# IMPROVING YOUR PERSONAL PRODUCTIVITY

Module One: Getting Started

Most people find that they wish they had more time in a day. This training will show you how to organize your life and find those hidden moments. You will learn how to establish routines, set goals, create an efficient environment, and use time-honored planning and organizational tools to maximize your personal productivity.

Workshop Objectives

Research has consistently demonstrated that when clear goals are associated with learning, it occurs more easily and rapidly. With that in mind, let's review our goals for today.
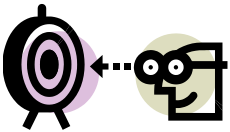
At the end of this workshop, participants should know steps to:

Set and evaluate SMART goals

Use routines to maximize their productivity

Use scheduling tools to make the most of their time

Stay on top of their to-do list

Start new tasks and projects on the right foot

Use basic project management techniques

Organize their physical and virtual workspaces for maximum efficiency

Take back time from e-mail and handheld devices

Beat procrastination

Module Two: Setting SMART Goals

Goal setting is critical to your personal productivity. It is the single most important life skill that, unfortunately, most people never learn how to do properly. Goal setting can be used in every single area of your life, including financial, physical, personal development, relationships, or even spiritual. According to Brian Tracy's book <u>Goals</u>, fewer than 3% of people have clear, written goals, and a plan for getting there. Setting goals puts you ahead of the pack!

Some people blame everything that goes wrong in their life on something or someone else. They take the role of a victim and they give all their power and control away. Successful people instead dedicate themselves towards taking responsibility for their lives, no matter what the unforeseen or uncontrollable events. Live in the present: the past cannot be changed, and the future is the direct result of what you do right now!
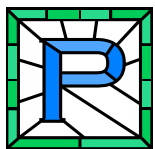
The Three P's

Setting meaningful, long-term goals is a giant step toward achieving your dreams. In turn, setting and achieving short-term goals can help you accomplish the tasks you'll need to achieve the long-term ones. It is also important to make sure that all of your goals unleash the power of the three P's:

- **Positive**: Who could get fired up about a goal such as "Find a career that's not boring"? Goals should be phrased positively, so they help you feel good about yourself and what you're trying to accomplish. A better alternative might be this: "Enroll in pre-law classes so I can help people with legal problems someday."

- **Personal**: Goals must be personal. They must reflect your own dreams and values, not those of friends, family, or the media. When crafting your goal statement, always use the word "I" in the sentence to brand it as your own. When your goals are personal, you'll be more motivated to succeed and take greater pride in your accomplishments.

- **Possible**: When setting goals, be sure to consider what's possible and within your control. Getting into an Ivy League university may be possible if you are earning good grades but unrealistic if you're struggling. In the latter case, a more reasonable goal might be to attend a university or trade school that offers courses related to your chosen career. You might also pursue volunteer work that would strengthen your college applications.

***Identify the "P" that is missing from each of these goals.

_____ Stop eating so much junk food.
_____ Get my writing up to my manager's standards.
_____ Learn to be a rocket scientist in the next year.
_____ Stop my dog from chewing up my slippers.

> **Long ago, King Robert the Bruce ruled over Scotland. One day, he was badly defeated in battle. His only option was to escape and hide. He found refuge in a small cave and waited there for months.**
>
> **One day, he watched a spider try to build a web across the cave's entrance. Time and time again, the spider fell down and got back up again. After many times, the spider succeeded, proving that with persistence and a plan, anything is possible.**

The SMART Way

SMART is a convenient acronym for the set of criteria that a goal must have in order for it to be realized by the goal achiever.

- **Specific**: Success coach Jack Canfield states in his book <u>The Success Principles</u> that, "Vague goals produce vague results." In order for you to achieve a goal, you must be very clear about what exactly you want. Often, creating a list of benefits that the accomplishment of your goal will bring to your life, will you give your mind a compelling reason to pursue that goal.

- **Measurable**: It's crucial for goal achievement that you are able to track your progress towards your goal. That's why all goals need some form of objective measuring system so that you can stay on track and become motivated when you enjoy the sweet taste of quantifiable progress.

- **Achievable:** Setting big goals is great but setting unrealistic goals will just de-motivate you. A good goal is one that challenges but is not so unrealistic that you have virtually no chance of accomplishing it.

- **Relevant:** Before you even set goals, it's a good idea to sit down and define your core values and your life purpose because it's these tools which ultimately decide how and what goals you choose for your life. Goals, in and of themselves, do not provide any happiness. Goals that are in harmony with our life purpose do have the power to make us happy.

- **Timed:** Without setting deadlines for your goals, you have no real compelling reason or motivation to start working on them. By setting a deadline, your subconscious mind begins to work on that goal, night and day, to bring you closer to achievement.

***Review the 3 goals listed below and check the circle beside the goals that are written using the 5 points of SMART goals;

<u>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely.</u>

- o I will complete the required training within the 2 weeks' time I have been allotted.
- o I will finish the framework on the building whenever I get to it.
- o I will study weekly for my CDL so that I can take my test by the end of April.

Now you write a SMART goal that is relevant for you on the lines provided.

_____

_____

_____

Prioritizing Your Goals

Achieving challenging goals requires a lot of mental energy. Instead of spreading yourself thin by focusing on several goals at once, invest your mental focus on one goal, the most important goal right now. When you are prioritizing, choose a goal that will have the greatest impact on your life compared to how long it will take to achieve. A large part of goal setting is not just identifying what you want, but also identifying what you must give up in your life in order to get it. Most people are unwilling to make a conscious decision to give up the things in their life necessary to achieve their goals.

Evaluating and Adapting

As we change and grow, our goals should change too. When you reach the target date set out in your goal, look at what you have achieved. Here is a checklist to help you out.

What percentage of my goal did I achieve?

Why did I achieve that percentage?

What would I do differently next time?

What is my next step?

What other goals might need to change now?

In addition, keep an eye on new trends and ideas around you – you might just find one that will change your life.

Case Study

Paul worked up a sweat as he tried to make heads or tails of the work in front of him. Cindy caught a glimpse of him and the scattered debris on his desk and asked what she could do to help. Paul told her he couldn't find the light at the end of the tunnel of tasks on his to-do list. Cindy suggested setting goals for both work and personal productivity. Together, they brainstormed positive ideas that made Paul feel better about his career goals using the SMART way of being specific and how to choose goals he could measure instead of having work pile on his desk. Paul set achievable goals that kept him in the fast lane to success in the workplace and at home.

In this case study, which would be most beneficial for Paul to get his work back on track, short task goals or long term accomplishment goals?

Module Three: The Power of Routines

For most people, the word "routine" typically conjures up an image of a boring, repetitive life, with every moment controlled and managed, and no room for spontaneity. Routines and rituals, however, can actually help increase the spontaneity and fun in your life. Because routine tasks are already planned for, you have more energy to spend on the tasks that will bring you closer to your goals and bring more joy to your life.

What is a Routine?

The Random House Dictionary defines a routine as, "any practice, or pattern of behavior regularly performed in a set manner."

In fact, you can build any type of routine in three easy steps.

1. Identify the Task. Let's say you want to build an exercise routine.

2. Identify the Time and/or Trigger. For example, perhaps you normally exercise right after work.

3. Identify the Sub-Tasks. For you, perhaps your routine involves going to the gym, getting changed, stretching, doing 45 minutes on the treadmill, performing three reps of weights, and doing a lap around the pool to finish things off. Then, you shower and go home.

Remember, a routine shouldn't be set in stone. Once you establish a routine, it can be modified at any point in time, depending on what works for you. With our exercise example, you could easily decide to exercise before work or even at lunch and still use the basic task and sub-tasks.

Personal Routines

Sleep, meals, and exercise form the building blocks of our lives. Without this stable foundation, other personal productivity efforts won't be as successful. Here are some ideas.

*   **Sleep:** Establish a routine for half an hour before you sleep. This might include creating a to-do list for the next day, enjoying a cup of tea, taking a warm bath, and or performing some stretches. All of these activities will help you wind down and sleep better. It is best to try to go to bed at around the same time every night, too.

*   **Meals:** Take a half hour each weekend to plan meals for the next week, including lunches and suppers. Then, make a grocery list and get everything you will need. Appliances like slow cookers and delayed-start ovens can also help you make sure supper is ready when you are.

*   **Exercise:** Try to exercise for one hour three times a week, or half an hour each day. One easy way is to go for a brisk walk at lunch or do yoga in the morning before work.

> **Albert Einstein developed a routine of walking to and from work. It was through this routine that he met mathematician Kurt Gödel. These two brilliant minds had a profound impact on each other, and on the theories that shape our world today.**

Professional Routines

Here are some routines that many people find helpful in maximizing their time in the office:

*   Instead of checking e-mail, news, and Web sites throughout the day, set aside one or several periods (for example, morning, noon, and at the end of the day). Then, batch and sequence your activities (for example, e-mail, news, and industry journals). You can batch many types of tasks in this way for maximum efficiency.

*   Set up a system for maintaining your task tracking system. This can be as simple as five minutes in the morning to update the day's list, five minutes at noon to update what you have done already, and five minutes at day's end to evaluate today and create a starting list for tomorrow.

- In the morning, perform your tasks in an organized, routine manner. You can also lay out your clothes and prepare your lunch the night before for maximum efficiency.

Six Easy Ways to Simplify Your Life

With some creative thinking, you can reduce the number of items on your to-do list. Here are our top six suggestions.
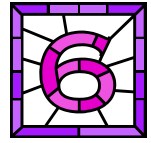
1. **Pay someone else to do it.** Evaluate the time you spend on household chores and decide whether it is worth it to pay someone else to do it. A service near my home will wash, dry, sort, and fold a load of laundry for only five dollars! We also pay a neighborhood kid ten dollars a week to mow our lawn.

2. **Use electronic banking.** Today, nearly all banks offer automatic bill payments. If you have bills that are the same amount and due at the same time at regular intervals, set up automatic payments so you don't have to pay it yourself. Just make sure that you have the money in your account at the required time.

3. **Keep everyone organized.** If you share your household with roommates, a spouse, or children, keep a calendar in a central location (such as on the fridge) so that everyone can record important dates and appointments. Advance notice means better planning and improved efficiency.

4. **Plan your meals.** Planning meals in advance (both lunches and suppers) will save you time, money, and energy. Try making soups, chili, or casseroles on the weekend and freezing them for use during the week.

5. **Take advantage of shortcuts.** Our world is filled with shortcuts: everything from speed dial, to ready-made salad kits, to automatic television recording, can save you a few seconds here and there. It all adds up!

6. **Save the difference.** The motto of the super-sized Duggar family is, "Buy used and save the difference." You can do the same thing with newfound minutes: save them up during the day and use them to work towards one of your goals.

***Think of one way to simplify your life.

> **MIT professor Earl Miller says people can't multi-task because of the way the brain is set up. Instead, we shift back and forth very quickly and think we're multi-tasking. He recommends doing one thing at a time for maximum efficiency.**

Module Four: Scheduling Yourself

Routines and rituals should form the framework of your days at home and in the office. In addition to these key activities, you will have day to day tasks, projects to complete, and goals to work on. This module will explore how to schedule those tasks and activities in the most efficient way possible.

The Simple Secret of Successful Time Management

In order to be as productive as you can be, you must remember the simple secret of time management. There is no secret, no one-size-fits-all solution, and no magic button. You must explore different methods and, through trial and error, find the solutions that work for you. Note that we said –most people find that combining several different time management and productivity methods creates a system that works for them.

As a last note, remember what we said earlier about growth. As you grow, and as your life changes, you may need to revise your time management system. Remember, keep an eye on what others are doing and new ideas that emerge. You might just find something that works for you.

> **95% of self-improvement books, audio tapes, and video tapes purchased are not used.**

Developing a Tracking System

Although there are many time management systems out there, we have found that most systems boil down to a few key principles. Here are our top three ideas.

Electronic Solutions: Most e-mail applications (including Microsoft Outlook and Lotus Notes) actually fall into the category of a PIM (Personal Information Manager) application. This means that they can store calendar, task, e-mail, and contact information all in one place.

To make the most of your electronic solution, follow these tips:

Keep personal and professional information in two separate locations. (For example, you might have a computer at home and one at work, or two e-mail profiles on the same computer.)

Take the time to learn about the features of the application and how to use them to be more productive. We'll look at this a bit more later on in the course.

Try to use just the application as much as you can. Switching between your computer and your day timer will waste time and increase the risk of missing information.

Productivity Journal: If you're more of a traditionalist and prefer using something similar to an old-fashioned day timer, try this solution.

To start, get yourself a spiral notebook and label it as your Personal Productivity Journal or your Professional Productivity Journal. (We recommend keeping a separate journal for work and for your personal life, so you can focus

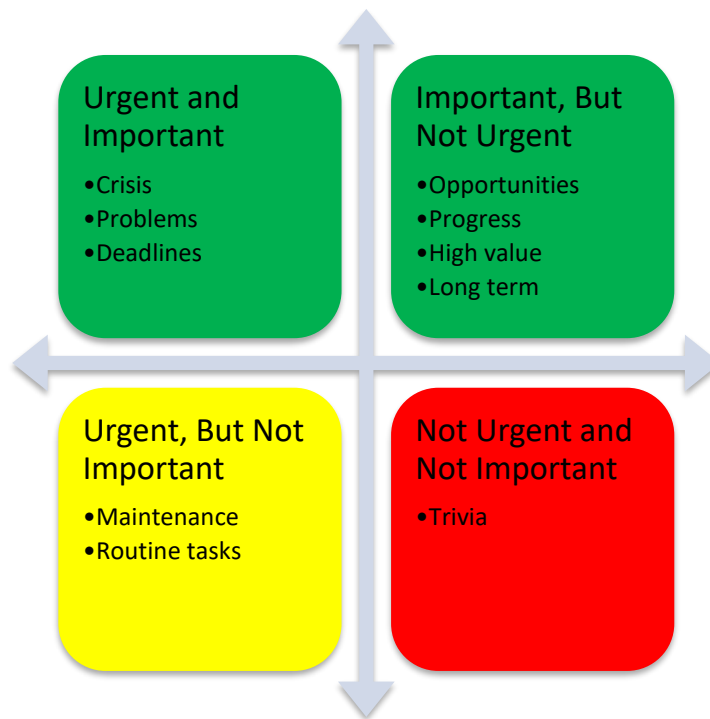on them at separate times, thus maintaining your optimal work/life balance.) Label each page with the day and the date and what needs to be done that particular day. Next, prioritize each task in order of importance. Highlight the top three items and focus on those first. Cross off items as you complete them. Items that are not completed should be carried over to the next page.
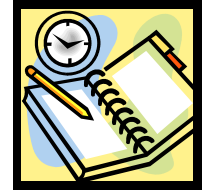
You can keep a long-term calendar in the back of the book (or use a three-ring binder with sections) to record upcoming events.

The Urgent/Important Matrix: Managing time effectively, and achieving the things that you want to achieve, means spending your time on things that are important and not just urgent. To do this, you need to distinguish clearly between what is urgent and what is important. This concept, coined the Eisenhower Principle, is said to be how former US President Dwight Eisenhower organized his tasks. It was rediscovered and brought into the mainstream as the Urgent/Important Matrix by Stephen Covey in his 1994 business classic, <u>The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People</u>.

Urgent and Important	Important, But Not Urgent
•Crisis •Problems •Deadlines	•Opportunities •Progress •High value •Long term
Urgent, But Not Important	**Not Urgent and Not Important**
•Maintenance •Routine tasks	•Trivia

Here is a breakdown of each quadrant.

Urgent and Important: Activities in this area relate to dealing with critical issues as they arise and meeting significant commitments. *Perform these duties now.*

Important, But Not Urgent: These success-oriented tasks are critical to achieving goals. *Plan to do these tasks next.*

Urgent, But Not Important: These chores do not move you forward toward your own goals. Manage by delaying them, cutting them short and rejecting requests from others*. Postpone these chores.*

Not Urgent and Not Important: These trivial interruptions are just a distraction and should be avoided if possible. However, be careful not to mislabel things like time with family and recreational activities as not important. *Avoid these distractions altogether*.

Scheduling Appointments

It's important to master the art of scheduling appointments efficiently in order to maximize personal productivity. Some tips to get started:

- Block off solid, quiet time to work at your desk without interruptions—no phone calls, meetings, or visitors dropping in unannounced. Make sure that people know you're unavailable from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., or whenever you find yourself working most productively.

- Leave the most convenient time for callers to call on your voice mail message or ask them to leave you a time that's convenient for you to call them back. You can also use voice mail to communicate your current status – at your desk all day, travelling, or on vacation.

- Meetings can be a big time-waster. Suggest start and finish times for meetings and strictly adhere to them. (Remember, after 45 minutes, most meetings lose steam.) When possible, use conference calls and web conferences to save travel time.

    If you're leading a meeting, remember to prepare a meeting agenda in advance with copies e-mailed to everyone. Set a good example by starting and finishing on time, with important points discussed first.

> **The average person gets interrupted about 50 times a day. This can waste up to half of your workday!**

Scheduling Tasks

Are you finding your to-do lists getting longer and longer? Give some of these ideas a whirl:

- Instead of being overwhelmed by a large project, deconstruct it into smaller, bite-sized projects.

- Delegate effectively by matching up individual strengths with project tasks.

- Be strict with deadlines, but be flexible enough to accommodate individual situations.

- Always have a backup plan!

- Allow for extra time when dealing with external parties.

> **One hour of planning can save up to ten hours of doing!**

Case Study

Frank had been way behind schedule and couldn't see his workday ending. Sandra poked her head in his office and saw the beads of sweat hitting the mounds of unfinished work in front of his computer. Franks eyes bulged and his teeth were clenched as he raced to type in more data information. Sandra knew that time management could save him from himself. Sandra offered a hand; she organized his desktop and placed a timer on his desk instructing him to

Ordinary people think merely of spending time. Great people think of using it.

Anonymous

lighten his heavy load and split his work into smaller manageable pieces instead of tackling them all at once. He saw no end to his turmoil but agreed to give it a shot and organized his work to accomplish the next day.

? Explain how the quote "Plan your work and work your plan" relates to the challenge Frank is facing. **?**

Module Five: Keeping Yourself on Top of Tasks
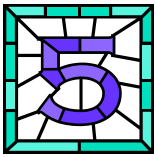
Even after you've got a plan in place, it's important to keep adjusting your plan so that you can stay in control of your time. This module will give you some ways to help you stay on top of your to-do list.

The One-Minute Rule

If you can do a task in a minute or less, do it! Here are some things that you can accomplish in 60 seconds or less:

Check for new messages on your voice mail and e-mail

Quick replies to e-mails

Accept a meeting invitation

Quick stretches to give you an energy boost

Review new RSS feeds

? What other tasks do you have that you can do in one minute or less?

The Five-Minute Rule

If you're stuck on a task – can't get started, have hit a roadblock, or just can't seem to get it wrapped up – set aside five minutes each hour to work on it until you've hit the desired progress point.

Here are some ideas for putting this into action:

Desk too cluttered? Set aside five minutes at the end of each hour to clear off one part.

Report not coming along? Set aside five minutes each hour to work on a particular part.

Inbox overflowing? Set aside five minutes each hour to work on clearing it out.

Set the timer on your cell phone or use a kitchen timer to track your time.

What to do When You're Sinking

No matter how well you plan and how organized you are, there will likely come a time when you feel like you just can't get your head above water. When this happens, follow these five easy steps to get things back under control.

1. First, take a deep breath. Make sure that your mind is calm and clear before you begin.
2. Next, make a list of all the tasks that are outstanding. If there is a due date, mark it beside each item.
3. Now, look at your calendar. Create a plan for the most important items. Transfer these items to your tracking system (Outlook, productivity journal, day timer, etc.).
4. Identify the three most important items. Make those a priority for today.
5. If possible, start work on the most critical item.

Like other plans, you will probably need to revisit your to-do items and priorities once you have completed a few tasks. This plan, however, should help you get your head above water and get back on track.

Topic Summary	Remember the five C's when you feel like you're sinking. Calm yourself. Create a list. Add each item to your calendar. Identify the main concerns for today. Start on the most critical item.

Case Study

ZeeZee Beaver arrives at work right on time on Monday morning. While he is waiting for his computer to start up, he reviews the to-do list that he started before leaving on Friday.

- Review the Request for Proposal from Acme Paper Suppliers (response due by Friday)
- Complete period-end results report and send to Jim Smith (due by end of day tomorrow)
- Complete monthly time sheet and send to Amy Jones (due by end of day today)
- Begin research for quote on brochure printing project (full report due in 20 days)

When he opens his e-mail, he is shocked to see 47 new messages!
He also has a voice mail from the head of the department requesting an immediate meeting, two urgent memos on his desk, and a note from his manager reminding him about a report due that day.
ZeeZee closes his eyes in panic. How is he ever going to get on top of all these tasks?

***TASK**

Using the five C's just discussed, create an action plan for ZeeZee. Use the worksheet below to create some goals for ZeeZee, try to write a few of them using the SMART technique. Be sure to look at all the tasks that have been given and list them in priority order.

Action Plan

MODULE	GOAL	SPECIFIC?	MEASURABLE?	ACHIEVABLE?	RELEVANT?	TIMED?	NEXT STEPS
ONE							
TWO							
THREE							
FOUR							
FIVE							
SIX							
SEVEN							
EIGHT							
NINE							

Module Six: Tackling New Tasks and Projects

When you're assigned a new task or project, it's important to create a plan at the beginning so you get off to a good start. This module will look at some different techniques that you can use to tackle new to-do items.

The Sliding Scale

When planning and organizing, try to create the right size plan for the task. If your goal is to organize your inbox, for example, it's probably not necessary to spend several hours planning each action. On the other hand, if you're handed a complex project, you may want to spend several days or even weeks gathering information and creating a plan.

For small tasks, basic tools such as a to-do list or calendar will probably be the best choice.

For medium-sized tasks or projects, you might want to use:

    *RACI charts – Chart that assign every task in a project to a team member
    *Visual timelines
    *Storyboards

And for large projects, consider:

    *Gantt charts – a visual time line using bar graphs
    *Project plans
    *Project-specific productivity journals
    *Online time tracking dashboards

Tools Needed	Project

	Choose a project from the list below. Come up with some tools that you would use to manage that project. List them in the column provided on the left.
	  *Report on the progress of road cleanup and paving project
	  *Construction of a new building
	  *Going away on vacation
	  *Preparing a budget
	  *Organizing a presentation that you will give for six people
	  *Looking for a new job

A Checklist for Getting Started

For most tasks, you will need some background information before you begin. Remember, you'll need very little information for simple tasks, and more detailed information for complex tasks.

Basic information you will gather should include:

What is the date I will start this task? What is the deadline?

Who else can I rely on for help?

What are the major things that need to be completed?

What obstacles might I encounter? How can I get around them? (For example, one of your key resources might be going on vacation in two weeks. You will want to gather all required information from them before they leave.)

What work has already been completed?

Evaluating and Adapting

For most medium to large sized tasks, you will want to build evaluation points into your plan. Typically, these occur at key gateways (called milestones in the project management world). At these gateways, you will look at your plan, determine what is working and what is not working, and adjust as necessary.

Some other signs that it may be time to review your plan:

You keep falling further and further behind.

You're not motivated to work on the project.

You're finding that your plan isn't the right size for your project.

Major changes have happened in your project.

Case Study

Harry used to be a walking to-do list. Sticky notes were plastered all over his shirt sleeve. Disorganization spelled his middle name. He couldn't make heads or tails of his assigned duties. Harry felt controlled by the chaos and asked Alex for advice. Alex told Harry that he needed to draw up a plan to tackle his mess. Together, they created the right plan for the right jobs and Harry felt the weight of the world fall off of his shoulders and one by one watched the sticky notes as they flew off of his shirt and dove into their correct plan. It became a miracle and Harry could stand proud because his work didn't drag him down anymore and his boss would be the happiest man on earth knowing that time and money had not been wasted due to Harry's disorganized bunch of notes.

Why is Harry's method of organization not a good one?

Module Seven: Using Project Management Techniques
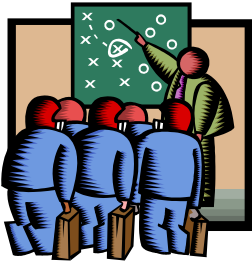
Project management is the art and science of planning, organizing, and managing resources to ensure that a project is completed successfully. Although project management tools are often used for major endeavors, we can scale down some of them and use them in our day to day work. This module will give you an introduction to key project management techniques and ideas and show you how to use them to become more productive.

The Triple Constraint
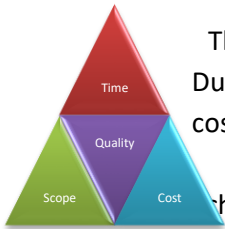
The Triple Constraint illustrates the balance of the project's scope, schedule (time), quality, and cost. During the planning phase of a project, the project management team defines the project scope, time, cost, and quality of a project. As the process continues, the project managers discover that there may changes or adjustments to be made in one of these areas. When this happens, the other factors of the triple constraint are likely to be affected as well.

For example, if the cost increases, it is logical to assume that the scope and time will increase as well. The same thing happens if the cost decreases; the scope and time will decrease too.

It is the job of the project manager, and sometimes the project team, to identify how a change to a single element will change the other elements.

Creating the Schedule

The next task is to build the schedule. A good schedule will allow you to will grow and change while you're working on your task or project. Keep it up to date to make sure that you will meet your deadlines.

There are many scheduling tools out there. For personal task management, we prefer a simple, table-style format.

The first column lists the tasks that need to be performed. This list is typically organized in the order in which the tasks will be accomplished chronologically. If it's a large project, think of how it might be broken up into phases, to help subdivide tasks that will be performed.

The second column specifies the duration time of each task listed. This duration might be listed in terms of days, weeks, or hours, depending on the project.

If you are relying on other people or machines to help you complete your task, make a list of restrictions and availabilities.

Let's look at Joe and Sue. They want to paint their guest room this weekend. Here is a summary of their availabilities:

	Friday	Saturday
Joe	5 p.m.-10 p.m.	9 a.m.-10 a.m. 1 p.m.-5 p.m.
Sue	5 p.m.-10 p.m.	10 a.m.-noon 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

Here is an example schedule for our room-painting project.

Task	Calculated Time	People Required	Start Time and Date	End Time and Date
1. Get paint samples	1 hour	Sue, Joe	5 p.m. Friday	6 p.m. Friday
2. Choose a paint color	2 hours	Sue, Joe	6 p.m. Friday	8 p.m. Friday
3. Remove all furniture	1 hour	Joe	8 p.m. Friday	9 p.m. Friday
4. Take off trim	½ hour	Joe	9 p.m. Friday	10 p.m. Friday
5. Paint trim	1 hour	Sue or Joe	9 a.m. Saturday	10 a.m. Saturday
6. Apply first coat	2 hours	Sue or Joe	10am. Saturday	Noon Saturday
7. Apply second coat	2 hours	Sue or Joe	1 p.m. Saturday	3 p.m. Saturday
8. Put trim back in	½ hour	Joe	3 p.m. Saturday	3:30 p.m. Saturday
9. Put all furniture back in	1 hour	Joe	3:30 p.m. Saturday	4:30 p.m. Saturday

Here are some tips to make your schedule efficient, accurate, and useful.

- Look for places where resources can perform activities simultaneously.

- Indicate milestones in your schedule. Milestones are identifiable points in your project that require no resources or time. They are simply a key point in time. They can also help you group your project into phases. Milestones in this project might be:

  o Have paint color chosen

WVDOH Training and Development – COVID-19 Training Materials

- o Have room cleaned out

- o Get painting complete

- o Have room put back together

- If you are delivering a business project, try to include deliverables with the milestones. This way, sponsors and stakeholders have tangible results at various stages in the project and are more likely to stay interested and committed.

- Make sure to include lag and lead time in your tasks. In the painting project, for example, there is little to no time allotted for the paint to dry between coats. The project will definitely fall behind schedule.

Using a RACI Chart

A RACI chart is an excellent way to outline who is responsible for what during a project or task. To start, create a chart with tasks listed on the left-hand side, and resources listed across the top. Now, put the appropriate letter in each cell:

- R: Responsible for execution

- A: Approver

- C: Consult

- I: Keep informed

Example

	Sue	Bob	Joe	Jane
Build widget plan	A	R	I	I
Build widget	R	A	C	I
Ship widget to customers	I	I	I	R

Module Eight: Creating a Workspace

It doesn't matter if you work place is in a garage, at a desk, or your vehicle. In order to be the most productive that you can be, you must create the appropriate environment. This module will give you some ideas for creating an effective, ergonomic workspace anywhere.

Setting Up the Physical Layout

One key aspect of an effective workspace is the physical layout. Keep these tips in mind:

Make sure your chair or seat provides sufficient support.

If possible, position the desk so that it receives maximum natural light. Make sure that light doesn't point at the monitor or in your face.

Keep your work area as clear as possible. Store tools and papers where they belong. Make a habit of cleaning off your area at the end of each day.

Do a complete clean and reorganization of your workspace once or twice a year.

Place the telephone within easy reach. Keep mugs and glasses away from electronics.

Try to have an area for your computer and an empty workspace. L-shaped desks are ideal for this.

Make your workspace a pleasant place to be. Plants and pictures are ideal for any work area. (If you're bringing items into an office, check company policy first.)

Focus on the changes that you can make. Keep your eyes open for new ideas.

Ergonomics 101

Ergonomics is the study of how workers relate to their environment. It has been proven that particular factors can increase or decrease the risk of certain injuries and conditions, such as repetitive strain injuries (RSI's), back problems, and eye problems.

Here are some things that you can adjust to make your workspace more ergonomic.

Keep your back straight.

Your feet should be flat on the floor or on a footrest.

Chair arm rests, back pads, and keyboard wrist rests can help to decrease muscle strain.

Ensure your monitor is tilted at a comfortable viewing angle. (Some people prefer to place it directly on the desk, while others find that a monitor stand eases neck strain.)

Use natural light when possible.

Most importantly, pay attention to your body. If you develop aches and pains, it may be a sign that your workspace needs to be adjusted. You may also need to consult your doctor for specialized treatment.

Healthy Tips	Frequent stretches (every hour at minimum) are another important part of staying healthy at work. Below are some soft stretches to try.

	Shoulder Roll
	This activity should be done while sitting.
	    *Relax shoulders.
	    *Roll shoulders forwards, up to your ears, and then back down to make a
	      complete circle.
	    *Repeat process three times forwards, and then three times in the
	        opposite direction.

	Head Turn
	This activity should be done while sitting.
	    *Slowly turn your head all the way to the left.
	    *Pause and take a deep breath.
	    *Slowly turn your head all the way to the right.
	    *Repeat steps three times.

	Arm Whirl
	Standing in a comfortable position.
	    * Spread legs.
	    *Raise arms straight out until they are parallel with the floor.
	    *Rotate arms, making 10 large circles forward and 10 circles backward.
	    * Swing arms over head so that arms are perpendicular to ground.
	    *Hold for 20 seconds.
	    *Lower arms and dangle below waist.

	Calf Stretch
	    **Stand up on your tiptoes as far as you can.
	    *Hold this position for a moment, feeling the stretch in your legs.
	    *Slowly lower yourself back to a normal standing position.

Using Your Computer Efficiently

In the last two topics, we focused on creating an effective, productive physical workspace. In this topic, we'll switch focus to your virtual workspace.

To use your computer most efficiently, customize your working areas as much as you can. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Organize your Start menu so that you can easily find the applications you need.

Keep your virtual desktop like your real desk – organized and clutter-free.

Customize toolbars on your desktop and within applications to place frequently used commands at your fingertips.

Make use of applications that automate tasks for you, particularly computer maintenance tasks.

As with your physical workspace, your company may limit your customization capabilities. Stay positive and focus on the changes that you can make, and the positive effects that those have.

Module Nine: Organizing Files and Folders

Being able to find a particular piece of information when you need it is essential to being productive. Some studies estimate that people spend up to an hour and a half each day looking for things! This module will give you some ways to keep your files organized.

Organizing Paper Files

To retrieve materials quickly, you'll need an effective filing system that includes three basic kinds of files:

1. **Working files:** Materials used frequently and needed close at hand.

2. **Reference files:** Information needed only occasionally.

3. **Archival files:** Materials seldom retrieved but that must be kept. For ease of retrieval, organize files in the simplest way possible. For example, you could label files with a one or two word tag and arrange the files alphabetically.

> **Disposophobia is the fear of throwing things away. News media have reported several cases of people dying under avalanches of clutter in their own homes.**

Scheduling Archive and Clean-Up

In order to keep your files organized, you must clean up and archive your files regularly. Set a consistent date and put a reminder in your calendar. This could be at the end of each month, the end of each quarter, or at the beginning of each year – it depends on what works for you.

For paper files, go through your working and reference files and move any old items to archive files, being sure to label and store them consistently. Likewise, go through your archive files and see if you can throw anything out. (Be sure to shred sensitive documents.)

For electronic files, there are many applications to help you archive your data. Many e-mail applications offer an automatic archive feature. Likewise, you can move files to a CD, DVD, or external storage area. This is also a good time to perform a backup of your entire system.

***Jane is** asking for your help in organizing her workspace. Lately, she's been having trouble finding what she needs and staying on task.

List four things that you think Jane should do to create a more effective workspace.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Module Ten: Managing E-Mail

E-mail can be a great time-saver, but it can also be a great time waster, too. This module will give you some tools to manage your e-mail time wisely. We'll also look at how to take back your life from your handheld device**.**

Using E-mail Time Wisely

Like other routine tasks (such as returning phone calls, handling paper mail, and checking voice mail), e-mail is best handled in batches at regularly scheduled times of the day. We suggest setting aside a period of time at the beginning of the day, right before or after lunch, and at the end of the day. During that period, focus on getting your inbox cleaned out. If you can't get it all done during your designated time frame, decide whether to extend the time frame, let it wait until your next e-mail session, or use the five-minute rule and work on it throughout the day.

If your job requires you to be more responsive, try setting your e-mail program to download e-mail every 30 to 60 minutes, rather than every minute. This will prevent you from being distracted and help you maintain a more continuous workflow.

Taking Action!

When reviewing your e-mail, try to take action right away to keep your inbox as clear as possible. You can:

- Read it, and then file or delete it

- Reply to it and then file it

- Delete it without taking any other action (appropriate for junk mail)

- Forward it and file it

- Mark it for follow-up (appropriate when you need to gather information before replying)

Planning Checklist	Using the information form Taking Action, how would you treat the emails below? Reminder about a meeting in one hour Spam advertisement for investments Request for an update on a project that you have delegated Question about your availability for a meeting Request for information on a new initiative that you have started

Making the Most of Your E-mail Program

You might not know it, but your e-mail program can probably take over some of your daily tasks. Most e-mail programs include tools to save you time and reduce the time you spend dealing with e-mail.

Our favorite features include:

Custom folders (much like the folders on your hard drive)

Rules to move e-mails to folders, or perform other actions upon certain triggers

Colored flags, including follow-up flags with reminders

Categories or keywords

Search tools

Junk mail filtering

Auto-archive and e-mail cleanup

Integrated task, calendar, and contact management systems

Our challenge to you: take five minutes each day to see what your e-mail program can do for you!

Taking Time Back from Handheld Devices

Disruptions are the biggest obstacle towards being more productive. We have already talked about handling e-mail and unannounced visitors. Another major source of disruptions, ironically, can come from handheld devices, cell phones, smart phones, and BlackBerries. Now you can be interrupted anywhere, anytime!

To ensure that your handheld device increases (rather than decreases) your productivity, try these tips.

Turn off as many notifications as possible.

Use your device for work or home – not both.

Give your number to essential people only.

If you're at your desk, set the device aside.

Use voice mail and automatic reply to let people know when you'll be away from your desk.

Set your device to vibrate in meetings or turn it off if possible.

> **A 2008 survey by AOL (the fourth annual E-mail Addiction survey) took a peek at where people check their e-mail.**
>   *** In bed: 67% From the bathroom: 59%**
>   *** While driving: 50%**
>   *** In a bar or club: 39%**
>   *** In a business meeting: 38%**
>   *** During happy hour: 34%**
>   *** While on a date: 25%**
>   *** From church: 15%**

Module Eleven: Tackling Procrastination

Procrastination means delaying a task (or even several tasks) that should be a priority. The ability to overcome procrastination and tackle the important actions that have the biggest positive impact in your life is a hallmark of the most successful people out there.

Why We Procrastinate

There are many reasons why we tend to procrastinate, including:

- No clear deadline

- Inadequate resources available (time, money, information, etc.)

- Don't know where to begin

- Task feels overwhelming

- No passion for doing the work

- Fear of failure or success

***Why do you procrastinate? Understanding your personal reasons will help you create a solution that will work for you. Take a few minutes to fill in the chart below with reasons you procrastinate on getting things done. Then think of possible solutions that can help you to overcome those issues.

Reasons I Procrastinate	Solutions
Stories to Share	Procrastination is the thief of time.

Nine Ways to Overcome Procrastination

 Your ability to select your most important task at any given moment, and then to start on that task and get it done both quickly and well, will probably have greatest impact on your success than any other quality or skill you can develop! If you nurture the habit of setting clear priorities and getting important tasks quickly finished, the majority of your time management issues will simply fade away.

Here are some ways to get moving on those tough tasks.

- **Delete it.** What are the consequences of not doing the task at all? Maybe it doesn't need to be done in the first place.

- **Delegate.** If the task is important, ask yourself if it's really something that you are responsible for doing in the first place. Know your job description and ask if the task is part of your responsibilities. Can the task be given to someone else?

- **Do it now.** Postponing an important task that needs to be done only creates feelings of anxiety and stress. Do it as early in the day as you can.

Ask for advice. Asking for help from a trusted mentor, supervisor, coach, or expert can give you some great insight on where to start and the steps for completing a project.

Chop it up. Break large projects into milestones and then into actionable steps. As Bob Proctor says, "Break it down into the ridiculous." Huge things don't look as big when you break it down as small as you can.

- **Obey the 15-minute rule.** To reduce the temptation of procrastination, each actionable step on a project should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

- **Have clear deadlines.** Assign yourself a deadline for projects and milestones and write it down in your day planner or calendar. Make your deadlines known to other people who will hold you accountable.

- **Give yourself a reward.** Celebrate the completion of project milestones and reward yourself for getting projects done on time. It will provide positive reinforcement and motivate you toward your goals.

- **Remove distractions.** You need to establish a positive working environment that is conducive to getting your work done. Remove any distractions.

Eat That Frog!

"If the first thing you have to do each morning is to eat a live frog, you can go through the day with the satisfaction of knowing that that is probably the worst thing that is going to happen to you all day long!"

Your frog is the task that will have the greatest impact on achieving your goals, and the task that you are most likely to procrastinate starting.

Another version of this saying is, "If you have to eat two frogs, eat the ugliest one first!"

This is another way of saying that if you have two important tasks before you, start with the biggest, hardest, and most important task first. Discipline yourself to begin immediately and then to persist until the task is complete before you go on to something else. You must resist the temptation to start with the easier task. You must also continually remind yourself that one of the most important decisions you make each day is your choice of what you will do immediately and what you will do later, or postpone indefinitely.

Finally, "If you have to eat a live frog, it does not pay to sit and look at it for a very long time!"

The key to reaching high levels of performance and productivity is for you to develop the lifelong habit of tackling your major task first thing each morning. Don't spend excessive time planning what you will do. You must develop the routine of "eating your frog" before you do anything else and without taking too much time to think about it.

Successful, effective people are those who launch directly into their major tasks and then discipline themselves to work steadily and single-mindedly until those tasks are complete.

In the business world, you are paid and promoted for achieving specific, measurable results. You are paid for making a valuable contribution that is expected of you. But many employees confuse activity with accomplishment, and this causes one of the biggest problems in organizations today, which is failure to execute.

Case Study

Tommy lounged against his truck while his co-worker, Ian, tackled a large task alone. While Tommy slumbered and doodled on his iphone, Ian flew solo and had to drag Tommy back to reality. Ian rained on his parade, Ian told Tommy that work should have been a priority and the idea that he avoided it made it a monkey on his back. He needed to face the work head on. Ian pointed to the load he carried and divided the work in half and congratulated him for having taken his power back and not backed into a corner. Tommy fought like a champ and faced his fear and beat the procrastination monster into submission saving both Ian's day and his own.

? What happens when your procrastination occurs at work? Who and what can it affect?

Module Twelve: Wrapping Up

Although this training is coming to a close, we hope that your journey to improve your personal productivity is just beginning. We wish you the best of luck on the rest of your training!

Words from the Wise

Paul J. Meyer: Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort.

Will Rogers: Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.

Newell D. Hillis: Man must make his choice between ease and wealth; either may be his, but not both.

You are almost finished. Continue to the last page to complete the assessment.

Enter the question answers on your Training Log.

Be sure to turn in the Assessment Form with your Training Log.

Improving Your Personal Productivity   Name: _____

Return this answer sheet with your telework log

1. What is the single most important life skill that most people never learn to do properly?

    a) Eat their vegetables
    b) Run a marathon
    c) Setting smart goals
    d) Being on time

2. SMART is an acronym for what words?

    a) Silly, maddening, artistic, realistic, trailblazer
    b) Saturated, melodramatic, animal, redone, trouble
    c) Simple, manageable, alert, reasonable, traceable
    d) Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timed

3. Sleep, meals, and _____ form the building blocks of our lives.

    a) Exercise
    b) Irritating
    c) Noise
    d) Distractions

4. Who rediscovered the Eisenhower Principle in 1994 and wrote a book centering on it?

    a) Truman Capote
    b) Stephen Covey
    c) Maeve Binchy
    d) John Grisham

5. What can you do to get a good start when you're assigned a new task?

    a) Create a plan
    b) Run for the hills
    c) Go on vacation
    d) Quit your job

6. What should you focus on at work?

    a) Changes you can make
    b) Home
    c) Late bills
    d) Message boards