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Foreword

Having a PDA, or utilizing additional technology, won't automatically make you more efficient. It might take you a long time to get used to utilizing it to help you manage your time. And then you'll have to make a habit of utilizing it. It may work as well as any paper-based scheme, if you take the time to learn how to utilize it correctly, and it has the benefits of compactness, the power to search for words and phrases, the power to store crucial documents, and so on. However, without acquiring the right habits in utilizing it, it may as well be a brick. Lastly, you might discover that the correct system for you is a hybrid one: maybe you use your PDA for Appointment and Contact management and a paper planner for jobs and projects ... Maybe another combination. My goal herein isn't to sell you on having a PDA but to show what you are able to do with one, so you are able to try it out and see if it's good for you.

Time Management Mastery For Busy People

Make time your loyal servant rather than a terrible master.

Chapter 1:

Where Do You Spend Your Time

Synopsis

A key to bettering your time management skills is to discover how you're expending your time. It's simple to utilize your PDA or PC for this. Simply set up a time log.

Choose Wisely

The sort, Importance, Effectiveness, and Efficiency fields are picked out from pop-up lists that have the accompanying values:

Sort - Family, Personal, Business, Other Importance - 1 (crucial and pressing), 2 (Important, not pressing), 3 (Not significant, but pressing), 4 (Not crucial, Not pressing)

Effectiveness - 100%, 90%, 80%, 70%, 60%, 50% or less

Efficiency - 100%, 90%, 80%, 70%, 60%, 50% or less

The first time I utilized a time log, many years ago, I was truly shocked at how much time I was squandering. To truly get value out of it, you ought to utilize it for at least 3 typical days (not weekend days). Then you ought to study it to see where you are spending time ineffectively. A different useful log that you are able to track in a database on your Pocket PC/Palm is one that seizes Rework actions. Such actions are those that you need to re-do something on.

An easy example is that you formulate a set of demonstrations and then need to rework it to address your boss's remarks. To get value out of this sort of log, you ought to utilize it for at least 3 weeks -- occasionally rework doesn't come out till a couple of weeks after the initial action. You are able to acquire a lot of efficiency by confronting those areas where you've the most rework.

Once you have to pick among many tasks, there are a lot of prioritization tools you are able to utilize. If you're in a rut with your

prioritization technique, trying out different techniques might yield the one that's correct for you.

Note that it's generally accepted that 20% of your actions will account for 80 percent of your success (The Pareto Principle). Therefore, if you've a hundred tasks in your job list, likely about twenty of those will be the key ones to center on. Therefore, whatever prioritization technique you utilize, you ought to ensure it helps you pinpoint these tasks.

Stephen Covey names a high-level prioritization scheme in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. In that scheme, jobs are categorized by 4 quadrants:

- * QI - crucial and pressing
- * QII - crucial but not pressing
- * QIII - Not significant but pressing
- * QIV - Not significant and not pressing

Dr. Covey mentions that highly effective individuals make time for the QII actions, and that doing so may reduce the time spent in extra quadrants. Though QI - QIV prioritization doesn't help you choose which QI activity to accomplish first and which to accomplish second, and so on, it may be really informative to discover which quadrants your tasks are in.

The ABC technique

I first became cognizant of this strategy when I utilized a paper-based Franklin planner. It ranks tasks into 3 categories:

- A = critical
- B = significant
- C = nice

Then it subdivides tasks in these classes into A1, A2, A3, ..., B1, B2, ... And so on. Notice that the A, B, C categories have an aboveboard correspondence to Quadrants I, II, and III discussed in Covey's book. Many individuals discover this prioritization technique to be really helpful. While the standard Pocket PC and Palm Task list application doesn't support these precise priorities, there are a few really good 3rd party applications that do. For instance, Pocket Informant and Agenda Fusion for the Pocket PC support prioritization and impart a number of additional valuable capabilities.

If you utilize Microsoft Outlook, you're likely already aware that it has 3 priority settings for a job: High, Normal, Low. These naturally correspond directly to the A, B, C precedences. Pocket Outlook on Pocket PCs and Smartphones utilize the same priority strategy as Outlook.

The pay back versus time technique:

With this technique, you weight every task by the pay back you anticipate from it versus the time it takes to accomplish it. Tasks that have elevated pay back and that require little time are the ones you'd accomplish first. Correspondingly, jobs that have low pay back and that take much time are ones you'd accomplish last or not at all.

Occasionally priorities change. We've all had to juggle jobs. On balance, though, we have to ensure our priorities are ordered with our personal goals and the goals of our organizations. Doing this calls for a periodic critique, and a weekly planning sitting is paragon for this.

Likewise, while the message has been out for a long time that organizations ought to clearly communicate their goals and priorities, enquiry continues to demonstrate that a lot of organizations are not

great at this. Therefore, you might need to make an effort to distinguish the goals and priorities of your organization, to guarantee your priorities are consistent with those.

Lastly, to accent what was remarked earlier, you ought to take full advantage of the Pareto Principle.

Chapter 2:

Managing Tasks

Synopsis

While I've aimed this material at Smartphone, Pocket PC, and Palm users, the precepts may be applied to desktop/laptop computer architecture and to paper-based planning schemes. In early 2001, I read David Allen's Getting Things Done (GTD) book and at once started implementing GTD on my Palm. I liked its inspired approach. Then GTD became a major tool for assisting me deal with all the stuff in my life. It let me accomplish this without calling for great concentration. I've since blended some of the FC and GTD methodologies. GTD helps me get a lot accomplished, and FC helps my effectiveness.

What You Need To Know

Key Principles

1. A fundamental learning from GTD: run through all of your projects and ascertain next actions for them and arrange Them By context of use (like @PC, @Home, @Desk), so that when your mental energy is too low for you to have an effective mind, you've a list of actions you are able to perform anyhow. This easy principle may dramatically better your efficiency and your impact. Orchestrating by context makes use of the age-old wisdom of "Be Where You Are."

2. Design for every day what you have to get accomplished. The importance of doing this can't be overemphasized. I've worked closely with dozens of senior and mid level people over the years, and understand that they contrive their days and their weeks. Yes, a lot of them suffer the big inflow of e-mails, new work, and too many meetings that a common mobile worker suffers. But they don't let that dissuade them from their plans (with the exclusion, naturally, of a few rare emerging activities).

3. Utilize the Pareto Principle. Whenever you center your attention on the actions that rank in the top twenty percent in terms of importance, you'll have an eighty percent payoff on your effort. ... If your to-do list has 10 items on it, the two most crucial ones will give you an eighty percent return on your time.

Arranging a Mindsweep

You can't adequately manage your jobs if you don't have all of them named. It does no good to have a list of fifty tasks when a hundred others are floating around in your brain and breaking your

concentration, particularly when some of those one hundred are more crucial than the fifty that are written down. So, a key to effective task management, is to write all of your tasks down and place them into your planning system (PDA, PC, or paper-based). The finest way I know of to accomplish this is with a Mindsweep: utilizing a tablet, or PC, or PDA, put down everything that springs to mind. It may take you a couple of hours to do this satisfactorily, but you'll be astonished at how many things you'll put down that are jobs (or projects) that weren't in your planning scheme. You ought to do this periodically. You'll need to go through your inboxes (physical and electronic, home and work) to guarantee you acquire all actions and place them into your system. When you blend this material with what you got from your mindsweep, you ought to have a great listing of everything you need to accomplish.

Keeping it bite-sized (following Actions)

Limit every chore to a solitary activity, the one you have to accomplish next to make progress on an undertaking. Prior to GTD, a common action item in my chore list may have been 'formulate Home Budget.' I'd dillydally on it as I recognized those 3 words represented much work. That "chore" wasn't real a chore at all, but a Project comprising several tasks. So, I'd put it off, time and time again. But today, the beginning single step action item for this project may be critique expenses for the past 2 months. That's a particular activity that my brain knows I may accomplish in a fairly short time period, so there isn't as much of a tendency to put it off.

Managing Contexts

If you've never altered the categories in your Palm's To-Do list or Pocket PC Tasks list, you'll likely determine that there aren't many and that they're pretty general. While the stock categories supply a

workable way to categorize projects, customizing the categories will help you best manage your tasks.

You ought to always consider how you are able to personalize the categories to work better for you. For instance, you likely wouldn't want my @Couch class. However, I utilized it as some of my @Home tasks are ones I'll do only if sitting on my couch (like Mindsweep) you are able to set these classes up directly on your Pocket PC or Palm, but it's best to go into Outlook and utilize its Master Category tool to arrange the categories. While you're arranging your fresh categories, you may wish to delete several the existing Master Categories that are built into Outlook, as a lot of them are likely to not be valuable to you.

Prioritizing

Quit prioritizing tasks and begin factoring in your intuition when you make selections on what to work at next (thinking about time available, energy state, context etc.). Individuals who implement the A, B, C priority systems for their tasks fall under the trap of working at only the A and B points, letting additional items fade for long periods, even for jobs that may be done in a matter of minutes of arc.

A few tasks are intrinsically more crucial than others, and you don't wish to get into a spot where the more crucial work is consistently held hostage to the simpler and less important work. So what do you do? One method of prioritizing while still utilizing GTD is to have a center category. When I utilized it, I'd normally assign 6 or so jobs to this category during my weekly planning session. It doesn't matter if they're ones that I'd do @Computer or @Office or @Home, they'd get assigned to this class. The tasks I'd assign to this class would be ones I truly, really wish to have accomplished by the end of the following week.

A different area in which I deviate from "pure GTD" is in the utilization of assigning dates to a few tasks. For instance, if I've an crucial meeting for next Thursday, I delegate myself a task of "preparation for Thursday meeting" and give it a begin date of Tuesday and an finish date of Wednesday (so that if I don't get to it on Tuesday, ascribable to emergent tasks, then I still have Wednesday to do the preparation). I might have many such tasks in a common week. I personally like to have an Agenda View on my Smartphone and Pocket PCs (and Palm), which shows the day's appointments and chores.

Utilizing the Two-Minute Rule

The Two-Minute Rule has been as helpful to me as any time management construct I've come upon in the past thirty years of my business life. The Two-Minute Rule is this: if you've an activity that may be done in 2 minutes or less, accomplish it. For instance, if you've an item in your in-box that states 'call Billy Bob about condition of the deal', accomplish it. Why place an item in your in-box or Tasks list when you are able to simply plow ahead and accomplish it nearly as fast? Although profoundly easy, this is one thing I find I have to work at from time to time.

Chapter 3:

Planning

Synopsis

Weekly planning is a crucial activity that ought to be a habit for every business pro. Disregarding it may cost you in the long-term, and even in the short-term.

Plan It

I've a recurring Friday appointment with myself for arranging my weekly planning. Arranging it on a Friday provides me an opportunity to do anything I might have omitted during the week. I've discovered that it helps me to have peace and quiet (shut office door), but you might like a little background music.

For mobile workers: If you travel a great deal, you'll likely wish to have your planning material with you. (You are able to generally keep it all on your PDA or paper planner or combo of both.) I've occasionally done a great part of my weekly planning while on an plane flight back home, utilizing a weekly planning checklist on my Pocket PC to lead me (may do with a Palm device, also).

Before you do any literal planning, it's crucial to do a full review of the week to see if you've left out anything. This critique would include going through all of your inboxes, physical besides electronic, to view memos, notes to yourself (including yellow stickies), and anything where you've placed info that you have to do something with. If you don't keep your e-mail inbox empty (I'm guilty on this one), you'll wish to view all the e-mail that came in during the week to guarantee you haven't forgotten to flag any you have activity on.

I likewise like to go through my Task list to determine if there are any jobs I meant to complete but didn't. I likewise check to see if I have to reword any of the jobs to ensure they're truly action-oriented. After executing the recap, it's time to get into to analyzing every Active Project to guarantee that you identify a following activity for every one. This is likewise a great time to countercheck that you've defined a clear Successful

Result for every project. This ought to be followed by viewing each of your Someday and perhaps items to see if there are any that have to become Active Projects (or even wiped out).

The weekly planning session is likewise a fantabulous time to recap your mission and likewise your goals, to see if you're on target with them and to take action if not.

After I've accomplished this, I recap approaching appointments to see if there are any meetings or deadlines I demand to prepare for. Note that it's a great practice to exhibit project deadlines on your calendar. The way I like to accomplish this is with an all-day appointment.

The last steps in the process are to distinguish Focus Items and to think about scheduling time for the most crucial jobs. You ought to likewise think about allowing time to work on particular projects or to accomplish particular types of work (like @Computer tasks). Ordered and thorough weekly planning may help put you and keep you on top of your game.

Chapter 4:

Goals

Synopsis

Here are a couple tips on goal setting that I've found out over the years. I've only included the matters that I've found from experience that have worked for me.

Go For It

The association of goal setting to time management is pretty aboveboard: If you don't set and reach for goals, you're going to work at stuff that doesn't serve you, thereby languishing your time. (Naturally, we all work at stuff that doesn't help us from time to time, but people who have no goals do much more of it.)

Among the most sensible things I've ever heard about goals is that merely the act of setting a goal provides you a fresh lens to view life through, and that this fresh lens will assist you in accomplishing the goal. You'll discover opportunities that you'd never have come across otherwise.

Individuals of different professions would view the same crowd of individuals; however an optometrist would likely more notice the individuals in the crowd who were wearing glasses than would the line backer who'd likely more note the individuals who were athletically built. When you set a goal, you'll begin seeing chances to make it occur.

Getting moving

One handy way of producing your list of goals is to fill in the blanks below the following categories:

- What you wish to BE
- What you wish to Accomplish
- What you wish to HAVE
- What you wish to GIVE
- What you don't wish to BE, Accomplish, HAVE, and GIVE

While you're brainstorming in these classes, you'll need to make certain you consider subcategories of concern to you. Ones that individuals frequently utilize are:

- Personal
- Loved ones
- Spiritual
- Professional
- Fiscal

This is simply a proposed list to get you thinking.

The Brainstorming procedure:

When you're brainstorming what to accomplish/be/have/give, think about what you'd do if you had no restrictions:

For instance, what if income and health weren't obstructions for you?

Likewise, consider the individuals you like and what it is that they have, accomplish, and are that you wish to emulate. You may even wish to ask one of these individuals to be your mentor, to help you think through these fields (at any rate partly), and to tell you what he/she has discovered to be effective for them.

You'll need to provide yourself a peaceful environment so you are able to really brainstorm. And, you do need to brainstorm, which implies: you write it all down, and you cast aside nothing, regardless how laughable it appears. When you attempt to mix brainstorming and practicality, you always lose the advantage of brainstorming.

You'll get time later to be pragmatic with your list. Sometime during this brainstorming drill, you should envision your funeral. What would be stated about you if it was held now, and how does that disagree from what you truly wish to be said about you? Did you leave your loved ones with a financial situation that you truly wish them to

have? From my own experience, I must unhappily suggest that you likewise envision the funeral of your dearest family. You might think you're being as good to your loved ones as you are able to be, but I promise you that you'll wish you had accomplished far more for them if you lose one of them.

When you've brainstormed your list of goals (which you might wish to do over the course of a few days or weeks), then you are able to comb out the ones that just don't add up. One way of reducing the list is to ask why do I wish this and what good will it truly do. When you discover a goal that doesn't have a great answer to this question, you've discovered a goal you are able to toss.

Likewise you should consider how to prioritize your goals, at any rate to the point of which ones you wish to work at 1st. You are able to prioritize them by region (Personal, loved ones, Spiritual, Professional, Financial, so forth), with every area having a Priority 1 and a 2 and ... Or, you are able to prioritize them absolutely, without regard for field, as 1 through 109 (or whatever). Note that priorities are likely to shift as your life conditions shift.

Then, it's time to knuckle down to turn the list into activity steps. Choose which goals are to be long-run goals and which are to be short-run and which fall someplace in between. Then, beginning with your short-run goals, envision what it will take for you to achieve the goal. This will help you in breaking the goal down to steps. Naturally, you likewise have to set deadlines for each of these goals (and steps).

If any of your goals turn to making a shift of habit, you ought to note that many researchers have discovered that it requires about twenty-one days to shift a habit. You'll need to factor this into your planning.

Likewise, when shifting a habit, you'll require discovering ways to give yourself favorable reinforcement for making alterations.

Lastly, you should have your key goals in front of you on a steady basis. You ought to view them at least weekly to see to it you're making progress and to see if you have to change your plans in anyway.

As far as software for goals, I've been told that Target-Assistant for the Palm platform is good, but haven't tried it out. Personally, I'm not truly keen on utilizing a PDA for goal setting, as I believe you should utilize something that "frees" your thinking process, like mindmapping or blank pieces of paper or whatever you feel helps to open your creativity. A PDA is good for carrying around a document that has your settled goals in it (a Word document or a spreadsheet, for instance), but it's likely not the best thing for goal formulation.

If you require more help with goals than was provided above, there are many books on goal setting that you might want to think about. If you've tried hard at goal setting previously and just haven't done well with it, you might even wish to consider taking a seminar.

Chapter 5:

Tips From The Gurus

Synopsis

Jack Welch, Warren Buffett, and a lot of other greats have portioned out some of their insights with the world through a few of their writings and interviews. I thought it would be a great to share a few of those insights here. As with a lot of matters that I've learned over the years, I wish I had studied some of these insights earlier (or that I had paid attention to them earlier). I surely wish you well in practicing them in your own life. For now I merely highlight a couple of insights.

All the same, I consider the accompanying insights to be of such substantial potential value to everybody, that I wanted to go ahead and share them without waiting to build a bigger list.

Advise From The Big Dogs

Welch's "6 Commandments":

Command your fate, or somebody else will

Confront reality as it isn't as it was or however you want it to be

Be blunt with everybody

Shift before you need to

Don't manage, lead

If you do not have a competency advantage, don't compete

Warren Buffett's investment-in-a-nutshell formulas:

Formula 1: do not Lose Money

Formula 2: do not blank out formula 1

Wayne Gretzky:

A good ice-hockey player plays where the puck is. A great ice-hockey player plays where the puck is going to be.

Einstein:

An individual who never made an error never attempted anything new.

Everything ought to be made as easy as possible, but not simpler.

Insanity: doing the same matter again and again and anticipating different results.

No issue may be solved from the same level of consciousness that produced it.

Peter Drucker:

Efficiency is doing things correctly; effectiveness is doing the correct things.

Unless dedication is made, there are only promises and desires; but no plans

Lou Holtz:

The mental attitude you pick to assume towards life and everything it brings you will decide whether you realize your dreams.

What you're capable of accomplishing is decided by your talent and ability.

What you try to do is decided by your motivation.

How well you do something is decided by your mental attitude.

Discipline isn't what you do to yourself; it's what you do for yourself.

Before picking out an action, ask yourself, "Will this raise my opinion of myself?" If it doesn't, seek an alternative that will.

Steve Jobs:

When I was seventeen, I read a citation that went something like: "If you live every day like it was your last, someday you'll most surely be correct. This made an impression on me, and since then I've looked in the mirror each morning and asked myself: "If today were the final day of my life, would I wish to do what I'm about to do today?" And if the answer has been "No" for too many times in a row, I recognize I have to shift something.

Wrapping Up

Overcoming putting things off and making good use of your time may take some discipline, a word that strikes fear in the hearts of many people, including me. However I can generally get the fear to lessen, when I work on it, by centering on a quote about discipline:

"Discipline is not what you do TO yourself -- it is what you Do FOR yourself."

And, speaking of doing something for yourself, don't forget to provide yourself a reward when you do make progress on overcoming putting things off and making good use of your time. Reinforcing positive behaviors helps turn them into habits.