

David Staughton

BEING MORE EFFECTIVE

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR BUSY PROFESSIONALS

Using World Class Best practice Techniques for managing your time and energy

Harnessing the Pareto (80/20) principle to do more in less time

Improving clarity, focus and feedback systems to get more time and energy

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Introduction

Let's start off with a bang— actually, a big idea in a little package. It's an idea that I always like to point out in my training seminars. It's a straightforward idea, but one, oddly, that a lot of people seem to miss out on.

Success is a matter of changing a few habits every day.

What does that mean for our purposes here? Well, learning to manage your time more effectively isn't about macro change. It isn't about some sweeping transformational event that will completely change who you are as a person. It's about small choices, and ones that are personal to you that in the long run will bring real and useful change. And if you can be a little bit more results-orientated and be a little bit more disciplined, then within 6-8 weeks, you can get phenomenally better at managing your time and becoming the success you want to be.

Self-Assessment

So here's a very quick question for readers – What news are you celebrating right now? What have you been doing? What's working for you?

We'll get into why this matters a bit later on, but for now, I want you to have a bit of a think about what you are looking forward to and enjoying in your life. Ask yourself, what is the best thing that happened to you in the last month or two? Have you had any wins or any success stories? Have you changed any of your habits slightly, any improvements in a personal best?

What's working for you?

Understanding this will be a key part of really working the program that's going to be laid out for you in this book. Also consider this:

Are you busy?

*Or rather, are you busy doing the **right** things?*

You'll see in the upcoming chapters that your attitude towards time and your own notion of "*being busy*" will have a pretty dynamic relationship to everything we're going to talk about. So have a think on that one, too, and maybe even jot down a few thoughts to circle back to later on.

Chapter 1

Time is not the Problem... There's Plenty of it!

Before we start addressing the tasks and techniques that you are going to bring into play to start managing your time more effectively, let's take a moment to talk about the core of our discussion here— time itself. You've heard it plenty of times and you've probably said it yourself plenty of times— *there just isn't enough time in the day*.

Well, guess what? There is. There most certainly is. In fact, there's all the time you need, no matter how overloaded your schedule is and how busy you are. You see, most people are just not *particularly aware* of what's going on with time. They don't look at time that much, they don't really value it. They let it slip by and, as a result, time just sort of disappears.

To get an idea of what I mean by this, ask yourself a question... "What is something that happened last week that was really important?" Does something come to mind right away? How about last month? Or even *last decade*? What about the last book that you read— what was really important in that book? Or take the last seminar that you went to... you sat there for an hour or you went to a conference for a day... what do you remember from that?

More likely than not, not much. Time for most of us becomes a blur with only hugely significant events such as, say, a wedding, really sticking out for us (and sometimes we even forget that!) Now, you can't be expected to remember everything that happens to you. I'm not saying that you should have perfect recall of every moment in time. What I *am* saying is that you should learn to value time by enhancing your focus and learning to truly prioritise how you spend your time.

Some things are particularly important and some things are not. Fact of life. That being said, anything you can do to get a bit more focus and— especially for yourself and in

Chapter 1

Time is not the problem... There's plenty of it!

your own life— know what's really important to you will help you to start focusing on what is really of value to you and your road to success.

This might be a simple matter of thinking about your values and allowing that to clarify what's important to you. I've done this exercise with many people... If you found out today that you only have 6 months to live, what would you be doing? And they all say, "I'd be traveling more and I'd be spending more time with the people who love me which, is my family or my friends." And I say to them, "Okay. If you did find out you have 6 months to live, how come you're not doing that at the moment? You're doing other stuff?" And they go, "Well, I'm working." And I go, "Well, why are you working?" And they go, "Well, I'm working because I want to make more money so that I can spend more time with my family and the people I love and travel and do all the things that I want to do."

So what we're really getting to here is that sometimes, the thing that is really important to you is that ***if you could make your money in less period of time***, you would get much, much better results. In essence, for every hour that you save, you could be spending your time on things that you really want to do.

Where do your time beliefs come from?

As with most everything in life, you probably have a lot of entrenched beliefs about time that you're not even aware of. These beliefs were instilled in you from early on and define much of how you approach time as a concept and your management of time.

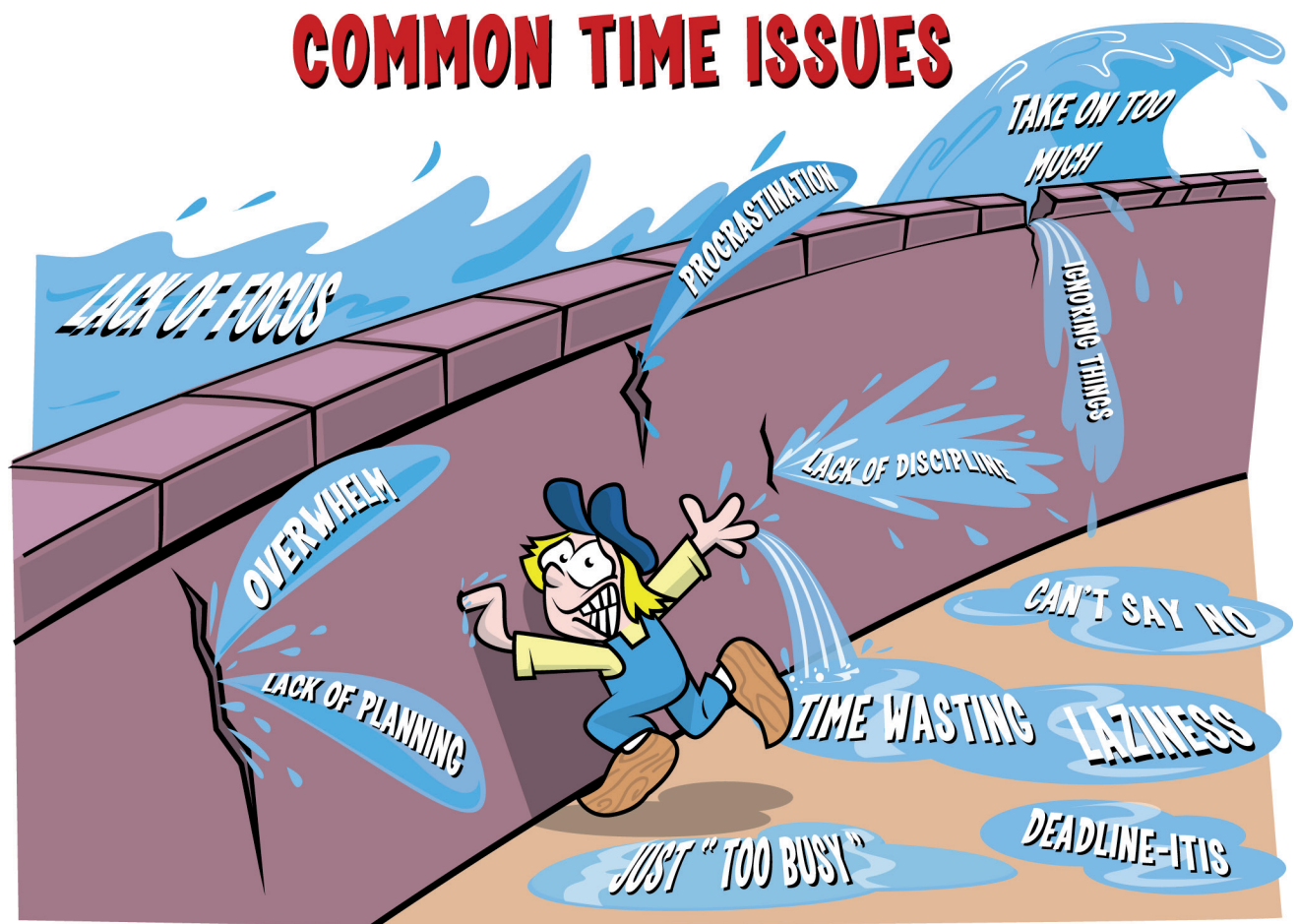
Think about it— if I shouted out right now, "Time is...", your brain might shout in response, "Money!" There are loads of these, such as "I never have enough..." (Time? Money?) and many people usually shout out some of the same answers, because we've all been programmed from pretty early on to think of these abstract concepts in a certain way.

Now, not all of these beliefs are necessarily serving you. If you walk around all day saying to yourself, "There's never enough time in the day", well, guess what? There won't be! How about if you walked around all day thinking to yourself, "I have all the time in the world! Let's get to it!" Can you see how that would foment not only more productivity, but more efficient use of time, as well?

So take a moment to really look at the beliefs you've built up over the years about Time and see what you can do to take a more constructive and productive approach to Time vis-à-vis these beliefs.

Chapter 2

THE DIRTY DOZEN – Common Time Issues



As I mentioned earlier, there are certain commonalities that we all share in our approach to time. In fact, many of the “gripes” we each have about time are pretty commonplace and result in very similar problems.

I like to group common time problems into what I call “the Dirty Dozen”. These 12 approaches to time are the reasons that *most* of us find ourselves pressed for time, dialing back on productivity, and falling off the road to success. Let’s take a look.

1. Overwhelmed- Where do I start?

This may be one of the most common ones, really. Your plate is full and you just don’t know where to begin. There’s so much that you need to catch up on that you’re not catching up on a thing! You’re overwhelmed and stunned... and ready to pack it in. Don’t! Start on something, *anything*, and start chipping away at that mountain of tasks. Snap out of it and get yourself to work.

2. Procrastination – I know what to do, but I’m not doing it.

There is a flipside to thinking you have no time and that’s thinking you have all the time in the world. When I mentioned earlier that you should use a positive mantra like “I have all the time in the world,” it certainly wasn’t so that you could use it as an excuse to sit on your posterior all day! If you have time, make use of your time. Don’t put off any project, no matter how much time you think you have. By staying productive and shutting down procrastination, you’ll maintain momentum and stay happier and more confident in your work.



3. Lack of planning- Flying by the seat of one's pants.

You have no game plan, no checklist, no to-do list, no system for moving forward! You just find yourself doing whatever comes up or whatever you feel like doing at any given moment. Not only is this a surefire way to get disorganised, it's an even greater way to lose focus. Approach your daily, weekly, and monthly tasks by planning and structuring them carefully. You don't have to cross every T, but you do need to feel like you have a system.

4. Ignoring – Cross your fingers, and it will get better!

Another popular one, right? The ugly stepsister of procrastination, this one involves the worst action possible— complete inaction. When a lot of us get overwhelmed, we stick our heads in the sand. A lot of us also know that this accomplishes nothing 999,999 times out of 1,000,000. You aren't going to get the results you want and you're certainly not going to become a success if you don't begin taking action and addressing your workload and all of the countless things you have to get done in a day.

5. Deadline-itis – Oh, the rush!

Do you know someone with Deadline-itis? Maybe you have it yourself. You leave projects and tasks until the last possible minute and then get everything done in a manic rush of creativity as you chase that ever-approaching deadline. You even convince yourself that this makes you a *more* productive person! Well, running scared isn't productive, and it is not going to create the long-term patterns of success you need to really achieve your goals. Don't leave everything to the last minute and get addicted to the rush of an impending deadline!

6. Can't say no – I love to help!

You have a pile of work on your desk and a co-worker who cannot handle his or her workload comes over to ask for a favor. Even though you're swamped, you grin and bear it and say sure, you'll take it on. In fact, you're the type of person who always helps with everything. You don't prioritise your own tasks and you certainly don't perform any triage on the new tasks you take on as a series of endless "favors." Learn to say NO! Turn a project down. We'll discuss later how behavior like this stems from being relationship-based, instead of results-based. For now, learn how much you can handle and where your goals lie, and stick with that plan. Maybe your saying no for once will get your co-worker on the track to effective time management, as well!

7. Lack of Focus – Bright shiny object disorder

Some of us get started on projects readily enough... and then we get started again. And again. And again. In fact, we completely lack any focus and just hop from task to task, addressing whatever appeals to us at the moment. Yes, chasing that “Bright Shiny Object.” Working like this, even if you’re working 24 hours a day, is not productive. Take the time to organise and stay on task, following projects through to completion and maintaining focus along the way.

8. Proving Something – What would dad think?

I would say that a lot of us fall into this category without even realising it. We set to our tasks everyday with zeal, but our motivation isn’t coming from a desire to optimise productivity and make the most of our time, it’s coming from a need to prove something— to ourselves, to others, to significant people from our past and present. Our productivity becomes more about filling a role than anything else. This leads to psychological exhaustion in the long run, as we keep chasing an ideal that we can’t really ever fulfill. You have nothing to prove! Let yourself off the hook on this one.

9. Time Wasters – Browsing, blabbing, and balking

You check the latest news on the Internet. You browse your favorite social network. You call your friend to check on that plan you have later in the week. Eventually, sometime very soon, you’ll get started on your work. You’re not actually procrastinating, because you actually think you’re achieving something... but you’re not. You’re a time waster, and you don’t really value the time you’re given in a day. This category could just as easily be called “Time Floaters”, because if you’re guilty of this time issue you’re just floating from one so-called task to another throughout the day, letting time slip through your fingers and achieving nothing towards your game plan.

10. Lack of Discipline – Just don’t do it

Those of us who lack discipline don’t lack an understanding of what’s at stake or what needs to be achieved. In fact, those of us who lack discipline probably have a clearer idea than almost anybody of what we need to do... we just don’t do it! We don’t have what it takes to set ourselves to task. Sometimes, setting to work or to a game plan is a simple matter of holding yourself to something and having the discipline it takes to do uncomfortable, tiresome, annoying things. Stick with the plan! Discipline yourself and force yourself to stay on task as much as possible.

11. Too Comfortable – Comfort is the enemy of greatness

You like your job, you like your house, you're comfortable with the amount of money you make and the kind of ideas you generate. Good for you! Now do *more*. Keep growing! Nothing is going to keep you further from real success than feeling comfortable. Step outside your safety zone and challenge yourself, each and every day. Never stop, and never be too comfortable.

12. Too Busy – Zero-sum game

Yes, sometimes we are just too busy. Back-to-back appointments, personal obligations, a to-do list that is so long it runs out the front door... Sure, it happens. It happens to a lot of us. It's still not an excuse! Get more focused, more disciplined, more organised. (We'll address aspects of this in detail in an upcoming chapter, as well.)

So which of the Dirty Dozen are you guilty of? One in particular or a mix of a few? Have a sit down and think about your patterns and your choices throughout the day. See what you can do to eliminate the Dirty Dozen from your life and you'll be taking an important step towards learning to manage your time more effectively.

Chapter 3

Lack of Time - The Symptom, Not the Disease

As mentioned earlier, sometimes being busy and not having enough time in the day is actually not the problem; in fact, a lack of time is actually the symptom of a *different* problem, one that you might not even be aware of. You may not be pursuing the best practices in an area of your work day and this is what is actually leaching all the time out of your day. Let's take a look at some common scenarios that often end up being the true disease that is plaguing your time management.

Customer Service – Bad or inefficient customer service is probably one of the biggest plagues on effective time management. Customer service situations escalate, and they escalate *quickly*. Bad customer service is essentially customer service that does not nip things in the bud. Once a customer is unhappy, he or she is going to become exponentially less happy until you find yourself managing what started out as a small problem 24 hours a day!

Get proactive about communicating with customers and make sure that you address issues before they escalate into Time Monsters.

Recruitment & Teambuilding – Another huge drain on your time can be the people around you. As you very well know, it's not just about the individual productivity or effectiveness of the players involved, it's about your team's productivity as a whole. Miscommunications, redundancies, resentments, what have you, can *all* escalate into serious drains on your time.

Chapter 3

Lack of Time - The Symptom, Not the Disease

Focus on streamlining your team and optimizing a chain of command *and* a chain of communication that leverages time efficiently, and make sure that each individual team member is ready to step up and really understands his or her role on the team.

Sales & Marketing - With sales and marketing, it is your mindset that can be the real drain on your time. If you haven't got the right mindset, which is to say that you are not being positive and optimistic, then you're generally going to have a low conversion rate. Your sales and marketing techniques become ineffective and become an enormous time drain. I've spent entire eBooks and seminars on this topic, but for our purposes here, understand that the best way to increase efficiency in your sales and marketing approaches is to maintain a positive and forward-thinking attitude.

Planning – This one is pretty self-evident but, again, so many of us never really sit down and address this. To put it plainly, if you have no plan whatsoever, and you just wake up every morning going, "Well, what will I do today?", you will perform badly and you will manage your time inefficiently. That's all there is to it. Remember your P's— *Prior Preparation Prevents a Poor Performance*. We'll get into more detail in a later chapter on how to structure that plan. Right now, just think about how effective your planning is at the moment, and think about how this may be eating away at the time you have in a day to get things done.

Cashflow – For some of us, issues similar to the ones that present with Sales & Marketing can manifest in terms of our business' cashflow which, in turn, can become a huge time drain. Spinning your wheels trying to fix a profitability problem can absorb a lot of time and energy. You need to understand that there is a psychological aspect to pricing and profitability. You need to feel confident and positive about your product, your service, or your offering to improve performance in this area. Eliminating this obvious strain on your business will free up an enormous amount of time for you.

Logistics – Sometimes inefficient time management is simply a matter of logistics. Just as an assembly line needs an optimised layout to increase efficiency, you need to have your office laid out in a way that increases your productivity and saves you time. If you work at a desk, make sure it's organised and that the tools you need are within logical and easy reach. If you carry a kit with you during your workday, make sure that it's clean and free of clutter. Organise your commute and make sure that that is up to par in terms of efficiency as well. Even look at the way you communicate, whether in person, via email, or on the phone. Are you optimizing your use of time in all of these scenarios?

Systems – Implementing an efficient checklist or methodology that informs your approach to your work is critical, as well. Oftentimes, a real time problem is hidden within sloppy methodology. Optimising your methodology can improve your management of time in leaps and bounds. There are several approaches that are particularly effective, including E-Myth, a book by Michael Goober. Whatever approach works for you, basically anything you can do to implement a system will save you some time. Remember, simple systems are best!

So, which of these areas are hiding potential time problems for you? If you haven't got the right approach in any one of these areas, it is more likely than not translating into, "I'm really, really busy." So sit down and take a look at each in turn and think about the simple changes you can make to eradicate these hidden time problems.

Chapter 4

Initial Ideas for Managing Time More Effectively

Outcomes – Identifying the results you want to achieve

One of my favorite sayings is, “Always know what your outcome is.” This goes for every meeting, for every event, for everything that you do, for today, for this week, this month, and on into infinity. Maintaining an outcomes-focused approach is absolutely key to learning to manage your time effectively. Ask yourself everyday:

What am I going for with my outcomes?

This is the classic “working smarter, not harder.” We talked earlier about how one of the Dirty Dozetime problems, Not Saying No, actually stemmed from being relationships-oriented. Let’s look at that in more detail right now. You see, there’s a real polarity in the world right now between people who are results-based and people who are relationships-based. Especially in times of economic concern, when the market is toughening up, this contrast can become particularly stark.

Results-oriented people tend to be a bit more keen to, well, get results. In everything they do and everything they say, these results-oriented people are prioritizing results above all else. Relationships-focused people, however, have a different agenda. They have lots and lots of nice chats and they’re very, very nice. But? They tend to spend too much time on the relationships and not enough time on the results.

So now that the marketplace is toughening up, and there’s a big shift in the marketplace at the moment with people who are very friendly and nice and relationship-orientated becoming more and more results-focused.

Now, the trick is not to become exclusively results-oriented. Of course we still want to flex our people skills! The real trick is to get results-focused enough so that you are staying on task (and not taking on others' tasks!) while still remaining open and communicative with the people around you. So that's the game, really— find your focus, but remain open to those around you. Balance is key!

Work in Small Blocks of Time

Another great way to start managing your time more effectively is to chunk your time into small blocks of time. Most of us tend to think in larger blocks of time, like hours or even mornings, afternoons, and evenings. Instead, try addressing your management of time in 10 or 15 minute blocks. By breaking down time into smaller blocks, you are actually paying more attention to time and really valuing what you can get out of every minute.

Think about what you can get done in a 10-minute timespan. Ingvar Kamprad, the CEO of Ikea, famously blocks all of his time into 10-minute blocks. This is particularly effective in meetings for a busy man like Kamprad— people who meet with him have to think about how they can pitch their idea or their plan in a matter of minutes. This encourages some real creative thinking and ensures that each of Kamprad's valuable minutes are spent wisely.

So, don't think in hours or days anymore. Start thinking in minutes!

Know Your Worth – Your Time Value

Do you know how much your time is worth? You probably have a pretty good idea, at least in the big picture. You may even have an official hourly rate instead of an annual salary. But what we're really talking about here is the optimal, high-productivity value of your time.

How productive do you want your hour to be? Choose a high-value rate for your hour, one that defines your time as something of worth that should not be wasted. Let's say you choose \$100 per hour. Pretty hefty, right? So what would you be doing with that hour, with that time, to be earning \$100?

You would NOT be doing low-value tasks or activities. You shouldn't be worrying about labeling new account files during this \$100 hour, would you? Of course, many of us take on lower-level tasks unnecessarily, whether out of being over courteous or not even realising the true value of your time.

What you want to do is eliminate all low-value activities from your hour. Where is this work going to go? You're going to DELEGATE or OUTSOURCE it to people who earn LESS than your ideal hourly rate.

Optimise your Time – Delegate smaller tasks to those who earn less

A couple of ways that you can get some help to stop doing the low-value tasks is to leverage outside relationships with organisations or individuals who specialise in taking tasks like this off a professional's plate. You can get an online virtual assistant or PA assistance via sites like oDesk or Elance. These sites offer you access to freelancers who are willing to work for affordable fees and take on the mundane tasks that are slowing down your day and driving down the time value of your hour.

Know your Goals

A crucial part of knowing your value is having a clear vision of what your goals are. Here's where we circle back to the very first questions I asked you...

What are you looking forward to?

Focus on this questions, and use this to focus your priorities moving forward. What's the next big thing that you're looking forward to? What's the next small thing that you're looking forward to? What's the next personal event that you're looking forward to? What's the next holiday you're looking forward to?

These can be four motivational goals to get you up and going in the morning. You can also use gratitude, which is in the morning to work out what you're grateful for. Confucius says, "Man who'll aim at nothing achieve it with amazing accuracy." So be really focused on what your goals are.

Set a Goal and Develop a Plan

"I need x number of sales to achieve this goal..."

Work out what activities are going to be required for you to achieve a goal. How many people are you going to have to see? How many networking events are you going to have to attend? What's your closing rate? Once you've decided on a game plan, stick with it! And don't just pursue one goal. Pursue goals across your life that have a variety of manifestations, goals that are rewards-oriented, objectives-oriented, activity-oriented, and decision and date-oriented. *That's* the ROAD to success:

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

- **R**ewards Goals
- **O**bjectives Goals
- **A**ctivity Goals
- **D**ecision & Date Goals

PUT THE BIG ROCKS IN FIRST !



When you're deciding all of this and beginning to align yourself with your ROAD goals, there's something important you have to do:

Put the Big Rocks in first!

We'll get into prioritising your time in greater detail later on, but for now, it's important for you to do a mental exercise that involves prioritising the things that really matter in life first. Just as with Time Value of your hour, small life items can prevent the really important ones from getting addressed.

Put personal, important things (your health, your family, your career, your finance) in first! You won't be able to stuff those big things in after your glass is already full with hundreds of little tiny things. Working the other way around, however, everything will fit! It's a fairly simple little exercise, but one that will get you headed in the right direction from GO.

Chapter 5

The Top Ten Time Skills

In this chapter, we are going to look at what I've figured out to be the Top Ten most essential Time Skills that will get you managing time effectively. They incorporate a lot of what we've discussed so far and make up a really mission-critical list for the professional who really wants to start managing his or her time dynamically.

Let's take a look at each one in turn.

■ 1. Planning

Rule # 1 of efficient Planning? Take the time to make time! Sounds counter-intuitive? It's not, really. By taking a bit of time each day, to plan and organise your day, you will actually create more time for yourself in the bigger picture.

Taking the time to make time doesn't just benefit you logistically. Sitting down and organising your day helps you *clear the clutter from your mind*, as well. For example, everyday should involve a **To-Do List**. On the obvious level, this helps you structure your tasks for the day; on the not-so-obvious level, this helps you; a) free your brain of the strain of being overwhelmed by a lot of tasks, and b) helps you brainstorm ideas.

Now, the lists you work with every day don't just need to be a traditional To-Do checklist-style list. There are a few others you can incorporate that will help you really start organizing and managing your time, including:

- A Put-Off List – A list of things that can be put aside momentarily in order to prioritise more pressing issues and tasks.
- A NOT-to-Do List – a list of things that are negatively correlated and creating more chaos and less efficiency in your life.
- A Waiting-For List – A list of the items you have *constructively delegated* to others (not dumped on).

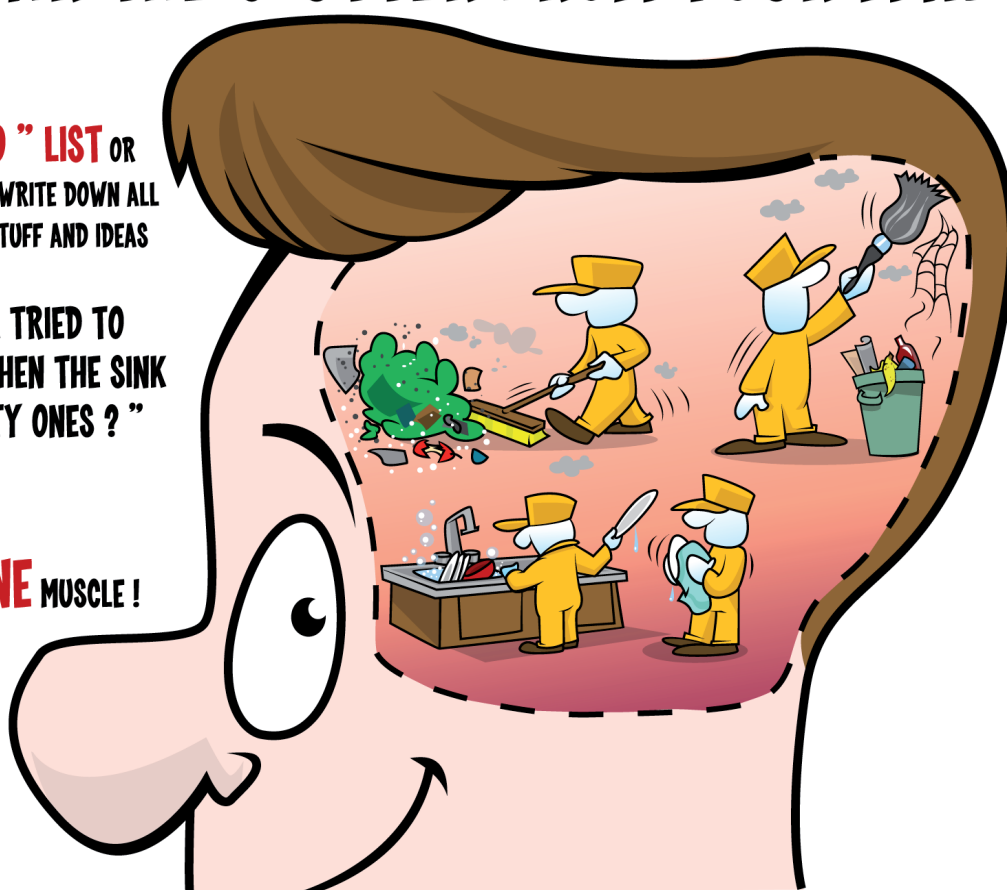
Remember, you can't wash a dish with a sink full of dirty ones! Take this time and make these lists to organise your day and organise your mind and give you the space and time you need to work effectively. It will also help you start building your Discipline Muscle. The more you spend on optimising efficiency and organization, the more disciplined and effective you'll become.

CLEAR THE CLUTTER FROM YOUR MIND!

* USE A **"TO DO" LIST** OR **JOURNAL** TO WRITE DOWN ALL OF YOUR BRAIN STUFF AND IDEAS

" HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO **WASH A DISH** WHEN THE SINK IS FULL OF DIRTY ONES ? "

* BUILD YOUR **DISCIPLINE** MUSCLE !



■ 2. Prioritising

The word "prioritise" came up a lot in the section above, didn't it? Makes sense then that Prioritising is the second of the Top Ten Time Skills you need to leverage. Now, truly effective prioritizing comes from an idea called the Pareto Principle.

Vilfredo Pareto was an Italian economist who studied the distribution of wealth and the inherent patterns inside that distribution. What he discovered was this:

Life is not fair! All relationships are NOT equal.

&

Results are NOT directly proportional to **Effort**.

The discovery of this led to the Pareto Principle, which is highly applicable to our needs here and that is:

*"You need to find the **vital few** hidden in the **trivial many**".*

You need to find the key items (and the key people) in your day-to-day activities that will truly bring you value. Your life and your workflow are dominated by an 80/20 rule:

20% of your Efforts give you 80% of your Results.

And

20% of your Customers give you 80% of your Profits.

So to apply the Pareto Principle to your work and life you need to do two things: you need to focus on your 3 Best Niches and you have to look after your High-Value Relationships.

Your Best Niches— Ask yourself, "what are my best products and services? My best customer types or industries?" Put more of your effort into A-Grade Tasks that address these A-Grade niches and get you... what? **A-Grade Results**.

Your High-Value Relationships – Prioritise the people who bring you the most value. Spend more time with your best employees or co-workers, coveting these productive relationships. Focus more energy on your best clients, that 20% that is delivering 80% of your profits. Work your best connections, referrers, and alliances, as well, to make sure that these critical partners are producing for you.

■ 3. Take Action!

You can't say this enough... STOP procrastinating! Taking action is about starting and starting NOW. Don't slow yourself up by always aiming for perfection. Set yourself deadlines and scheduled tasks and learn to stick to them by leveraging your ever-growing Discipline muscle. Not every

task is going to be executed ideally. The point is not to execute rushed and sloppy work, but to focus on forward momentum and staying on track.

A good way to address the problem of procrastination is to create a Procrastination List. Use this list to clarify your weak spots and to understand why you procrastinate. Your list should include all the items you have been putting off. Look at these items closely and consider the following:

- Why have I been putting these items off?
- What are the real reasons (i.e. fears) that are causing me to put these items off?
- Are these items important to me?

Once you have addressed these issues, you will have new insight into how you work and manage time and how you can move forward more effectively.

Another point to consider with regards to procrastination is the question of HOPE. As we discussed earlier, crossing your fingers and hoping everything will work out doesn't work out. Hope is NOT effective Business Strategy! Don't spend anytime hoping that hard problems or tasks will solve themselves. Address them first!

■ 4. Saying "No"

As we discussed in the Dirty Dozen section, you have the right to say No. You need to prioritise your own tasks and your own effective time management over the needs of others. Saying no doesn't have to be about being rude. Saying no can be as constructive for the other person as it is for you. Keep the following in mind when you say no:

Believe you have the right to say NO – This belief in yourself will make your NO much more decisive and convincing.

Offer an Alternative – Give constructive suggestions for other ways in which the problem or task can be addressed.

Be Honest! – Don't make up a story. Just give it to them straight. This acts as a clarifier, just like believing in your NO does.

Say Thank You and SMILE – Thank the person for considering you! Use your relationship strengths to smooth over the moment. You want the other person to leave feeling as charged and productive as you are.

Remember, you get what you put up with. By choosing NO and allowing yourself to set boundaries you are defining a language and a template for how you will be treated and acted upon by others.

■ 5. Avoiding Overload

STOP! That's how you avoid overload. Sounds simple, right? In some ways it is. You need to just do less and use your new skills in prioritising to focus on what really matters. Take a look at your workload and decide for yourself what you are no longer going to do. This includes tasks, but it also includes habits, methodologies, etc.

Where avoiding overload gets complicated is where it applies to other people. Sometimes, frankly, avoiding overload is a matter of SACKING some BAD relationships.

We've touched on this several times in this eBook, but it bears repeating here with absolute clarity: AVOID ENERGY DRAINERS! Energy drainers are people that pull you down or pile you down with things due to their own faulty time management skills.

AVOID ENERGY DRAINERS!



Set your boundaries and let these Energy Drainers know that you are no longer open for business! A good statement to keep up your sleeve? “Failure to plan on your part does NOT constitute an emergency on my part.”

Sums it up pretty nicely, don’t you think?

Make it clear to people that you are not a Professional Problem Solver. Become the person people bring solutions to NOT problems.

■ 6. Delegating

Again, delegating is not dumping! Delegating is about leveraging the best person for the job. An important part of delegating is encouraging others to understand the value they bring to the table. Train others to think for themselves. Ask them questions like:

- What would you do?
- What else could you do?
- Which option do you think is best?

When they come up with a good approach, let them know! Effective delegating is about communicating positively and proactively. As with saying no, effective delegating can help the other person as much as it does you. Practice the kind of situational leadership in your delegation that encourages a team mentality—Tell, Sell Participate, Delegate.

■ 7. Get more Organised

As we talked about earlier, the simple act of cleaning off the top of your desk and making sure that everything you need is within easy reach is a great way to start saving time. Extend these basic principles of organisation into everything you do.

One of the best ways to organise your workflow is to utilise a Tickler File System. This idea has had a lot of renewed interest as of late, thanks to the efforts of David Allen in his book *Getting Things Done* and via Merlin Mann’s website, 43folders.com. This is how the Tickler File System works: you create 31 numbered “day” files and 12 “month” files. You use these files to store reminders and work tasks for yourself as much as a year in advance. In this way, you are able to plan and organise more effectively in the long term.

Check out 43folders.com as well as the Allen book to get even more productivity and organisational ideas that can help you out.

■ 8. Subdue Your Phone

Don't let your phone run your life! It's your tool and you should be the master of it. Here are a few tips on how to subdue your phone and stop it from running your life:

Leave better messages – Be concise and detailed in your messages. You want to limit the amount of back and forth that is needed by being as clear as possible in your messages. Of course, this doesn't mean that you should leave 25-minute messages! Just make sure that you are not leaving any open-ended questions and that you have covered the essential details.

Be less reachable – You don't have to be in contact *all the time*. Remember, there was a time not so long ago when business was conducted without being in touch 24/7. Allow yourself time to step away from your phone.

■ 9. Master Your Meetings

Just as with your phone, you don't want meetings running your life... or ruining it! Stay on top of all information that is downloaded to you in a meeting by taking effective notes and start every meeting with a clear and concise Agenda and Action Plan.

■ 10. Using Off-Peak Time

Use your down time to your advantage. Now, this doesn't mean that you should be working all day and all night; it simply means that you should use some of your down time to review your work, your thoughts, and your notes from your day. You might even try keeping a journal as a way to review and assess what you accomplished that day. Review this diary regularly to check in on yourself and make sure that you're staying on course.

In Conclusion

Well, I hope you got a lot out of this eBook. Hopefully, it's tapped you into plenty of ideas that will help you become highly effective at managing your time. Let's circle back and summarise some of the key points as we wrap things up:

- **Know your outcomes!** *Figure out the results you want to get and then make them happen.*
- **Know your worth!** *Figure out your high-value hourly rate and use it as a goal post in achieving success.*
- **Delegate!** *You don't have to do everything yourself. Delegate to trusted parties. You want to keep high-value activities for yourself and delegate lower-level activities to those with a lower hourly rate.*
- **Get going!** *There's no time like the present to start managing time more effectively. Get your momentum going right away.*



David Staughton

AUTHOR | SPEAKER | CONSULTANT

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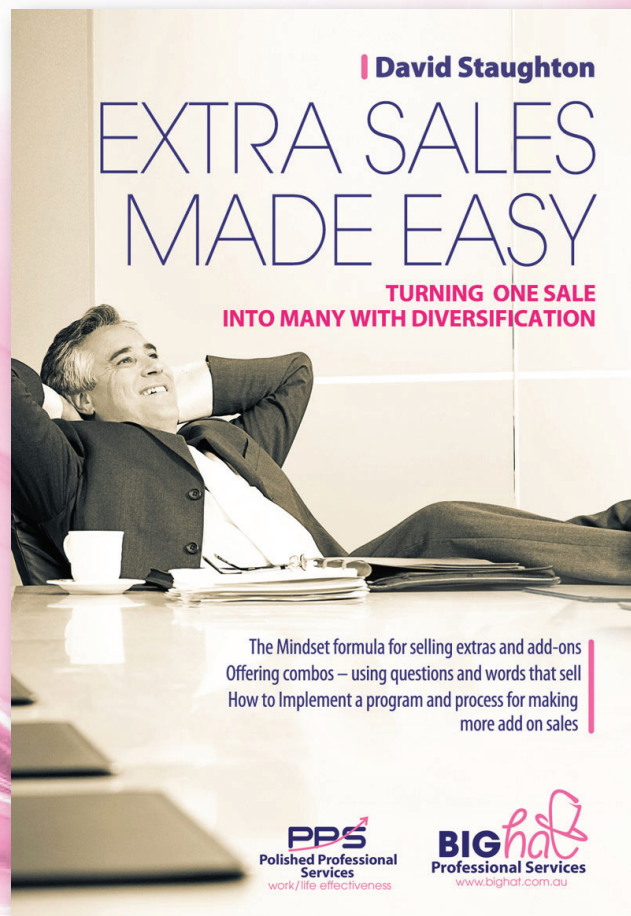
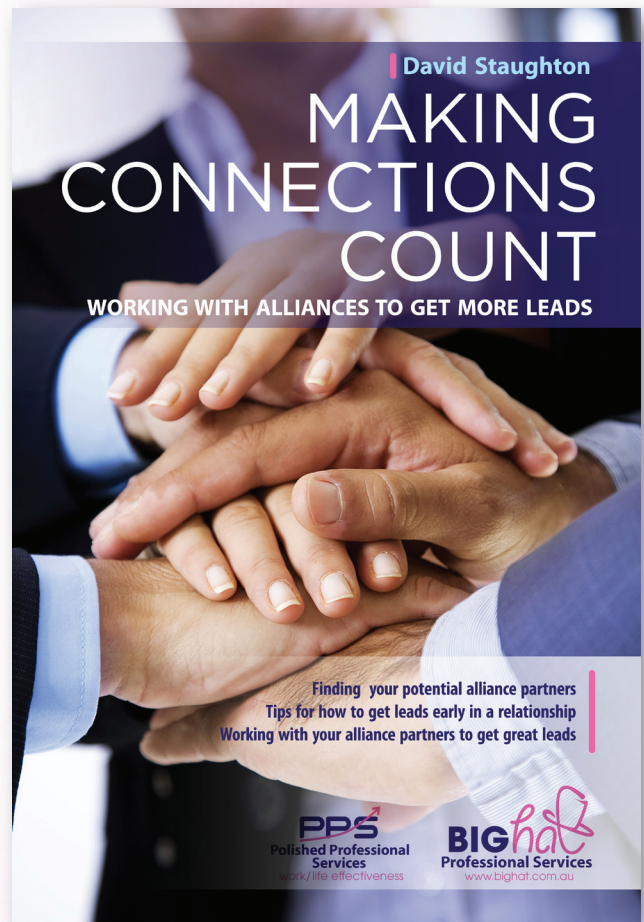
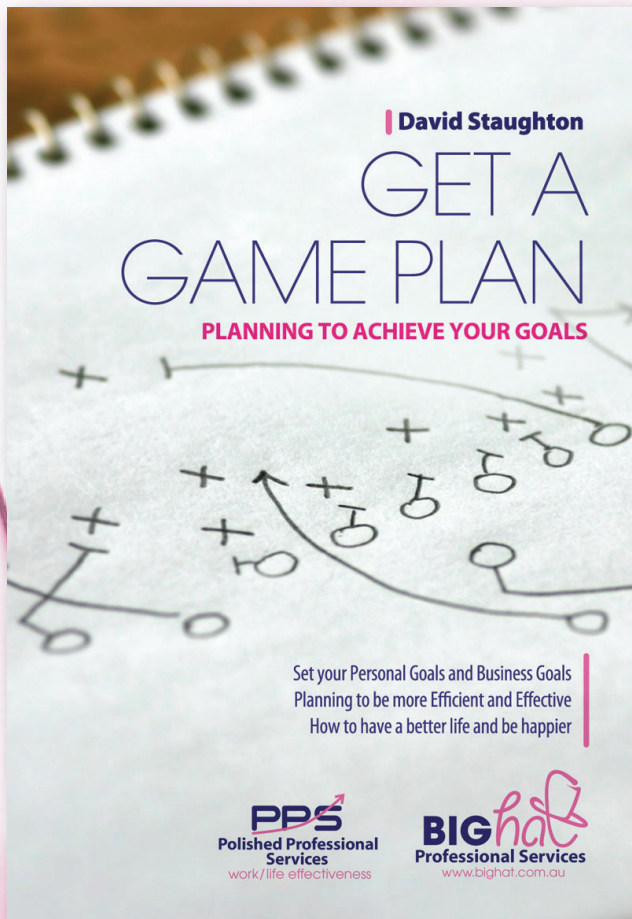
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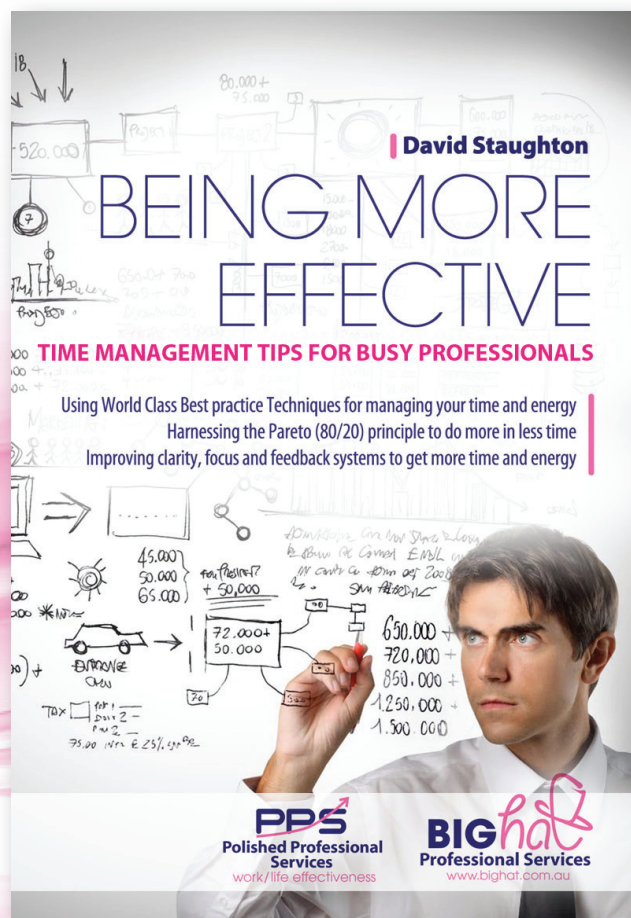
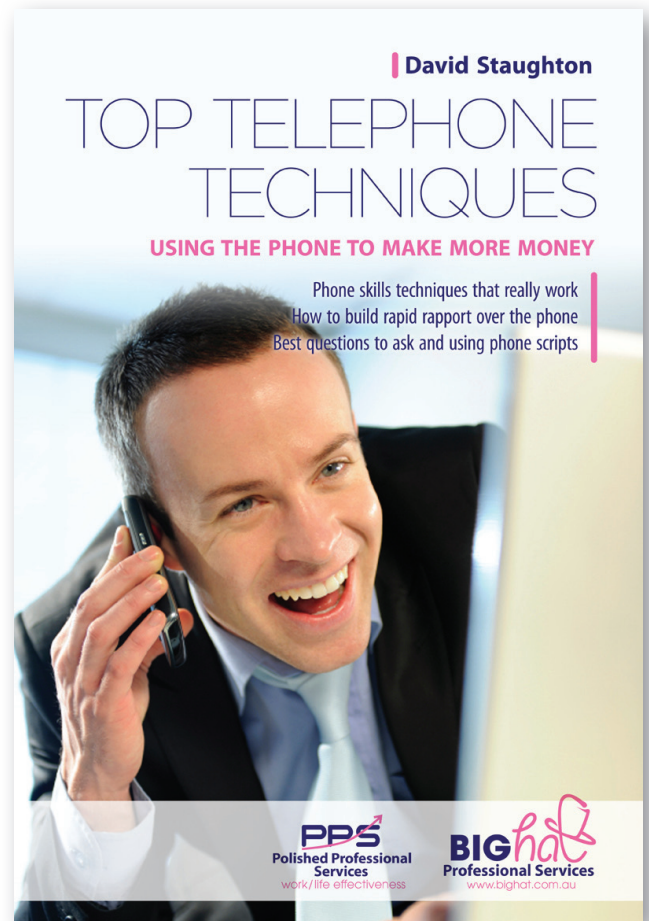
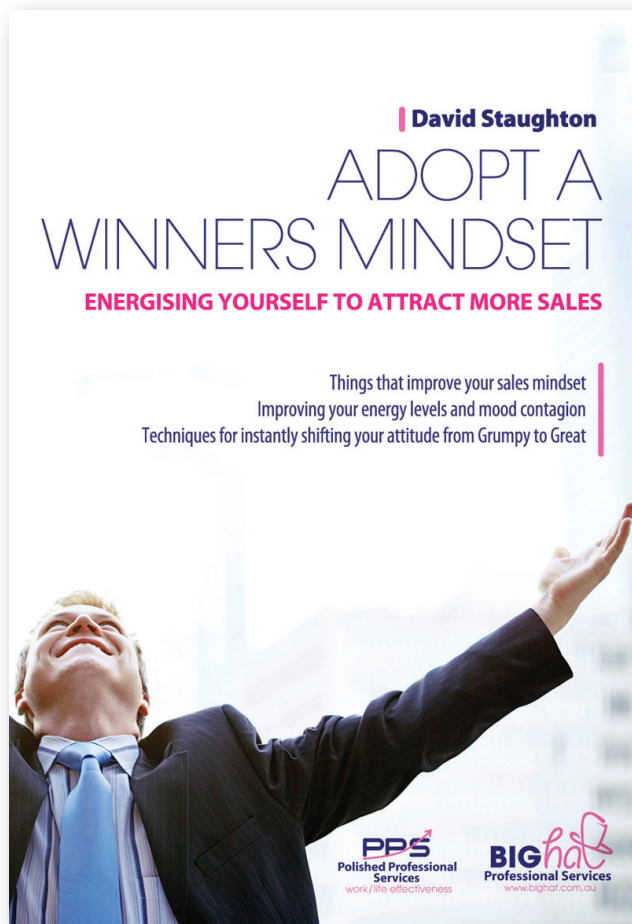
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