

TIME

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.

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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.

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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
1000			Call Follow-up		
1100	Call Follow-up	Coaching Call			
1200			Direct Mail	Direct Mail	
1300	Operations Work	Follow Ups			
1400		Return Calls/email	Cold Calling	Business systems ("ON" the Business)	
1500		Business systems			Planning
1600	Reading/Learning Operations Work	Return Calls/email	Alliance Host Ben.	Return Calls/email	
1700		Customer Networking Activities	Call Follow-Up	Follow Ups	
1800			Return Calls/email	Reading/Learning	
1900	Reading/Learning		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		Production Work	Production Work
1000	Call Follow-up		Alliance Host Ben.		
1100	Direct Mail	Call Follow-up		Direct Mail	Business systems ("ON" the Business)
1200			Production Work		
1300	Return Calls/email	Cold Calling		Reading/Learning	
1400	Business systems ("ON" the Business)		Business systems ("ON" the Business)		Return Calls/emails
1500	Production Work	Return Calls/email		Follow Ups	
1600			Customer Networking Activities		Post Info Kits
1700	Reading/Learning				
1800					
1900					

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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			
1200	Operations & Production Work	Operational Work	Direct Mail		Emails & To Do
1300		("ON the Business")	Follow Ups		Admin & Planning ("ON the Business")
1400		Customer Calls	Cold Calling		
1500			Operational Work		
1600		Return Calls/email	("ON the Business")	Return Calls/email	
1700		Customer Networking Activities	Call Follow-Up	Follow Ups	
1800				Reading/Learning (Working "ON" Me)	
1900			Reading/Learning		

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.

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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 ¹	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			

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

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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 E Mails and To Do	Review D.O.C.'s E Mails and To Do	Review D.O.C.'s E Mails and To Do	Review D.O.C.'s E Mails and To Do	Review D.O.C.'s 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	Reactive Time	Reactive Time	Reactive Time	Reactive Time
1700	MBWA				Advert Review
1800	Plan tomorrow	Plan tomorrow	Plan tomorrow	Plan tomorrow	Plan tomorrow
1900					

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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					

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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

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Time Matrix Activities

Urgent

Not Urgent

Important

Not
Important

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

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	Task	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
08:00					
08:15					
08:30					
08:45					
09:00					
09:15					
09:30					
09:45					
10:00					
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