

### The Default Diary

The purpose of a default diary is to help you consistently to get more of the stuff that is really important done. The stuff that is really going to make the difference.

Typically the challenge that we all have with time is that we procrastinate. We tend not to do the stuff that is important, unless and until it becomes really urgent. One of the effects of setting out a default diary and sticking to it is that we make quality timeslots for stuff that we know is important, but not necessarily urgent; and by allocating timeslots we create an urgency for that function.

The default diary works by allocating a timeslot to a task, not a task to a nominal timeslot.

Typically what we used to do was wait until something that was important got so urgent that we would say, "Come what may I am going to send those prospecting letters out tomorrow morning if it is the last thing that I do!" And sometimes it felt as though it would be the last thing you would do. You would stick doggedly to the task till it was finished. As a result your enthusiasm would wither and probably affect the quality of the task and you would be glad to never have to do that task again, until it again became so urgent that you had no choice.

We need to be smarter than that.

The principle of the default diary is that we allocate a certain amount of time to the stuff that we know is important but which would get squeezed out if we did things the old way. In the example above the prospecting letters would have say a 60 minute timeslot every week, perhaps on a Tuesday morning (in the first example below). Each week we would do what we needed to do in that hour, knowing that if we didn't complete the task we would still have an hour for that activity the following week, and again the one after that. We would measure and record the number of pieces that we achieved and try to better that number the following week, either in quantity or quality. As a result we will find ourselves consistently doing what we know to be important in addition to all the stuff that is urgent, and in a way that is manageable.

There are some examples of differing default diaries below. When you have studied them, develop your own default diary. One that suits you, how you work and compensates for the things that you find difficult to do.

If you find it difficult to find time to do important stuff like reviewing the figures, holding meetings, cold calling, walking the floor, making prospecting calls, writing thank you notes, then simply allocate a timeslot to that particular task and stick to the discipline of it.

Expect to follow this diary most of the time. It is not a tool to regiment you. **It is a tool to refocus you** when you are planning your day or when changes in plans occur.

If you find yourself unable to stick to your default diary ask yourself do you need to change or does the default diary need to change? Be honest. Be truthful. Be above the line. The content of a default diary may become out of date, the principle never will.

## TIME

Keep in mind the following as you create your own default diary...

- Remember the formula for success. The right things, done in the right amounts over a long enough period of time= success
- Allocate time to work on the business not just in the business.
- Decide how much of your time is designed to be spent on sales and marketing (building the business) and how much is on operations (maintaining)?
- Make room in your default diary to take the first steps and then remember these three words. **Insistently, Persistently, Consistently**,
- Break your Big Hairy Audacious Goals into smaller chunks and you will be able to achieve them more quickly. Objectives that are too large lead to procrastination, which adds frustration and delays results.
- Remember to include time to “sharpen the saw” i.e. go to the gym, walk the dog, read, run. These too are important but may not yet be urgent for you. Don’t wait until they become urgent, by then it might be too late.
- Do any follow ups to meetings immediately after the meeting.
- Allocate time after coaching, training and seminars specifically to internalise the learnings and plan what you are going to do differently.
- On mailings follow up in the window two to three days after mailing or the benefit of the mailing will be lost.
- If you get a lead or a referral at networking meeting, schedule time to follow-up right away so it will not get cold.
- Don’t ever abandon marketing as you grow your client base, otherwise you will find yourself “out of clients” at some point. Therefore, always have marketing time in your diary.
- Remember to **shade the areas** in a meaningful way. It helps you understand your focus for that given time period.
- Do not try to fill every hour of every day. You will need some reactive time and some time to accommodate other non regular stuff.

*“Things which matter most MUST NEVER be at the mercy of things which matter least” Goethe*

*“There is surely nothing quite so useless as doing with great efficiency what should not be done at all.” Peter Drucker*

For a really good explanation of this concept please see “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen R Covey. Pay particular attention to ‘Principles of Personal Management’ Habit 3 PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST’

The final couple of sheets are to help you understand how you currently spend your time. Print out several copies of the diary sheet. This is a retrospective diary, not a planning diary.

Every day for 3 or 4 days retrospectively observe and record how you have spent your time. Put a cross in the far right-hand columns under the Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 columns that correspond with the nature of the activity on the ‘Time Matrix Activity’ diagram. You will very quickly be able to measure how much of your time is spent in which quadrant. You can repeat the exercise periodically to measure how much time you are spending in the ‘go forward’ quadrant.

## TIME

### Samples of Weekly Default Diary

#### Possible example Weekly Default Diary for a Small, Start-up Business Owner

|      | Monday             | Tuesday                        | Wednesday          | Thursday                                | Friday             |
|------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| 0800 | Emails & To Do     | Prospecting letters            | Networking         | Emails & To Do                          | Emails & To Do     |
| 0900 | Cold Calling       | Cold Calling                   | Operations Work    | Operations Work                         | Follow Ups         |
| 1000 |                    |                                |                    |   | Alliance Host Ben. |
| 1100 | Call Follow-up     | Call Follow-up                 | Direct Mail        |   | Coaching Call      |
| 1200 | Direct Mail        |                                | Follow Ups         |   | Administration     |
| 1300 |                    | Operations Work                | Cold Calling       | Business systems<br>("ON" the Business) | Planning           |
| 1400 | Return Calls/email |                                | Alliance Host Ben. | Return Calls/email                      |                    |
| 1500 | Business systems   |                                | Call Follow-Up     | Follow Ups                              |                    |
| 1600 | Reading/Learning   | Return Calls/email             | Return Calls/email | Reading/Learning                        |                    |
| 1700 | Operations Work    | Customer Networking Activities | Reading/Learning   |   |                    |
| 1800 |                    |                                |                    |   |                    |
| 1900 | Reading/Learning   |                                |                    |   |                    |

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Possible example Weekly Default Diary for a Small, Established Business Owner

|      | Monday                                  | Tuesday                           | Wednesday                               | Thursday            | Friday                                |
|------|---|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 0800 | Emails & To Do                          | Emails & To Do                    | Networking                              | Emails & To Do      | Emails & To Do                        |
| 0900 | Cold Calling                            | Cold Calling                      |   |                     | Follow Ups                            |
| 1000 | Call Follow-up                          |                                   | Production Work                         | Production Work     | Alliance Host Ben.                    |
| 1100 | Direct Mail                             | Call Follow-up                    |   |                     |                                       |
| 1200 |   |                                   | Direct Mail                             |                     | Coaching Call                         |
| 1300 | Return Calls/email                      |                                   | Follow Ups                              | Business systems    |                                       |
| 1400 | Business systems<br>("ON" the Business) | Production Work                   | Cold Calling                            | ("ON" the Business) | Admin & Planning                      |
| 1500 |   |                                   | Business systems<br>("ON" the Business) |                     |                                       |
| 1600 | Production Work                         | Return Calls/email                |   | Return Calls/emails | Reading/Learning                      |
| 1700 |   |                                   | Post Info Kits                          | Follow Ups          |                                       |
| 1800 |   | Customer Networking<br>Activities |   |                     | Reading/Learning (Working<br>"ON" Me) |
| 1900 | Reading/Learning                        |                                   |   |                     |                                       |

TIME

Example Weekly Default Diary for a Medium Sized Business Owner

|      | Monday                       | Tuesday                                 | Wednesday                               | Thursday                     | Friday                               |
|------|------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0800 | Team Meeting                 | Emails & To Do                          | Networking                              | Emails & To Do               | Emails & To Do                       |
| 0900 | Sales Meeting                | Cold Calling                            |   | Coaching Call                | Follow Ups                           |
| 1000 | Direct Mail                  |   | Team one-on-ones                        | Operations & Production Work | Alliance Host Ben.                   |
| 1100 | Call Follow-up               | Emails & To Do                          |   |                              |                                      |
| 1200 | Operations & Production Work | Operational Work<br>("ON the Business") | Direct Mail                             |                              | Emails & To Do                       |
| 1300 |                              | Customer Calls                          | Follow Ups                              |                              | Admin & Planning ("ON the Business") |
| 1400 |                              |   | Cold Calling                            |                              |                                      |
| 1500 |                              |   | Operational Work<br>("ON the Business") |                              |                                      |
| 1600 |                              | Return Calls/email                      | Call Follow-Up                          | Return Calls/email           |                                      |
| 1700 |                              | Customer Networking Activities          |   | Follow Ups                   |                                      |
| 1800 |                              | Reading/Learning (Working "ON" Me)      | Reading/Learning                        |                              |                                      |
| 1900 |                              |   |   |                              |                                      |

Personally, I wouldn't recommend either of the first three examples. For me they are too bitty. Too many rapid changes of direction, not enough spare or reactive time and not enough time working 'on' rather than 'in' the business. They are examples to illustrate the point. Choose a format that suits you, your working style and the needs of the business.

**TIME**  
A Coach's Possible Default Diary.

|      | Monday                    | Tuesday            | Wednesday    | Thursday     | Friday          |
|------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
|      | Team Day                  | Selling day        | Coaching Day | Coaching Day | Poets Day       |
| 0800 |                           |                    |              |              |                 |
| 0900 | Team Meeting <sup>1</sup> | Presentation       | Client       | Client       | Flexible Time   |
| 1000 |                           |                    | Client       | Client       | Flexible Time   |
| 1100 |                           |                    |              |              | Flexible Time   |
| 1200 | Admin                     |                    | Client       | Client       |                 |
| 1300 |                           |                    |              |              |                 |
| 1400 | Marketing                 | Sales presentation | Client       | Client       | Sharpen the Saw |
| 1500 |                           |                    |              |              |                 |
| 1600 | Ring People               | Client Visit       | Client       | Client       |                 |
| 1700 |                           |                    |              |              |                 |
| 1800 |                           | Free Seminar       |              |              |                 |

<sup>1</sup> All meetings should have a written purpose, agenda, time limit and specific outcomes.

TIME

Another possible default diary for a bigger business perhaps.

|      | Monday                               | Tuesday                              | Wednesday                            | Thursday                             | Friday                               |
|------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0800 | Weeks review                         | MBWA                                 | MBWA                                 | MBWA                                 | Sales Meeting                        |
| 0900 | Review D.O.C.'s<br>E Mails and To Do |
| 1000 | Forecast                             |                                      | Sales Stock and pipeline planning    |                                      | Review Display                       |
| 1100 | Managers Meeting                     |                                      |                                      |                                      |                                      |
| 1200 |                                      | Visit Satellite Site                 |                                      | Visit Satellite Site                 | Review Numbers                       |
| 1300 |                                      |                                      |                                      |                                      |                                      |
| 1400 | Marketing Meeting                    |                                      | Visit Satellite Site                 |                                      |                                      |
| 1500 |                                      |                                      |                                      |                                      | Confirm readiness for weekend        |
| 1600 | Reactive Time                        |
| 1700 | MBWA                                 |                                      |                                      |                                      | Advert Review                        |
| 1800 | Plan tomorrow                        |
| 1900 |                                      |                                      |                                      |                                      |                                      |

**TIME****My Default Weekly Diary for Weeks 1 - 4**

|      | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| 0800 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 0900 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1000 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1100 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1200 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1300 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1400 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1500 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1600 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1700 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1800 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1900 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 2000 |        |         |           |          |        |

**TIME****My Default Weekly Diary for Weeks 5 - 9**

|      | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| 0800 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 0900 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1000 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1100 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1200 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1300 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1400 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1500 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1600 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1700 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1800 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1900 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 2000 |        |         |           |          |        |

**TIME****My Default Weekly Diary for Weeks 9 -12**

|      | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| 0800 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 0900 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1000 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1100 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1200 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1300 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1400 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1500 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1600 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1700 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1800 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 1900 |        |         |           |          |        |
| 2000 |        |         |           |          |        |

## TIME

### Using the time matrix activities grid

This is about having crystal clear criteria to categorise what you choose to do with your time.

If your criteria are not clear you won't be able to differentiate and that means you won't be able to make meaningful and effective choices.

These are my recommended definitions:

Something is **urgent** if it has an end time/ a deadline to it. If it doesn't it is not urgent.

What makes something important? The only definition which consistently works is this: something is **important** if it pertains to your goals. If it gets you closer to your goals. This means that if you have no goals or your goals are too vague you will never be able to define whether something is important or not. This means that you will never be able to prioritise what you do with your time. Remember what Peter Drucker said "There is surely nothing quite so useless as doing with great efficiency what should not be done at all." This is about choosing how you are going to invest your time and that means also choosing what you are not going to do.

Prioritising is important and of course being effective is important too so bear in mind:

### The 3 S's of Execution

1. Schedule time
2. Show up
3. Single task focus

1. If you don't allocate the time it isn't going to happen
2. When you have scheduled the time, show up with an attitude to make it happen
3. That means focussing on the job in hand and avoiding all distractions

# Time Matrix Activities

Important

Not  
Important

Urgent

Not Urgent

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working in the business</li> <li>• Fire fighting</li> <li>• Panics</li> <li>• Crises</li> <li>• Making decisions</li> <li>• Reacting to customers</li> <li>• Reacting to team</li> <li>• Pressing matters</li> <li>• Hitting Deadlines</li> <li>• Projects with deadlines</li> <li>• Telephone calls</li> <li>• Visitors</li> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Paying People</li> <li>• Production</li> </ul> | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working on the business</li> <li>• Leading</li> <li>• Reviewing/appraising</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Selling</li> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Prospecting</li> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Relationship Building</li> <li>• Implementing Systems</li> <li>• Building Professional Knowledge</li> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Attending Seminars</li> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Working on myself</li> <li>• Relaxation</li> </ul> |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interruptions</li> <li>• Unprepared meetings</li> <li>• Some decisions</li> <li>• Other peoples tasks</li> <li>• Some calls</li> <li>• Some visits</li> <li>• Some visitors</li> <li>• E mail</li> <li>• Some reports</li> <li>• Badly planned meetings</li> <li>• Popular activities</li> <li>• Busy Work</li> </ul>   | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trivia</li> <li>• Busy work</li> <li>• Time wasters</li> <li>• Unproductive Activity</li> <li>• E mails</li> <li>• E zines</li> <li>• Gossip, speculation, rumour</li> <li>• Politics</li> <li>• Viking catalogue</li> <li>• Surfing the net, facebook</li> <li>• Everything else</li> </ul>   | 2 |

**TIME**

|              | Task | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|--------------|------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>08:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |
| 08:15        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 08:30        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 08:45        |      |    |    |    |    |
| <b>09:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |
| 09:15        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 09:30        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 09:45        |      |    |    |    |    |
| <b>10:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |
| 10:15        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 10:30        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 10:45        |      |    |    |    |    |
| <b>11:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |
| 11:15        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 11:30        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 11:45        |      |    |    |    |    |
| <b>12:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |
| 12:15        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 12:30        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 12:45        |      |    |    |    |    |
| <b>13:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |
| 13:15        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 13:30        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 13:45        |      |    |    |    |    |
| <b>14:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |
| 14:15        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 14:30        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 14:45        |      |    |    |    |    |
| <b>15:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |
| 15:15        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 15:30        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 15:45        |      |    |    |    |    |
| <b>16:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |
| 16:15        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 16:30        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 16:45        |      |    |    |    |    |
| <b>17:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |
| 17:15        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 17:30        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 17:45        |      |    |    |    |    |
| <b>18:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |
| 18:15        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 18:30        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 18:45        |      |    |    |    |    |
| <b>19:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |
| 19:15        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 19:30        |      |    |    |    |    |
| 19:45        |      |    |    |    |    |
| <b>20:00</b> |      |    |    |    |    |