



Boosting Productivity

Session starts at 2pm



HELLO!

I am **Karen Maher**

I am an experienced HR consultant and workforce development specialist originally from the North East of England.

I specialise in coaching, mentoring, mediation and training delivery. I deliver QQI accredited courses including People Management, Supervisory Management and Medical Secretaries

I am also qualified to administer and deliver psychometric tests including EQi2 (Emotional Intelligence) and MBTI (Personality Types).



Introduction

Working remotely can be a challenge, especially if you're not used to it.

For many people it looks like this way of working is becoming the norm.

This session is going to look at some tips for you to help cope with the changes you may be facing.

We will also be looking at how to work smarter and not necessarily harder whilst also maintaining your work-life balance





OVERVIEW

Making time to plan

Identifying your personal time-stealers

Setting SMART goals and objectives for yourself

Dealing with common distractions

Managing Interruptions

Tasks; to do lists; daily plans

Team productivity

Effective virtual meetings

So how is it for you?



Why working from home is both **awesome** and **HORRIBLE**



10 Working from Home Tips

1. Get started early

When working in an office, your morning commute can help you wake up and feel ready to work by the time you get to your desk. At home, however, the transition from your pillow to your computer can be different.

One way to work from home productively is to dive into your to-do list as soon as you wake up. Getting a project **started** first thing in the morning can be the key to making progress on it gradually throughout the day.

2. Structure your day like you would in the office

When working from home, you're your own personal manager. Without things like an in-person meetings to break up your day, you can be quick to lose focus or burn out. To stay on schedule plan **what** you'll do and **when** over the course of the day. Create personal events and reminders in your calendar that tell you when to finish and start new tasks.

3. Plan Ahead

Spending time deciding what you'll do today can take away from actually doing those things. It's important to let your agenda change if you need it to, but it's equally as important to commit to an agenda that outlines every project or task before you begin. Try writing your to do list the day before, making it feel ready the next day.

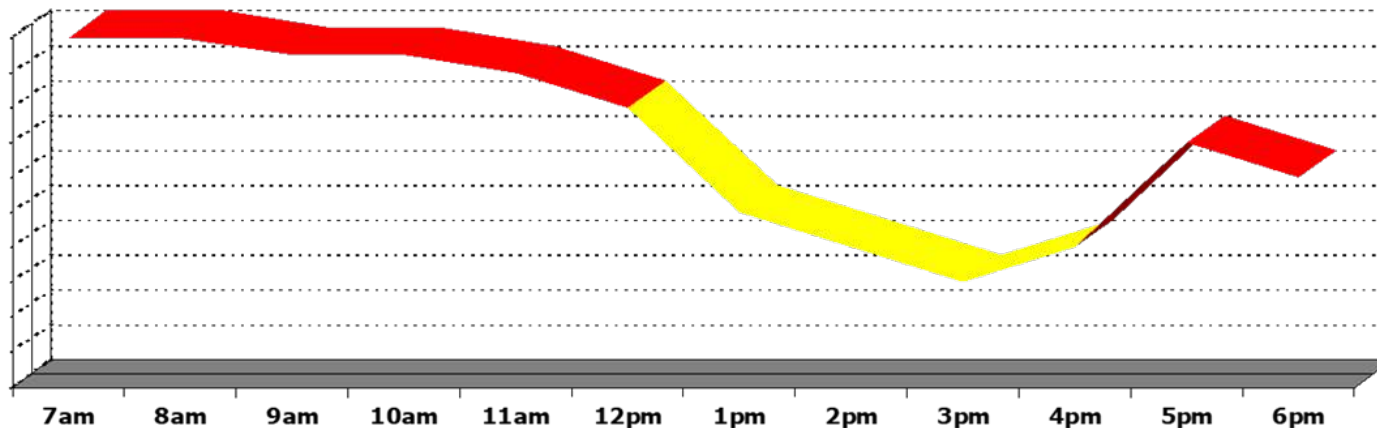


10 Working from Home Tips

4. Work when you're at your most productive

Nobody runs straight through their work from morning to evening. Your motivation will ebb and flow throughout the day. When you're working from home, it's all the more important to know when those ebbs and flows will take place and plan your schedule around it.

Capitalise on your most productive periods, save your harder tasks for when you know you'll be in the right headspace for them. Use slower points of the day to knock out the easier, logistical tasks that are also on your plate.



10 Working from Home Tips

5. Save calls for late morning

Give yourself some extra time before working directly with others. If you're struggling to come up with a reasonable work schedule for yourself start with the solitary tasks in the morning. Save phone calls, meetings, and other collaborative work for when you've officially "woken up."

6. Make it harder for yourself to use your social media

Social media is designed to make it easy for you to open and browse quickly. At work this can be the detriment of your productivity.

To counteract your social networks' ease of use during work hours, remove them from your browser shortcuts This ensures you stay signed out of all your accounts and each web search you conduct. It's a guarantee that you won't be tempted into taking too many social breaks during the day



10 Working from Home Tips

7. Focus on one distraction

"if you want something done, ask a busy person."

The bizarre but true rule of productivity is that the busier you are, the more you'll actually do. Busy people are in fast-enough motion that they have the momentum to complete anything that comes across their desk. Unfortunately, it's hard to find things to help you reach that level of busyness when you're at home -- your motivation can just swing so easily.

8. Communicate expectations with anyone who will be home with you.

You might be working from home but still have "company." Make sure any roommates, siblings, parents, spouses, and pets respect your space during work hours. Just because you're working from home doesn't mean you're home.



Working from Home Tips

9. Take clear breaks

It can be so easy to get distracted that you avoid breaks altogether. Don't let the guilt of working in the building you sleep in prevent you from taking a break to relax. Go for a walk outside or spend time with others who might also be in the house.

10. Pick a definitive finishing time each day

Working from home can be convenient and difficult at the same time. You can get so caught up in your activity, in a relaxing environment, that you lose complete track of time.

Most of us are used to colleagues whose packing up and leaving the office reminds us to do the same.

Try setting an alarm at the end of the day to indicate your normal work day is coming to an end. You don't have to stop at exactly that time, but knowing the work day is technically over can help you start the process of saving your work and calling it quits for the evening.

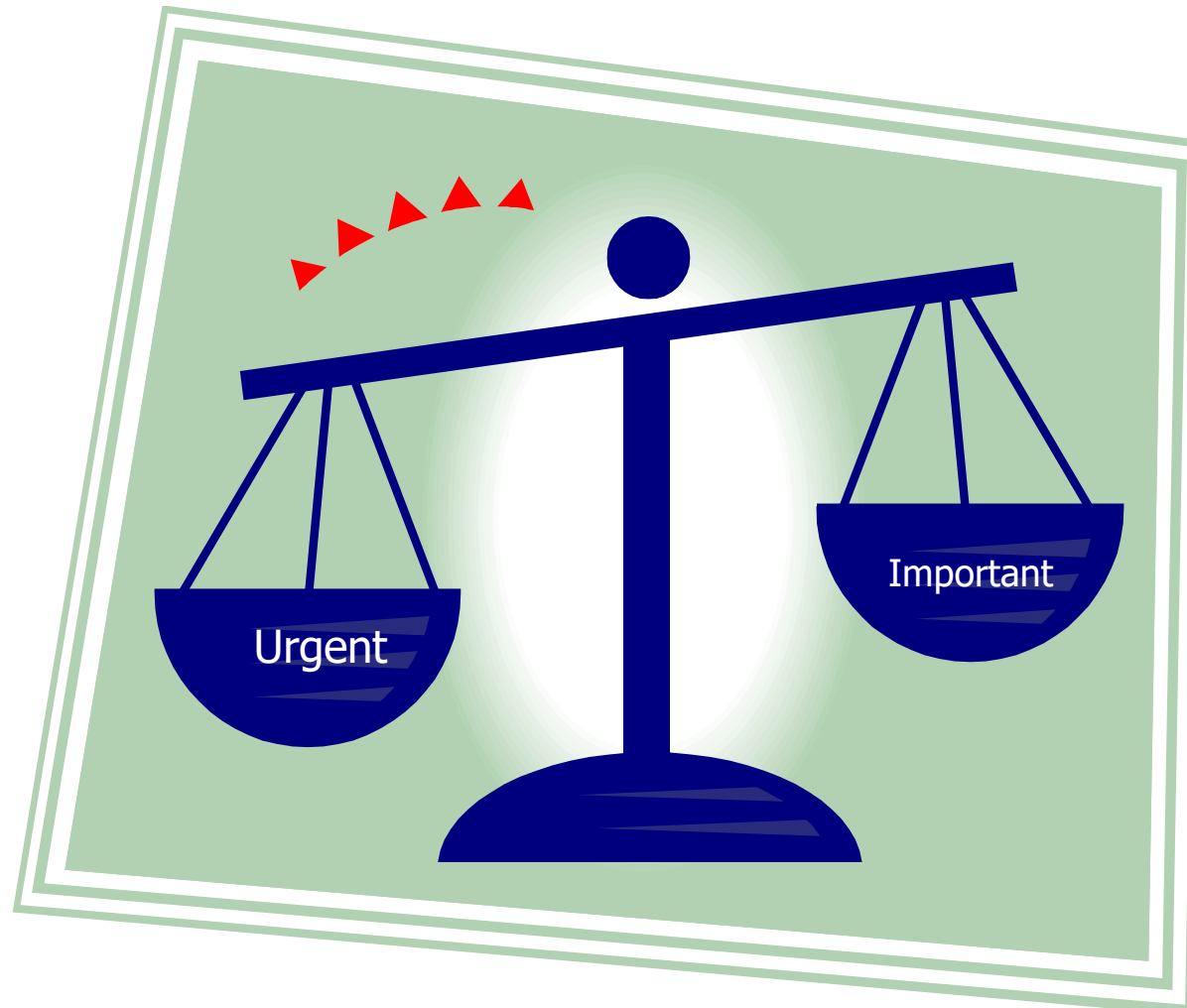


SMART(ER) Goals

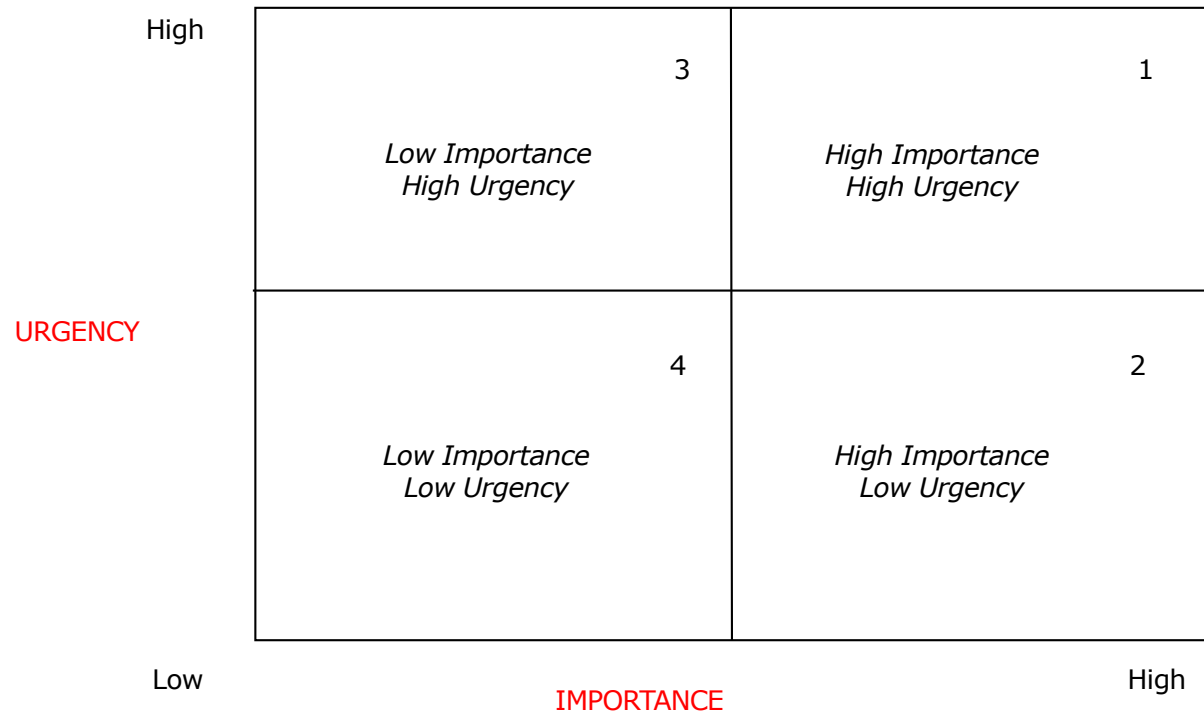


Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Timely
Evaluate
Review

Knowing what's important



Time Management



Getting Organised - To do Lists

Paper or technology?

- Post it Notes
- Your calendar
- Your phone



Forward planning

- A master list. Your long term goals
- A weekly project list. Everything for the next 7 days

Getting Organised - To do Lists

Keep it simple

- The longer the list the harder it is to motivate yourself

Most Important Tasks

- Make these your priority



Use SMART objectives

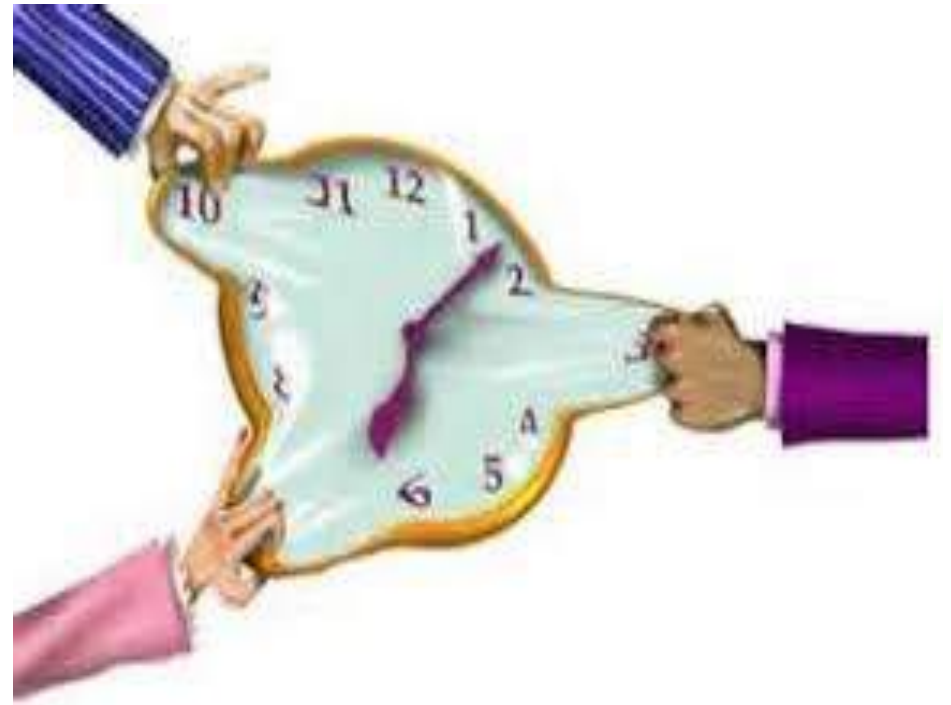
- They should be actions that have timescales

Don't Stress

- If it doesn't get done, add it to the next list.
- Be flexible and kind to yourself

Identifying your time stealers

What is it that stops you from working or takes up too much of your time?



Dealing with Time Stealers

Family

The doorbell

Telephone Interruptions

People dropping in via Zoom

Poor information

'Techno-failure'

Changing priorities

Lack of organisational planning

Sifting through unnecessary emails

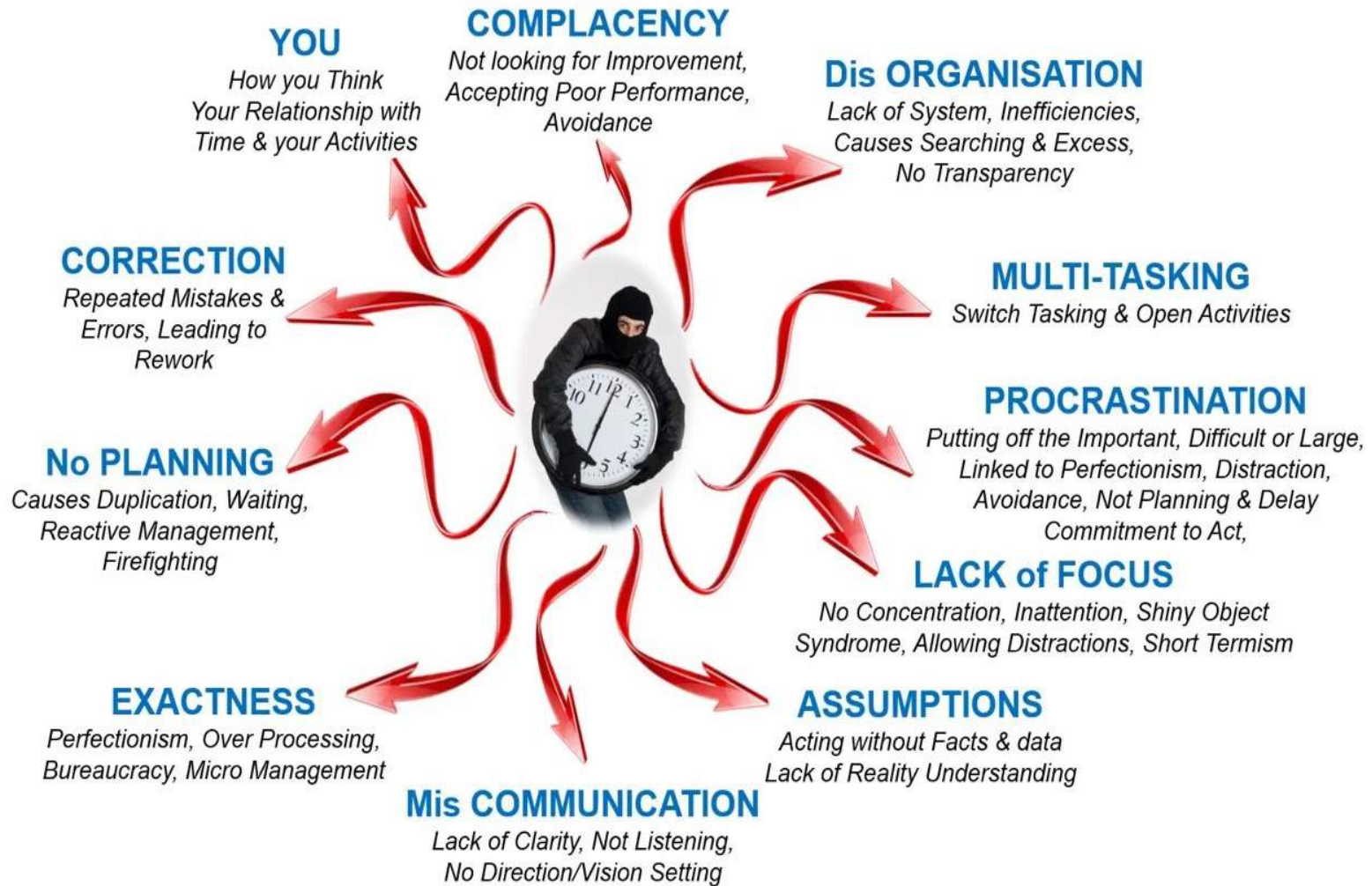


Dealing with Time Stealers

- Moving goal posts
- Putting things right
- Indecision
- Badly organised meetings
- Searching for files not stored correctly
- Unnecessary checking of others and their work



Dealing with Time Stealers



Managing your Time

1. Create a time audit – what do you actually do?
2. Set a time limit for each task
3. Use a to-do-list
4. Plan ahead
5. Do your most important tasks first
6. Learn to delegate
7. Abandon 'Half work'
8. Change your schedule
9. Leave time in between events
10. Stop trying to be perfect
11. Learn to say No
12. Don't waste time waiting
13. Batch similar tasks together
14. Find inspiration



"If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And If it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first."

Mark Twain

Virtual Meetings

Positives and negatives for you?



Virtual Meetings – the positives

The benefits of virtual meetings include-

- solving specific problems
- time problems
- distance problems
- deadline problems
- Worklife balance
- Cuts travel and expenses costs

The ability to connect with people from all parts of the world with the click of a button has revolutionised how companies do business.



Virtual Meetings – the negatives

As soon as one or two attendees “dial in” to any meeting, productivity starts to suffer.

Attendees often interpret virtual meetings as a license to multi-task.

Meeting organisers tend to be less careful with the purpose and design of the conversation.

And it’s not uncommon for one or two attendees to dominate the discussion while others sit back and “tune out.”

Virtual meetings can be less productive when it comes to discussion and collaboration due to the flow of conversations being much different than face to face conversations.

They can become less fluid and free and become more rigid and systematic.



Making Virtual Meetings Effective

Use video. To make people feel like they're all at the meeting, use video conferencing. Technology — such as Zoom, Skype, and GoToMeeting — helps to personalise the conversation and to keep participants engaged.

Always provide an audio dial-in option. Video conferencing can work well, but it relies on a strong internet connection that may not be available.

Test the technology ahead of time. Prior to a virtual meeting, all participants should test the technology and make sure they are comfortable with the major features. And remember, supplier or customer conversations may require your team to familiarise themselves with different software packages.



Making Virtual Meetings Effective

Make sure faces are visible. Video conferences are more effective when people can see each other's facial expressions and body language. Ask individuals to sit close to their webcam to help to recreate the intimacy of an in-person meeting.

Stick to meeting basics. Set clear objectives, and send a pre-read if appropriate. During the session, use an agenda, set meeting ground rules, take breaks, and clearly outline next steps (including timing and accountabilities) after each section and at the end of the meeting.

Minimise presentation length. If someone needs to present, use screen sharing to guide the conversation, so attendees can literally “be on the same page.” But prioritise conversation to maximise the time people are looking at each other.



Making Virtual Meetings Effective

Call on people. Getting everyone to participate without talking over each other is challenging. Try asking individuals to speak by virtually “going around the table” before a decision is finalised.

Don't be afraid to tackle tough issues. Meeting virtually is a learned behaviour, and you can get a lot out of it once you and your team get comfortable working this way.

Practice once or twice while you're still together. After the meeting concludes, gather and debrief about the experience. What went well, and what didn't? How can you evolve your virtual meetings to make them as productive as when you meet in person?



Summary

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- Managing Interruptions
- Tasks; to do lists; daily plans
- Team productivity
- Effective virtual meetings



Summary & Recap

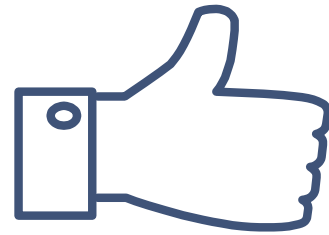
Q&A





**GOOD BYE &
GOOD LUCK!**





THANKS!

Any questions?
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