ and ‘urgency’ criteria to decide what to work on. Q-step: What quadrant are we in? Is it urgent? Is it important?
		 Bucket Method: Visualize how tasks fall across up to 3 buckets to understand which priorities should get your attention. Q-step: What bucket are we in? Are we aligned? What percentage of time goes to each bucket? How do we define success? Do we need to make tradeoffs?

Organization Efficient workflow	☐ Too much on the mind ☐ Inefficiencies ☐ Touching tasks twice (or more) ☐ Forgetting details ☐ Missed deadlines ☐ Unclear owners or next steps ☐ Feelings of confusion or disorder	Consistent Capture System (CCS): Create a capture system for the 3 primary areas (to-dos, appointments, and notes) to keep things organized and easy to find. Q-step: <i>Where shall I/we capture this? What's the best system to keep track of open loops?</i> Closed Loop Culture: Identify next steps, who owns them, and when they'll be done. Q-step: <i>Who will own this? Who is capturing it? How/when should we follow up?</i>
Focus Working in chunks vs fragments	☐ High volume of distractions ☐ Multi-tasking ☐ Frequent context-switching ☐ Procrastination or perfectionism ☐ Lack of feelings of progress ☐ Constant email/app checking	If-then Cues: Identify common distractions, and create 'if cues' that trigger good 'then behaviors' in response. Q-step: <i>What are the biggest distractions? How can we automate our responses to these distractions?</i> Pomodoro: Work uninterrupted for a set chunk of time then take a short break. Train your focus muscles! Q-step: <i>How often do distractions happen? Are we working in uninterrupted chunks of time vs. fragments of time?</i> Kanban: Organize your tasks in 'backlog,' 'doing,' and 'done' lanes to track workflow progress and spot bottlenecks. Q-step: <i>What task are we focusing on right now? What are the tradeoffs or bottlenecks?</i>

