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**Introduction**

The greatest resource a business can have is time; however it is often very elusive! This special PFM™ graduation bonus gives you the means and reasoning for great ‘self-management’ *...a term which will make more and more sense as you enjoy this document.*

Self-management will help organise you and your business, and in turn allow you to achieve success more quickly.

As writer Sam Ewing once said...

> “It is not the hours you put into the work, it is the work you put into the hours”

Sam Ewing, writer and humorist

In fact, to be more precise, it is not the hours you put into the work, it is the work you GET out of the hours. When you use the ideas presented here (and of course system and process too!) you will maximise the effect of your effort and realise the true potential of the business.

In essence, this special graduation bonus will dramatically change the way you work, helping you achieve high levels of efficiency and effectiveness both personally and in business.

So before you dive in, and as we conclude your PFM™ training journey, let me leave you with a closing thought...

> “Success is not a place at which one arrives, but rather the spirit with which one undertakes and continues the journey”

Alex Noble, writer

...so here’s to your continuing journey and I look forward to when our paths cross once again.

All the best,

Michael Christon
Contents

Legal notice .................................................................................................................................................. i

Introduction ................................................................................................................................................ ii

Time waits for no one .................................................................................................................................. 1

A quick note on creating time ...................................................................................................................... 1
A quick note on managing time ..................................................................................................................... 1
Getting it wrong – the mismanagement of self ............................................................................................ 2
Getting it right - the management of self ..................................................................................................... 2
Importance of time ...................................................................................................................................... 3
Time is money – measured in dollars and pounds ....................................................................................... 3
How much would you pay for your values? .................................................................................................. 5
The true cost of time ................................................................................................................................... 5
Doing stress! ................................................................................................................................................. 6
What you can do to make stress work for you .............................................................................................. 7
What NOT to do .......................................................................................................................................... 8
Recognising the symptoms ............................................................................................................................ 8
How to avoid burn out .................................................................................................................................. 9
Work effectively with your natural rhythm .................................................................................................... 10
Take a break! ................................................................................................................................................ 12

Planning and priorities ............................................................................................................................... 14

How good are you at managing self? ............................................................................................................ 14
The Pareto principle ..................................................................................................................................... 15
Prioritise your tasks .................................................................................................................................... 16
Planning your working day and week .......................................................................................................... 18

Kick-ass tips and methods for self-management ......................................................................................... 21

Create an effective working environment .................................................................................................... 21
Handle paper with GUTS ............................................................................................................................. 22
Telephone handling ...................................................................................................................................... 23

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Time waits for no one...

No matter what our circumstances we all have to manage time to some extent, it is a natural consequence of life. The sequence of events or the people involved will have a dramatic effect on the time spent, and of course it is so easy to seemingly lose or waste time.

It therefore follows everyone has the potential to do better and perhaps a few simple ideas is all it takes. This module is just that, a few simple yet powerful ideas that are going to revolutionise your management of time.

And remember! The management of time is not just for business, you have a personal life too that is also going to benefit from this approach – so think about both business and personal when considering how best to implement these ideas.

A quick note on creating time

You cannot create time! It is impossible, there are only 24 hours in a day and there always will be – you cannot magically create an additional hour as required. Within that 24 hours not only do you need to fit in your life as well as your business, you also need to have time for sleep, food and family.

It is an interesting statistic that you spend around 25% to 30% of your life in bed, that’s around 18 years or 160,000 hours! You spend 40,000 hours eating!

In the working environment you have only a few hours each day to achieve the success you desire, so given the fact you cannot create time it important you learn how to manage time instead.

A quick note on managing time

You cannot manage time either! Time will always keep ticking so just like you cannot create time neither can you slow it down or speed it up. Time is what is, so...

“Time management is really a misnomer – the challenge is not to manage time, but to manage ourselves”

Stephen R. Covey – The seven habits of highly effective people

Covey gets it spot on. You cannot manage time, you can only manage yourself, and that is the key to the ideas in this document. Place the focus on YOU rather than the ticking clock and suddenly the achievement of great efficiency and effectiveness takes on a whole new light.
Getting it wrong – the mismanagement of self

If you fail in your attempts to manage self there are a number of consequences, none of which are good for you or your business...

- You and your company will become inefficient in your activities with an immense lack of productivity and a general level of under-performance in all areas of your business
- You will begin to feel over-worked, which in turn leads to negative stress making you feel tired with little or no energy. Motivation will be replaced with depression and in time you will suffer from ill health, and for some this may even prove fatal
- And even if, early on, you somehow manage to avoid the personal pitfalls, the tide will catch you as you lose control of your business and watch as your success is washed away

Alternatively...

Getting it right - the management of self

When you are successful in managing self there are many wonderful upsides to enjoy both in business and life in general...

- You and your business become an efficient and effective mechanism with high productivity, and better still, high profits
- You enjoy the feeling of positive stress that gives you great focus and motivation to succeed in your every endeavour whilst enjoying a happy and healthy life
- The efficiency brings about more time for what matters, whether that be development of your business and/or a wonderful holiday with friends or family
- And of course – you revel in your ever-increasing success!

So, what do you think?

Do you want to easily and effortlessly manage yourself and achieve your every goal and dream?

...or do you want to suffer as you bear every ill of life and business as you fail to ‘manage your time’?
Importance of time

“Productivity is the deliberate, strategic investment of your time, talent, intelligence, energy, resources and opportunities in a manner calculated to move you measurably closer to your goals”

Dan Kennedy, marketer and serial entrepreneur

When you reconsider the values work you did with the main PFM™ course, it is interesting to note how time affects your perception of those values.

For example, you may have stated that one of your core values is ‘happiness’ – so would it be okay if your happiness in each day only lasted two minutes?

What about the family or relationship values you may have listed – clearly you’re going to be okay with five minutes a day with those folk.

Yes?

…of course not!

You want to have time to enjoy all of these values as and when they are expressed in your life. As I mentioned before, there are not many things in business which are more pitiful than a supposedly successful businessperson who has millions in the bank but no time to spend it!

Similarly, if you believe family or relationships are important yet you only set aside a small amount of time for them, then I have to ask how long do you think it will be before those significant others get fed up with your lack of attention?

Time is money – measured in dollars and pounds

Let us now consider the more classic business perspective, this being...

Time = Money

Or to put it another way...

What is your REAL hourly rate?

The answer to this question is exceptionally informative and persuasive when wishing to make decisions about activities or priorities.

For example, think about this...
Number of days in a year

365 days

Total number of holidays including weekends, vacations and public holidays

104 + 20 + 5 = 129 days

Number of working days

365 – 129 = 236 days

Desired personal income in one year (what you take home)

£50,000

Tax and inland revenue (this is merely an example, tax varies depending on country)

35% x £50,000 = £17,500

Salary requirement

£50,000 + £17,500 = £67,500

Cost to the business for having one employee (most accountants consider 1.5 times salary a fair approximation)

£67,500 x 1.5 = £101,250

7.5 working hours in a day, so hourly rate is...

£101,250 / (7.5hrs x 236 days) = £57.21 per hour

Profit requirement for reinvestment (reasonable amount would be 20%)

£57.21 + 20% = £68.66 per hour

A working day therefore costs...

£68.66 x 7.5 = £514.95 per day

So you need to be charging your customers at least £68.66 per hour or £514.95 per day.

But wait! – There’s more...

This calculation does not take into account other ‘hidden extras’ such as pension payments or the more obvious costs for other members of the team. For instance, if you have a two person business with yourself and, say, an administration assistant then it can be easily argued that without said assistant you would not be able to be in front of customers.

So... Your charge-out rate needs to include that as well!

And then we have the simple fact that you cannot always be in front of a customer – You may need hours of preparation and then there are those emails you need to attend to, and the accounts to check, and so on, and so on... In fact when it comes down to it you may only have 15 hours per week which can be charged for, which means just taking that into account in the above example your rate would be nearly three times as much!
Of course, there is an easy objection to what I have just suggested, this being “But I don’t sell my time, I make widgets”.

Nonetheless time still means money whether you measure it in number of widgets produced or hard cash. If you have a meeting for 3 hours then that just cost you £205.98 (and that is with the ‘basic’ calculations) or if you want to count widgets that would be ‘X’ number of widgets!

**How much would you pay for your values?**

“A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing”  
Oscar Wilde, poet and playwright

This is a wonderful quote and one which is very important to remember, after all this isn’t any old business you are running, this is a **Personal Fulfilment Machine™**. So taking into account both the importance of values and the cost of time, you are left with an intriguing question:

**How much would you pay to ensure your Personal Fulfilment Machine™ runs perfectly?**

Having two extra hours a week to enjoy time with your partner, kids or just to have fun with a hobby is priceless – AND – has a related real-world cost.

**The true cost of time**

As part of this **PFM™** graduation bonus and as a special unannounced bonus you will soon have access to a special online calculator which originally formed part of a set of desktop tools for my **Blueprint for business™** customers.

This calculator will help you quickly realise the true ‘price’ of time and will calculate on a similar basis to the previous example. So to say it will be enlightening is an understatement!!

**And good news...**

Rather than a desktop application, this calculator will be in the form of a webpage so it will run on any computer, PC or Mac.

Watch out for this special surprise bonus ...you will receive an email sometime soon!
Additional comment...

As an extra to my normal business activities I run a very specialised form of consultancy which typically takes at least two hours per appointment. My rates are higher than most, in fact some of my local competition charge less than half of what I do.

HOWEVER...

I happen to know that I work far less hours than they do. So while they are busy rushing around seeing many more clients, I am happily relaxing with my family and dogs. For me, my 'machine' is working perfectly.

Given the ‘additional comment’ above, it is also worth highlighting that by working less hours for more money I am able to minimise the potential stress of having to work too many hours ...which of course raises that unspoken but ever-present aspect of any business ...STRESS!

Doing stress!

Stress is a process. It’s how our mind and bodies come together to respond to things we think are opportunities, threats, constraints or demands.

This means there doesn’t have to be an external event or pressure; you can have stress just by thinking about things. In fact, that’s how most people do it! ...and those things don’t even need to be real.

As ‘Success Coach’ Michael Neill said:

“You aren’t afraid of what you think you’re afraid of; you’re afraid of what you think”

Michael Neill, success coach and author

And his colleague Paul McKenna observed:

“The single biggest cause of ill-health is an inappropriate response to stress. The continual inappropriate arousal of our mind and body can lead to illnesses”

Paul McKenna, world leading hypnotist and expert in the human mind

So the important point here is – YOU do the stress. External events may create the conditions, but YOU create the response.
And now…

**WARNING!**

Stress can make or break your Personal Fulfilment Machine™

*(Hmmm, subtle! – but hey, I didn’t want you to miss the warning!!!)*

**What you can do to make stress work for you**

Here’s the scoop…

*Stress can be very helpful in the right amount and you can increase your stress capacity through ‘training’*

It is a simple fact that optimal amounts of stress can inspire us to great feats of creativity and motivation. The challenge of learning a new enjoyable skill imposes a stress and it’s this stress that drives us to perform better. In other words, this stress is the catalyst for growth and fulfilment.

Interestingly, increasing your stress is a lot like physical training. Thinking of the analogy of weight lifting/training, you simply need to put a ‘load’ on your system for long enough to encourage your body to adapt and improve.

If you understand the mechanism of stress you can make this work to your advantage and be ‘stress fit’.

Here’s what happens, in brief and without the jargon…

When you perceive a stress your nervous system instantly sends a bunch of signals that trigger your ‘fight or flight’ response. This gears you up to do some physical action. In prehistoric times this would have been essential to help keep you safe from predators like sabre-tooth tigers.

...but of course there’s not many of those around nowadays!

Your heart begins to race, your muscles tense, your palms become sweaty and as your blood flow begins to change, you feel that funny stomach sensation of ‘butterflies’.

So now if you need to act (run away or fight the tiger!) ...*you’re ready.*

If not, you might be a bit shaky for a while but you’ll soon be back to normal, no problems.
If the stress continues then your brain sends you into the next stage, and in order to fight inflammation and blood loss caused by any injury, more chemicals are released to help you convert your body resources into usable energy. What this means is your brain and body are resisting whatever is causing the stress and then adapting to it. So, you quickly use up body resources to resist and adapt – and this is the ‘training phase’.

If the training phase lasts for a short time, the stress can actually do you good. You get better at handling stress as a result, your capacity for stress increases. Also, a 2004 study showed, it can even boost your immune system¹.

But, there's a flipside...

**What NOT to do**

Unfortunately, when the stress continues beyond this useful ‘training phase’ your body resources deplete and your immune system becomes compromised. Consequently, you become less fit for life and less able to fight disease.

Your risk of contracting these conditions increases:

- high blood pressure
- heart disease
- strokes
- diabetes
- headaches
- menstrual problems
- body aches & pains
- impaired memory
- stomach ulcers
- anxiety
- depression
- sexual dysfunction

Also, you may be more prone to comfort eating and the abuse of alcohol and drugs.

If the stress still continues, your body runs out of resources. The initial ‘fight or flight’ responses may return and eventually ‘burn out’ (i.e. mental and physical breakdown) will occur.

**Recognising the symptoms**

Clearly it makes sense to recognise the symptoms of excessive stress in yourself and your team. So keep an eye out for...

### Physical signs
- Increased heart and breathing rate
- The ‘shakes’
- Sweating
- Headaches and fatigue
- Thirst
- Grinding teeth
- Muscle tension

### Mental signs
- Nervous mannerisms (twitching, hair pulling, nail biting etc)
- Sleep disturbance
- Change in activity levels
- Change in eating habits
- Anger outbursts
- Lose interest in hobbies and leisure

### Emotional signs
- Anxiety
- Panic
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Tearful
- Hopelessness
- Loss of awareness of time, people or places

### Behavioural signs
- Poor concentration
- Low self confidence
- Decision making difficulty
- Racing thoughts
- Memory loss
- Depression

### How to avoid burn out

The first thing is to eliminate the stressors in your life, and those of your team. Good planning and excellent system and process will help a lot – and this will be made all the easier by a clear business vision and set of goals (i.e. your PFM™). Also, think back to your values work, because challenges to your values can also lead to stress.

- Use psychological tools like NLP to choose how you respond in these situations...
  - In the case of you and your team, if you know their values you can make sure you do not inadvertently cause them stress by challenging those values
• Where stressors are unavoidable and not of the ‘good challenge’ type, you can get relief by good ‘stress hygiene’…
  o Listen to your body’s natural rhythms and take breaks. Enjoy exercise and eat a healthy balanced diet. You can use relaxation techniques, meditation and laughter to get the right natural ‘happy chemicals’ in the right places
  o Work with people who are fun to be with and good at their work. Make time to be together with those people who are special for you

And ALWAYS remember to honour your values, because they make you who you are.

**Work effectively with your natural rhythm**

Given all the facts and background it is easy to see your body and mind is not a machine offering continual output at a consistent level. Instead it is a living-breathing organism and it follows there will be natural highs and lows throughout the day. Understanding these fluctuations is your key to successful self-management.

This fact brings to mind some of the ideas we discussed in week 12 of PFM™ and underlines the importance of one of the actions suggested, this being the monitoring of your energy levels. As you know, that action gets you to focus on your personal flow of energy throughout the day, with specific observations such as...

• What time(s) of day do you feel at your best?
• What time(s) of day do you feel at a low?
• How do you feel between these times?

The end result is a graph along the lines of...

![Energy Level vs Time Graph](image-url)
As discussed in the video of week 12, the key is to work WITH your flow, rather than against it.

Unfortunately this is hardly ever the case as all too often business people are forced, either by management or themselves, to work to a specific regime – typically this is a ‘9 to 5’ type day.

But hold on a moment, this suggests that everyone works to the exact same schedule...

...hmmmm, I don’t think so!
Again, as discussed in week 12 - this idea is flawed because some people are ‘morning people’, some are better in the afternoon and others are ‘night owls’. In fact it is genetically proven that some people do indeed have a natural disposition to certain times of the day.

So, consider this...

A ‘night owl’ is at odds to the ‘9 to 5’ system. Such a person may feel sluggish and slow in the mornings but focussed and dynamic in the evenings - and therefore asking them to be a great performer before midday is probably like asking rock star Ozzy Osborne to play quietly...

It isn’t going to happen!

It therefore follows that you need to understand and work to your own routine, go with the flow and in turn be efficient in everything you do.

Additional comment...

Clearly this is an ideal...

As you may end up having no one in the office at peak business hours because it didn't suit their particular rhythms! That said, it does give you something to work towards, and interestingly...

What about considering such things when hiring people?

If you know mornings aren’t your thing, then hire someone who loves to work at that time!

But your daily rhythm is not the only aspect of flow to consider...

Take a break!

Now there’s a novel idea!

Keeping in mind the idea of ultradian rhythms, the key as suggested by Dr Rossi is to have a break every 1.5 hours. Better still, make this break a good 20 minutes.

Many great thinkers have stated that insurmountable problems become surmountable, creativity blocks become creativity torrents, limited concentration becomes focussed concentration ...following a break.
In other words, you ride the waves…

…your waves, your energy flow.

This is also a lot more preferable to the ‘junkie’ living so many businessmen opt for instead, with those ‘acceptable’ addictions - Coffee, caffeine pills, sugar, chocolate, some even go for alcohol…

Okay, so we are not talking hard drugs, but we are still nonetheless talking about forced shifts in body and brain chemistry. Such addictions go under the radar because they are about legal substances, but that does NOT mean they are good for you!

If your mind and body have to RELY on such substances then they are not working for themselves. Instead your mind and body are working against their natural flow.

This WILL lead to burn out, physical and mental illness ...oh, and loss of business too!

There is a much easier answer – and again it is having decent breaks throughout the day.

So having completed 1.5 hours of work, get up, go for a walk, listen to music, have a (non-business) chat with a colleague – and then return to your plan of the day (we’ll talk planning and scheduling in a moment). Similarly, consider all other forms of business activity such as sales calls, meetings, presentations, training, interviews…

All of these will benefit greatly by being kept to 1.5 hours segments or sessions, each followed by a decent 15 to 20 minute break.
Planning and priorities

How good are you at managing self?

“The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once”

Albert Einstein, theoretical physicist and philosopher

In discussion many people take a wild guess at their ‘time management ability’ without any real research. Often it is only through such research that you really discover the truth. This lack of accuracy naturally calls into question an individual’s ability to effectively prioritise and plan.

As part of your week 12 PFM™ training one of your actions was to complete a log of not only your energy but also the activities you perform through the day. This included an estimate of activity as well as recording the actual reality.

(If you haven’t already started or completed these logs …Start doing them now!!!)

So... Having completed at least a week of logs (preferably two weeks to allow for any anomalies), there are three simple questions you will ask of your daily/weekly activity:

- How did your estimate compare to the reality?
- Were you efficient? – i.e. did you do things the right way?
- Were you effective? – i.e. were you doing the right things?

There exists a common school of thought that suggests the ideal business is one that allocates its time according to the following ratios...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routine tasks</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(administration, accounts, etc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing projects</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(fulfilling existing customer work, repeat sales, etc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; development</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(new product development, new sales, etc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Manage your time” – by Tim Hindle, DK books
Whether you agree with the exact proportions or not, what is interesting is the incredible difference between this ideal and a typical business needing to manage time better. All too often businesses find that 60% of their day is not spent on development but routine tasks instead.

The need to meet this ideal is far more profound when you consider the financial implication of such a breakdown. It could easily be argued that ‘routine tasks’ equates to costs, ‘ongoing’ equates to your day-to-day cashflow, and ‘planning and development’ equates to the real profit of your organisation.

So failing to get the proportion working in your favour WILL affect your bottomline. With this in mind let’s consider how to prioritise and schedule your activities in an effective manner, starting with...

**The Pareto principle**

Many people spend too much time doing the wrong thing. Whether through procrastination or lack of direction, it is very easy to waste considerable amounts of time in the working day.

In any business there is always activity which can be labelled BAU, “Business As Usual”. From emails to stock taking, accounts to dealing with suppliers …*this BAU will still need to be completed but is it a priority?* More specifically, is it a priority for YOU?

An interesting way to consider the priority split of your daily activity is by using what some people call the ‘80:20 Rule’…

Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto, noticed that 80% of property in Italy was owned by 20% of the Italian population. Romanian management thinker Joseph Juran adopted the idea and expanded it. His suggestion was that most of the results in almost any situation are governed by a small number of causes.

For example, in sales…

"20% of customers are responsible for 80% of sales volume."

This crucial idea is something we explore in depth in our 3SG™ video series, but for now let’s stick to what the 80:20 rule means for you...

Clearly this ‘Pareto principle’ is very useful in self-management too.

Think about what you’re now doing...

Of that 100% of business activity the ‘rule’ suggests you could do just 20% of it and get 80% of the results! Or to put it another way, you could increase your productivity by 400% by being brilliant at doing that 20%! © BusinessMagi 2001 - 2010

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You could then invest some of your increased productivity by looking after yourself, relaxing and enjoying the company of people who care for you.

Needless to say, you'll find that your motivation will increase because you’re getting better results, more quickly. You’ll not procrastinate again, because you’re working to the values and goals of your PFM™ (…and that’s the 20% which makes the 80% difference!)

Here’s some examples:

- What is the 20% of your time spent on tasks which creates the 80% of value for you? Identify this 20% and do those things. Delegate or bin the rest!

- What about your reading? What 20% of your paper and online reading is the most useful 80%? Read that and cancel the subscriptions to the rest. You’ll save money too!

- When you’re doing something don’t strive for 100% perfect unless it’s critical that you do so. 80% right is often ‘good enough’ and no one else will notice the difference and it will only take you 20% of the time to get to that stage.

Additional comment...

As a quick tip check out RSS feeds. This is a technology advancement which makes 'keeping up to date' very easy. Imagine having delivered directly to your computer only the news and information you actually want, that special 20%, well that is RSS.

Check out:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10628494

...for more information.

Each of the bulleted questions above are alluding to the need to...

**Prioritise your tasks**

The good news is it is very easy to do the right things, you simply need to prioritise your tasks and work accordingly.

Best selling author Stephen Covey made famous the work of Roger and Rebecca Merrill who defined tasks in terms of importance or urgency. This has been continued by many authors since, however not many have been that explicit as to what actually makes something ‘important’ or ‘urgent’...
This is where I want to give you a spin on some classic business thinking ...a twist on the original.

(What follows is a more in-depth look at the prioritisation discussed in your week 12 of training)

Let’s start with what makes something ‘important’. Now having completed PFM™ this becomes a lot easier to answer. In other words, rather than this being some form of universal business definition of ‘important’ as suggested by others, you already know this is ENTIRELY about you ...and YOUR values and your Personal Fulfilment Machine™.

Clearly, when you know your values, you know what is important.

It’s that simple.

And as you have also created a Personal Fulfilment Machine™ where you have clearly stated what is mission critical (thanks to the whole CSF idea), you already have the specific answer to ‘what is important?’...

Anything you highlighted as a Critical Success Factor is ‘Important’. It’s that easy!

This leaves the ‘urgent’ definition and this is where Success coach Michael Neill has once again made things just as easy. Rather than concocting false reasoning for something being ‘urgent’ (let’s face it, most people can probably agonise over any hypothetical consequence in order to ‘perceive’ urgency), Neill suggests a simple question:

“Are there any real world consequences for not getting this done?”

Michael Neill, success coach and author

Notice he says ‘real world’ - we are not talking about emotional stuff or some psycho-mumbo-jumbo you have inflicted upon yourself in order to feel motivated (“It’ll make me worse at my job” or “I’ll feel terrible”).

These are REAL consequences that you MUST avoid in order to maintain your business (“We’ll lose the contract”, “The bank will foreclose” or “I’ll get prosecuted by the tax man”).

So, back to the Merrill’s basic premise - Produce a task list and prioritise accordingly...

- **Task A** – Important and urgent; typically these are tasks that only you can do
- **Task B** – Either important or urgent but not both; these are tasks that require or can deliberately involve (i.e. delegation) the input of others
- **Task C** – Not important or urgent; do not waste time on such tasks, they can be easily delegated ...or even ignored!

...any task you are unsure about can probably be classed as a ‘C’.
Having classified your tasks you need only act accordingly...

- **Task A** – Important and urgent: Aim to do a few of these each day
- **Task B1** – Important but not urgent: The majority of your day will involve such tasks, consider scheduling *(we'll discuss this in a second)*
- **Task B2** – Urgent but not important: Consider scheduling or better still delegate such tasks
- **Task C** – Not important or urgent: Only do such tasks when time permits, in most cases it is probably best to delegate ...or even bin such tasks!

**Additional comment...**

As a closing thought on priorities and the idea of importance vs. urgency...

It's easy to understand that if at any given moment you seemingly have a dozen priorities, you've probably missed what 'priority' really means!

My dictionary defines it as:

```
priority noun – the state of being first in time, place or rank, from the latin – previous or superior
```

So when you're prioritising for any given period of time, you need to be thinking about what could be done properly in that time in order of importance.

"The best things in life come in threes, like friends, dreams and memories" – Anon

As a simple rule of thumb, three may well be the magic number. If you have more priorities than this then it is worth reconsidering the REAL importance of each task.

And if you're still wondering what your priorities are... Take a moment to think about what you would do if you had 50% less time than you have now. What would you do? Concentrate on those things and delegate or forget about the rest.

**Planning your working day and week**

Before we get to the actual planning, let us consider a few basics of planning... Ironically many businesspeople have project management skills, however they do not use such skills for their personal benefit.

*For instance what is stopping you looking upon YOURSELF as a project?*
As part of week 12 of PFM™ you completed a comparison between actual and estimated time spent during a working day. The resultant graph is a classic example of what is known as a Gantt chart, i.e. a project management tool.

So let’s use the same idea to create project plan, a Gantt chart, for you. An example being...

This graphical representation allows you to map out tasks by day, week or even month. For instance, in the above example the ‘GHI’ task which happens in week 2 may entail a number of individual tasks, so you may wish to have a separate Gantt Chart just for that week. This time the individual tasks will be set out according to, say, half-days.

In line with project management, there are a few pointers to keep in mind...

- Remember to start all such plans with a Root Definition, you may even wish to have definitions for each step or task
- Produce Gantt Charts for the day, week, month – and break tasks into sub-tasks where appropriate
- Include time for travel, food breaks, etc (perhaps you can still recall those days where lack of planning had resulted in missed lunches or even holidays – perhaps you are still suffering in this way!)
- BE REALISTIC! – Now is the time for realism! When planning give yourself contingency time by deliberately adding in extra periods of time. Yes, your PFM™ sequence and schedule may have offered some insight into timing, however always consider over-estimating time taken for any given task. When you do this, the worst that can happen is you will surprise all involved by delivering a project early, or if simply managing your own activities, you may even find you have time for another holiday!
Before you complete the next action, let’s quickly recap the idea of ultradian rhythms – as this will also affect your planning...

Given the priorities work just discussed, you have four types of task:

- **Task A** – Important and urgent: Aim to do a few of these each day
- **Task B1** – Important but not urgent: The majority of your day will involve such tasks, consider scheduling
- **Task B2** – Urgent but not important: Consider scheduling or better still delegate such tasks (see the next section for more details on delegation)
- **Task C** – Not important or urgent: Only do such tasks when time permits, in most cases it is probably best to delegate...or even bin such tasks!

Now let us combine this with your flow of energy and produce a working schedule that is both effective (i.e. working with priorities) and efficient (i.e. working with your rhythm)...

As shown above, in order for you to be working at peak efficiency it makes sense to place your Task A’s at your natural peak, Task B’s at your secondary peak and C’s at your low.

Similarly, allow your natural rhythms to guide your overall plan... e.g. If you are a night owl, then plan accordingly. If an ultradian rhythm has a period of 1.5hrs then make sure your plan includes 20min breaks.

And of course, if you have completed in entirety the energy logs from week 12 of your PFM™ training then you will have a whole week’s worth of graphs – Is there a trend for your energy over the course of a week? Perhaps you start strong and then fade by the close of the week or maybe you have a strong middle section of your week. Whatever the case, whenever planning your activity, take this into account too.
Kick-ass tips and methods for self-management

In this section we explore a number of useful self-management ideas and as you are about to discover they are simple to implement and totally results focused. They are not presented in any specific order as all are as relevant as the others. All you need to do is find ways to implement them... and then reap the rewards of that ‘extra’ time!

These ideas include:

- A ‘real’ working environment – How to make your place of work the place to be, a place of activity and comfort
- The secret to effective meetings – Yes, they can work!
- The essentials of delegation – Whether you have your own team or not!
- The might of ‘mission control’ thinking – How to think like a General and realise success
- Filing made easy – Including the most important and essential part of any filing system

Also, to help you get the most from these ideas I have included six related actions in the appendix of this document. So let’s get cracking...

Create an effective working environment

What is the favourite part of your home? For many it is their sitting room, a place where you spend a lot of time, which means it is comfortable and well laid out for maximum ease and minimal stress.

The paradox with this is quite obvious... you spend more time in your office than your sitting room and more than likely your office has not been arranged with the same thinking in mind!

Just as you have your furniture, such as seating and television, arranged carefully within your sitting room, so too should you have your office arranged.

Additional comment...

Thinking of the television for a moment, only a fool keeps the remote controls on top of the television ...because the whole idea is for you to operate it with ease and without the need to leave your seat!
So ask yourself the obvious questions...

- Is it comfortable sitting in your office?
- Is everything you need to hand? Stationery, computer, books?
- Do you have natural light?
- Better still, can you look out of a window and ‘focus on infinity’ (something which is known to relax the mind)?

Clearly, as this is about (so called) ‘time management’ it makes sense that you have a large visible clock within your office too.

But don’t just stop with the normal ‘mundane’ stuff! Your wall space is often a great opportunity for sources of motivation. How about having tangible reminders of your goals and values? For example, what is a great symbol for your ‘perfect average day’ or a ‘perfect exceptional day’? What about pictures or photos?

**Handle paper with GUTS**

So what about that desk of yours?

Desk tidy policies are not just something dreamed up by management who wish to control the every move of their minions. A tidy desk actually aids in creativity...

> “A cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind”

...and if this is true it follows that inspiration and creativity will suffer. Avoiding this is very simple, just clear your desk at the end of every day – not only will you enjoy freedom of thought but also every morning you will find a welcoming desk free of clutter and paper mountains.

Now you have mastered the art of the tidy desk let us find a home for the paper that is no longer littering your space. To begin with, and as with all other important office tools, you need to have filing close at hand, perhaps in the shape of a filing cabinet or just a set of trays.

Whether it is a simple process of ‘in’, ‘out’ and ‘ongoing’ for the trays or document numbers for your files - a filing system is only complete when it is used in a methodical way. Therefore, if you have not already done so, get your system and process kit in action and design a suitable method for the filing of documents.

*Remember, all great filing systems include a very special object: A bin or shredder!*
As a rule of thumb you can consider getting to the GUTS of the problem...

- **G** ...Give it away - Pass it on to an employee to deal with
- **U** ...Use it - This may include filing but does not mean leave it on your desk!
- **T** ...Throw it away - File it in the big round receptacle
- **S** ...Send it - Post, email, courier – whatever makes the paper disappear

If in doubt, throw it away! At all costs you want to avoid the classic ‘I’ll read it later’ – because you won’t. In order to ensure you do not inadvertently produce paper-mountains consider this simple little tip...

Whenever you find yourself delaying the reading of a document (or similar), just place a little mark at the top right hand corner of the page. Now you simply follow the ‘three strikes and you’re out’ rule so when you get three marks and you still have not read the document you throw it away. Think of it like this - if the document was important you would have read it earlier!

Check the appendix now for the relevant action for this idea...

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**BONUS ACTION 1: A place for everything**

**Telephone handling**

The phone has to be one of the greatest inventions for communication and at the same time the single greatest source of disruption in business.

Take the mobile/cell phone for instance...

Ring! Ring! ...“Hello?” – All the time! But of course so many will argue “I can’t live without it” – okay, so how did modern civilisation do so well last century without one?!

- If people want to give you complex information, ask them nicely to email, post or fax it instead
- If a call is not convenient with what you are doing, say so and then arrange a time and method to deal with what the caller requires. Stick to that commitment and you will still maintain good service
Plan your calls before you make them and have other tasks lined up if the call is not taken or if you must stay on hold.

Don’t be available at all times. Use an answering service or assistant when you are in ‘quiet time’. You MUST then respond to the messages – it doesn’t have to be by phone.

**Planning for interruptions and disruptions**

Despite your valiant efforts plans can go off course – however following on from the need for contingency planning, you can easily minimise the likelihood of disruptions by simply considering their source...

- Colleagues chat at all times of the day, and perhaps night
- Customers place demands upon your time, and some take ages to explain what they want
- The phone rings, the email pings and your mobile bleeps

...*all of which can be avoided.*

Many disruptions are in fact interruptions, in other words someone is trying to make contact or communicate with you. Now some ‘time management’ guru’s suggest closed-door policies or worse having your desk set in such a way it acts as a barrier between you and anyone entering the office...

*Nonsense! Such ideas only demonstrate you are unfriendly and unapproachable ALL OF THE TIME, and in turn are a great way of annoying people and restricting business success!*

You simply need to communicate with people more effectively your need for time. The solution is the introduction and communication of ‘quiet time’ into your working day.

Also on the topic of disruptions... Studies have shown that the word ‘disrupt’ is most appropriate as that is exactly what happens to your mind. It gets disrupted! When a distraction hits home, your thought processes fall out of sync and your flow gets disrupted. Now this would not seem such a big problem except that the...
studies show it takes at LEAST 20mins to get back into flow! So given enough disruptions you will never get anything done! ...sound familiar?

Interestingly this suggests that multi-tasking is a falsehood as each parallel task will only disrupt the others...

So try ‘serial-tasking’ instead!

In other words, block times for ONE task and one task only.

An interesting concept to consider when thinking about planning out tasks is ‘Quiet time’ – this is a period of time you give yourself such that you are effectively unavailable to others. Everyone within your organisation deserves such moments, particularly when working on Task A’s (important and urgent).

The key to successful implementation of ‘quiet time’ is enforcement – you need to communicate and so enforce your need for time. Make sure your team are aware you cannot be disturbed and exercise self-discipline by ignoring the phone and learning to say ‘no’.

An interesting way to achieve ‘quiet time’ within a busy office is what I call the ‘Duplo method’...

To begin with you need to visit a children’s toy store and purchase a set of Duplo™ or Lego™ bricks (please note I suggested buying some ...rather than stealing them from your or someone’s baby!)

Whatever type you choose, it is important the bricks are big (like the size of a business card). You will need four colours for each team member and the appropriate brick is to be placed near their workstation (the computer monitor is always a good visible location).

The colours work on a kind of traffic light system and are denoted as follows...

- **Red Brick**  Stop! Do not disturb, I am in ‘quiet time’
- **Yellow Brick**  Caution! If it is important you can interrupt me, otherwise I am busy
- **Green Brick**  Go for it! I am happy for you to ask whatever
- **Blue Brick**  I am enjoying a well earned rest on holiday

This simple system has been proven many times to make a huge difference when wishing to avoid interruptions.

**BONUS ACTION 2:** Achieve ‘quiet time’ with Duplo™
Delegation is good management

Following on from the prioritising of tasks, in particular tasks B and C, another essential aspect of self-management is delegation. In essence, delegation is beneficial to all involved for not only do you get an easier life but also your employee gets to learn a new task and take responsibility.

Of course, simply ‘dumping’ a task on someone is not delegation. Instead there is method to effective delegation and therefore as you would expect there are a few guidelines to remember...

- **Give them the right to decide** - Delegate the right to make a decision whilst retaining the overall responsibility for the task. This is very important otherwise your employee will forever be asking you questions and disturbing you. Similarly they will never learn to take responsibility for their actions.
• **Brief thoroughly the appropriate employee** – In other words make sure you have given the task to someone who is right for the job and you have explained in detail the task; perhaps you may wish to use a root definition as a way to describe the task.

• **Avoid doubling up your team unnecessarily** – It is too easy to throw lots of people at a problem and think that numbers will make a difference. The key, as with so much of business, is quality not quantity. So be aware of the skills of your team and get the right person for the delegated task, and in turn minimise the required man-hours.

• **Be flexible** – Despite your many years of experience and incredible expertise there is always a good chance someone else has thought of a better way to implement a task. Never underestimate or limit the ability of others, instead foster an atmosphere of learning and development, allow people to evolve.

• **Give feedback** – Having had the task completed, always give constructive feedback to your employee. It is important they learn from the experience and your feedback may be the key to them surpassing your expectations next time you delegate a task.

And always remember... The key driver of successful delegation is trust - so trust your team and have faith in their abilities and in return you will see success for you, them and your business as a whole.

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**Additional comment...**

It is not uncommon for someone to suggest they cannot delegate because they do not have anyone to delegate to ... in other words, they are a small business of one or two people.

So, in such cases you need to leverage the time of external people instead. Think of outsourcing as 'external delegation'. Unless you have some incredible ability in the relevant area you can outsource all manner of different business activities from accounts to your website.

Remember, you want to be working on what really matters and what really needs YOUR attention.

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**BONUS ACTION 3: Delegate with purpose**
Meetings can work!

There is that wonderful joke often heard within the offices of large corporates...

“Stuck for something to do? Have a meeting!”

The idea being meetings are often a waste of time and effort – and to be fair, this is frequently the case, though interestingly the problem often begins before the meeting even start.

All too often meetings begin without any appropriate preparation and as you have heard many times before ‘Failing to plan is planning to fail’. So a great first step is to plan an agenda and more importantly communicate this to all attendees before the meeting begins.

Keep the agenda realistic both in terms of time and content, and having given prior sight of the agenda to others, be prepared for suggestions or changes before the meeting begins. Then there will be no excuse for allowing a meeting to be hijacked by changes being suggested during the proceedings.

Once again the use of a root definition for the meeting will provide a framework from which to work from – remember such a definition offers a succinct way of describing the purpose, process and payoff of a meeting. What more could you want!

Though there are a few more ideas you may wish to keep in mind...

- Keep the meeting on track by sticking with the agenda
- If something important threatens to hijack the meeting, take this matter offline and discuss later, or if it is vital to the discussion, ensure all within the room understand and agree to its importance. Then agree when, within the meeting, you wish to discuss this new point and the parameters of that new discussion
- Discuss all points on the agenda, drawing conclusions as appropriate – these should be noted by a previously nominated ‘meeting secretary’ who takes notes throughout the meeting
- Remove from all agendas the term ‘Any other business’ – By having this included you are asking for trouble! The removal of this aspect of an agenda will create positive ongoing behaviour where all future agenda points are appropriate having been considered ahead of time
- Agree actions, including time frame and people involved – this must include the person who is ultimately responsible for making sure the nominated people complete said actions
Similarly, the person with the ultimate responsibility may need to provide feedback on the completion of the tasks to those attending the initial meeting.

Consider having meetings standing up and without tea and coffee. This will drastically reduce wasted time.

**BONUS ACTION 4: Meet with purpose**

Additional comment...

I have a great friend Carl (who incidentally was instrumental in helping take Blueprint for business and related material online). This is his slightly humorous story for how he cut time in meetings by over half!

...When I was a law student I spent some time working for a company doing leading edge, high tech engineering. I worked for the project manager who was a brilliant physicist (and an evil squash player, but I digress...) - He was great to work with and had a very dry sense of humour.

Every week we had a project team meeting to review progress and keep everything on track. All the heads of the different technical specialisations were there. Along with all the support services with people from planning, procurement, finance etc. There was a lot of status being displayed by some. Of course, I was the lowest of the pile being a student and not an engineer. I used to take the minutes of the meeting.

Typically the meetings would last for about five hours or more, taking up the best part of a whole day. There were interesting discussions back and forth about technical matters and solutions. I learnt some cool stuff and a lot went over my head.

Before my boss went on holiday, he had an idea he thought would be fun. He asked me if I would like to chair the next two project meetings. "Feel free to shake things up a bit", he said, smiling at me, "It'll be good for everyone..."

The next meeting arrived and there was barely concealed surprise when I announced I'd been asked to chair the meeting. I could see glances between some of the key members of the group...

I reminded everyone what the purpose of the meeting was a) to review progress, and b) see that any issues that needed resolving got dealt with.

<continued overleaf>
Do you procrastinate?

Stepping away from specific ideas for the implementation of self-management, let us now consider one of the greatest bug bears when trying to manage self - the ability for us to say ’I’ll do it tomorrow’.

So many great and wondrous endeavours have come to nothing because those involved procrastinated.

As you know, it is so easy to put off boring routine tasks, dealing with difficult people or calling that customer. Similarly, sometimes you can get so caught up in a whirlwind of events you often end up not knowing where to start on certain tasks, so you simply do not start the task.

Essentially, procrastination happens for one of two reasons and sometimes both...

A person will procrastinate when:

1. Whatever you can do instead of the task fulfils a greater need than the task itself

2. The fear is greater than the perceived value of the task

Once again we are talking about values and their inherent link with motivation, which only serves to underline the importance of everything at the beginning of PFM™!
Ironically we are often more creative in putting things off than we are in actually trying to do them – and this is the main clue in avoiding procrastination, for it is all in the mind as procrastination is often not based on reality.

**Procrastinate about procrastination**

If you are so good at procrastinating then why not procrastinate about procrastination!

...*put off the idea of putting things off!*

One of the more interesting ways to achieve this is by revisiting your energy graphs and task priorities, and consider a new classification of ‘how nice?’ (in other words, enjoyment) then plan specific blocks of time for each task.

By doing this you are doing is taking into consideration the idea of motivation, as this is often what is lacking when you find yourself procrastinating.

In addition, consider doing one or two of the following...

- Reframe the task so you can see the happier side of completing the task. For many this is simply a point of perspective, are you thinking about the beginning, middle or end? Try thinking about a different part of the process, you will often find it is the ‘happy ending’ which is missing in your mental representation.

- Visualise a ‘happy ending’ before you start the task – this may be as simple as considering how good you are going to feel knowing that the awkward task is now out of the way.

- Give yourself a reward for a job well done – this can be anything from a welcome break or a bar of chocolate. Intriguingly, a human being can be ‘trained’ just like a dog!
BONUS ACTION 5: Avoid procrastination

Still needing to tap into some motivation?

Well, you’re only human if you find there are times when you still need to convince yourself of the merits of a task ...even it has met all manner of ‘importance’ criteria.

So with this in mind the following action is specifically designed to assist you in overcoming perceived barriers so you can then create conviction and commitment to the task in hand...

BONUS ACTION 6: Get motivated

House and home

Who said self-management was all about the office! There are many great ways to make a huge difference in your overall management of self by considering that place where you spend the most time, your home...

- Use a blackboard or whiteboard in the kitchen or utility room to write down what needs to be bought as you finish things
- Plan your menus for the week ahead, do meals that will cater for more than one meal and/or make more and freeze what you don’t eat
- Use a pre-printed shopping list so you can easily plan shopping before you go
- Have a working wardrobe that is simple to mix/match and use so you don’t have to make lots of decisions
- Prepare your clothes for the morning the night before
- Keep your keys in the same place on a hook so they will not go walkies!
- Multi-task (in a good way!), catch up on learning by listening to CDs or MP3s while you cook, iron, shower, etc
A few final notes on achieving success with self-management

What has been presented here is, what I believe, a very effective perspective on self-management. Of course there is still so much you can do to help you achieve success in your self-management.

For instance, as your working day is sometimes ran at the behest of others, it will often provide you with opportunities to fill unexpected time gaps, so be prepared...

- When on a phone call, have something to hand which you can do when put on hold
- Take something to read (a Task C perhaps) for between meetings
- Use the spare time for yourself, have a break!
- Take up a hobby or even get a dog and go for a walk!

It is also worth noting that effective problem solving has the ability to dramatically reduce wasted time. Consider learning some form of ‘solution technique’ such as brainstorming (see previous Velocity Bonus) or Tony Buzan’s Mind Mapping. Both ideas provide what you could call ‘creative space’ either visually or mentally, and often that is all that is required when wishing to solve a problem.

Most importantly, be fair on yourself when working out your day.

Remember, even if you ignore the ultradian rhythm idea, the law of the land provides guidelines for the maximum number of hours an employee should work before a break is taken – and you have the same rights to these breaks as any employee!
In conclusion

Effective self-management not only has the ability to improve your business but also to improve your everyday life. When you manage your self you will remove stress, improve your health and I believe increase your wealth.

On the point of money, it is also worth remembering that time can also be measured in terms of hard cash… which means saving time will save you money. So remember...

- This thing called ‘time management’ is a misnomer… you need to manage self instead!
- The idea of ‘self-management’ is clearly personal – So find a system that works with and for you by following your natural rhythm of the day
- Stress is a business killer if not controlled and harnessed correctly
- Business time is not only measured in hours and minutes but also money. Everything you do is working to an attributable hourly rate – and you don’t come cheap!
- Prioritise according to what is REALLY important, your values, your PFM™
- Plan everything but do not stick absolutely to the plan! Be prepared to change the plan and perhaps even your Personal Fulfilment Machine™ as well
- Measure and monitor your success – and make adjustments only as and when required

But we’re not quite done yet, because the last point needs clarifying...

A final (surprising) thought

So far you have created a Personal Fulfilment Machine™ and the associated goals, from which you have sketched out the CSF’s, required tasks, sub-tasks, KPI’s, priorities and you even have a schedule and plan. And thanks to this bonus document you have also been able to tap into truly effective methods of self-management and efficient working...

As a quick aside… CONGRATULATIONS! This is going to REALLY boost your business success!

So that said, what I am about to say may come as a bit of a surprise given all the great work you have just completed...

Do not stick perfectly to the plan!
Yes, you read that correctly! Plans are very useful and they most certainly guide your work and effort, however, they are not absolute!

As a famous Prussian General once said:

“*No battle plan survives contact with the enemy*”

Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke (aka Moltke the Elder)

In other words, Moltke was highlighting that the enemy is not necessarily going to go along with your plan for victory!

Now I am not suggesting you are at war or that your customers are the enemy! 😊

Far from it, instead I simply want you to note what the statement suggests about plans. Clearly Moltke is highlighting the obvious fact that despite whatever plan you create, life still happens around you, there will always be events and influences you cannot control or plan for.

This means strict adherence to a plan of action will ultimately lead to problems, as you will not be taking into account the ever-changing nature of life and business.

Now this does NOT mean plans are not required … *that would be just plain stupid*!

Moltke did a lot of planning; however he was always mindful that things do not always go as planned. So, he was very careful, thinking about all the different variations and contingencies he may need. Then no matter what ultimately happened, he was still prepared.

This is why the monitoring of your progress with KPI’s and the willingness to change your plan, and perhaps even your overall *Personal Fulfilment Machine™*, is important.

Similarly, there is also a question of adherence to something far more important than a plan to consider, this being your values...

**Let your values be the final decider**

The question is...

*As everything starts with your values, are you actually still on track?*

Think of it this way, the whole idea of the *Personal Fulfilment Machine™* is for you to have a business that creates the life you want. Your personal goals have been derived from your values and your business goals...
have then followed suit. And as you will recall, when you act from your values you will naturally tap into a great and endless source of motivation ...your values are the fuel for your Personal Fulfilment Machine™.

So it makes sense to make sure your machine is running properly, and the best way to do this is to use your values as the final decider. Simply ask yourself...

Are you being true to who you are?

And if you ever get a weird feeling you are not – then make the right change.

...Now THAT is self-management.
Appendix

Following on from the final section of this document, it is obvious that there are so many more great ways to self-manage effectively. Your increased efficiency can create countless knock-on benefits; best of all these benefits can often be personal from improved health to time for those things that really matter like family and loved ones.

So let’s get you those benefits...

This appendix is a collection of six simple actions from achieving success with delegation to avoiding disappointment from procrastination.
Bonus action 1 – A place for everything

Just as you have your furniture, such as seating and television, arranged carefully within your lounge, so too should you have your office arranged. As you are probably going to spend more time in your office than any other room, clearly it makes sense to make it a comfortable and easy working environment.

The following checklist is designed to highlight areas to consider when wishing to ensure your office is suitably laid out in order to ensure efficient and effective working practices. Some of the ideas are simple objects like a bin ...of course, thinking about the GUTS system, the bin is an essential part of any filing system!

Simply tick (☑) as required and take appropriate action when you come across something which has not already been addressed...

- Forget about the mini-clock available on your PC - Do you have a large visible clock in your office?
- Is it comfortable being in your office?
- Do you have a proper desk with suitable chair?
- Are your desk and chair positioned ergonomically? i.e. appropriate heights and distances in order to ensure minimal physical stress when working
- Is there natural light in your office?
- Is your desk situated so you can ‘focus on infinity’ rather than staring at a blank wall?
- Do you have clear, clutter-free working space on your desk?
- Is your computer on your desk? ...and does it still allow the above working space?
- Is the printer close by?
- As an absolute necessity, is your phone on your desk?
- Do you have ‘In’, ‘Out’ and ‘Ongoing’ file trays?
- Do you have stationery (pens, paper, etc) close to hand?
- Is your main paper filing system close by?
- Do you a large bin under your desk?
Given your day-to-day working activities, do you have all necessary working materials (i.e. books, manuals, tools, etc) close to hand?

Do you have some form of simple cable tidy system to reduce clutter and more importantly the risk of accidents?

Do you have a notice board or whiteboard within your office?

**ACTION:** Consider reorganising your entire office by first planning out a suitable floor plan based upon those objects and items you need close by whilst still ensuring a comfortable working space.
**Bonus action 2 – Achieve ‘quiet time’ with Duplo™**

As you will recall, ‘quiet time’ is a period of time you give yourself such that you are effectively unavailable to others. The key to successful implementation of ‘quiet time’ is enforcement – you need to communicate and hence enforce your need for time. An interesting way to achieve this is using Duplo™ blocks.

Simply follow these steps...

To begin with you need to visit a children’s toy store and purchase a set of Duplo™ or Lego™ bricks – it is important the bricks are big (say 3cm x 3cm x 10cm).

You will need four colours for each team member and the appropriate brick is to be placed near their workstation (the computer monitor is always a good visible location).

The colours work on a kind of traffic light system and are denoted as such...

- **Red Brick**  *Stop! Do not disturb, I am in ‘quiet time’*
- **Yellow Brick**  *Caution! If it is important you can interrupt me, otherwise I am busy*
- **Green Brick**  *Go for it! I am happy for you to ask whatever*
- **Blue Brick**  *I am enjoying a well earned rest on holiday*

Of course this method will only work if everyone...

- Understands the system and knows what each colour means
- Respects the choices of colleagues (e.g. does not disturb ‘Red brick’ quiet time)
- Is disciplined enough to use the right colour brick at the right time – i.e. no abuse of the method

So make sure this is the case!

**ACTION:** As with any of the methods or ideas suggested in PFM™ - On an ongoing basis monitor the success of this method and should there be any problems, first ask ‘What has caused this not to work?’ and then tweak the method accordingly or notice and fix the bigger issue that is being highlighted by the problem.
**Bonus action 3 – Delegate with purpose**

Considering the idea of importance versus urgency, and those tasks denoted as B² & C, clearly it is important to delegate appropriately.

The following checklist can be used whenever you wish to delegate and is designed to highlight key aspects of delegation.

Simply tick (☒) as required and take appropriate action when you come across something which has not already been addressed.

- In order to ensure clear communication, have you produced a Root Definition of the task?
- Have you chosen the right person for the task? Are they capable of performing the task without continual supervision?
- Have you explained the task in detail?
- Have you described what you want achieved, when you want it and why?
- Given appropriate time and if necessary, have you discussed different methods for achieving the desired result?
- Have you given your employee the opportunity to offer suggestions for the completion of the task?
- Have you delegated rather than dictated or abdicated?
- Have you arranged time for a feedback session to discuss the results of the delegated task?
- Depending on the outcome of the delegated task, are you prepared to ‘do whatever it takes’ (i.e. further training, more discussion, etc) in order to ensure further and more successful delegation?

**QUESTION:** If delegation hasn’t worked, what can YOU do to make it work better next time?
Bonus action 4 – Meet with purpose

Meetings can work! You need only follow a few simple steps in order to ensure successful meetings. The following checklist is designed to be looked over before you have a meeting.

Simply tick (☑) as required and take appropriate action when you come across something which has not already been addressed.

☐ Is your agenda realistic in terms of content and time?

☐ Can you discuss some of the content at a different time? ...if so, plan a separate meeting

☐ Have you produced a clear Root Definition for the meeting?

☐ Has the agenda and any supporting information (for example, documents to be discussed) been given to all who will attend the meeting?

☐ Have you given them the opportunity to comment on the agenda prior to the meeting?

☐ Have you appointed a chairperson? (remember if you plan to take an active part in the discussions it may be worthwhile asking someone else to chair the meeting and keep it on track in both time and content)

☐ Have you appointed a ‘secretary’ for the meeting who will record all relevant details?

☐ Does everyone who will be attending the meeting know each other? ...if not, have you made provision for all relevant introductions?

☐ In order to keep to time, do you have a watch or clock available in the meeting?

Having had the meeting...

☐ Did you arrive at suitable conclusions which were recorded by your secretary?

☐ Has the secretary emailed all who attended (and any other interested parties) with the minutes of the meeting?

☐ Have you decided and recorded all follow-on activities including who will be involved and the timeframe for these activities?

☐ Have you decided who will take ultimate responsibility for ensuring the above activities will be carried out by the nominated people?
And having completed all relevant activities from the meeting...

☐ Has the person with the 'ultimate responsibility' provided feedback to all who originally attended the meeting?

**ACTION:** Meetings don’t have to be lengthy affairs – consider having mini-meetings lasting only 10mins. In many companies this has proven to be a very efficient and effective process.
Bonus action 5 – Avoid procrastination

Ordinarily procrastination is a sign of lack of motivation and most people become unmotivated when they cannot see the positive in a given task. This of course does not mean the positive is missing, it simply means you have not discovered it YET.

This quick exercise is designed to give you alternative and more motivating perspectives when considering an area of procrastination. In order to make the most of each of these questions we suggest you visualise/imagine the answers and hence describe what you see, hear and feel.

Studies have shown that this kind of sensory description ‘brings to life’ any activity and hence is far more likely to spark motivation.

Thinking of the activity/task you ordinarily procrastinate about, write down the benefits and ‘positives’ regarding each of the classic stages (beginning, middle and end). Think about money, time, efficiency, effectiveness, ease, speed, stress, comfort, enjoyment...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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What will you get or achieve by completing this activity?

What are the negative consequences of failing to complete this task?

What reward(s) can you give yourself for having completed this task?

**QUESTION:** If you suffer from procrastination with several activities, are there common themes? – e.g. you forget to focus on the positive outcome, or fail to give yourself a suitable reward, ...

**ACTION:** When you find common themes, change all of your working practices to remove such issues and hence reduce the likelihood of procrastination.
Bonus action 6 – Get motivated

This exercise is all about taking a problem to the extreme in order to find the right (and easy) solution. As humans we are great at thinking negatively ...so let’s use that to our advantage!

Essentially you are going to answer three questions, thinking in terms of barriers and those things you believe hold you back...

- How can you make it WORSE?
- What is the exact opposite to the previous answer?
- What ideas or activities does this suggest?

For example, let’s consider email and how there’s seemingly so many that they just cause you endless distraction:

- How can you make it WORSE?
  - I could check my emails every two minutes and look at any email as soon as my alert pings
- What is the exact opposite to the previous answer?
  - I will check my emails only at set times and I will not respond to email alerts
- What ideas or activities does this suggest?
  - Turn off email alerts
  - Only check emails at lunchtime and late afternoon
  - Do not have email program or browser open apart from at the above times

So now it’s your turn, just complete the table overleaf with all of your perceived issues. I really want you to eliminate this nonsense from your mind ...so I’ve given you two tables to fill!

**QUESTION**: Can you put in place all of your ideas/activities/solutions?

**ACTION**: If no, find someone who can! Delegate or outsource the solution.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The supposed issue</th>
<th>What is the opposite?</th>
<th>How can you make it worse?</th>
<th>Solutions/ideas/activities</th>
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