GladiatorTraining.biz
TURNING WORKERS INTO WARRIORS

# Higher Productivity

## Members' Dossier




**Getting More Done without unnecessary Struggle**

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# Strategic Productivity Briefing

When people talk about **"Time Management"**, there is a basic misunderstanding.

The truth is simple: We cannot control time itself—we cannot make it go faster or slower, or increase the number of hours in a day.

What we can control—or manage—is ● what gets done, ● in what order, and ● what can wait, or indeed be omitted.

So, in reality, productivity is actually a matter of **"Prioritising"** what's important over what isn't.

Although this may sound obvious, it is surprising how often we do the opposite.




Alongside our training and presentations, Gladiator Training provides these essential keys to workplace efficiency.

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# The Three Universal Laws of Productivity

## Law 1: Be the master of your day, or you will become a slave to other people's priorities.

Your time is like a full tank of fuel: it is a limited and precious resource. Every time you spend your energy on someone else's urgent requests, you burn fuel that belonged to your own goals. In the end, your tank runs dry before you can achieve what truly matters. Your time is your most valuable asset—do not let anyone waste it or steal it from you.

## Law 2: If your objectives are not crystal clear, less important tasks will shout louder and take over.

To protect your time, you need to understand its true value. Think about what your time is worth—either through your salary or the business goals you are aiming to reach. When you realise how much an interruption actually costs, it becomes much easier to politely decline distractions.

Of course, when a request comes from your boss, saying "no" is not always an option. However, you can use smart, professional template responses to manage their expectations without dropping your core work:

*"I would be happy to help with this. I am currently finishing [Task X], which is due at 3:00 pm. Should I pause that to focus on this immediately, or can I start it as soon as I finish?"*

## Law 3: Build a reputation as someone who treats their schedule with respect.

When colleagues know you defend your calendar fiercely, they think twice before interrupting you with minor issues. Treat your calendar like a professional tool, not just a decoration on your screen. After all, you would not walk out of a meeting with a major client for a quick chat—so treat your dedicated focus time with the exact same respect.

If a colleague asks for a moment of your time, try a response like this:

*"I would love to help, but I must finish this report by 4:00 pm. Can we schedule 15 minutes tomorrow at 10:15AM perhaps?" (Make sure they see you open your calendar to check the slot!)*

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## Three Proven Executive Habits

To help keep your schedule on track, it helps to incorporate these timeless habits into your daily routine:

- **The "Touch It Once" Rule** (*Mark McCormack*): Never pick up an email or request, read it, and set it aside to worry about later. The moment you open a task, make a firm choice: reply immediately, delegate it to someone else, or schedule a specific time to handle it.

- **The 48-Hour "Cooling Off" Rule** (Jim Rohn): Emotional urgency is the enemy of real progress. When a new, non-emergency request threatens to disrupt your week, put a mandatory 48-hour delay on it. This simple gap allows genuine priorities to separate themselves from temporary panic.

- **The "Clean Desk" Closure** (Zig Ziglar): Mental fatigue at the end of the day rarely comes from the work you completed; it comes from unorganised tasks left hovering in your sight. Spend the last 10 minutes of your day clearing your workspace and closing open tabs. Starting tomorrow with a clean slate keeps your mind calm and ready.

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# For the Busy Executive:

## Start Here

**Avoid Mental Overwhelm:**

Stop all negative self-talk and start planning instead.

**Be Realistic:**

Accept that while you may have a lot to do, you probably will not finish everything today.

**Create a handwritten List:**

While digital apps can be handy, putting tasks on paper[1] makes you more likely to commit to them and ensure they get done.

[1] *preferably using the format provided*

**Distractions — Remove Them!**

If you need to check social media or news, save it for your breaks. Remove the temptations. Put away unnecessary devices.

**Select your Top Priorities:**

Pick 3 to 5 vital tasks that *must* be finished today no matter what. There will be others, but *these* are your priorities. Prioritize!

**Create a sense of Urgency:**

Once you decide that a task must be done, give it your serious attention; prioritize it, give yourself a deadline, focus! Treat it as a commitment you have with another person.

## Block Your Time:

**Schedule appointments immediately:**

Add appointments to your calendar right away and set reminders.

**Set aside time for calls:**

Block dedicated slots in your day to make routine or less urgent phone calls.

**Break up long tasks:**

Divide large projects into chunks to maintain concentration. If needs be, switch tasks in between; this recharges your energy and focus. Use 'focus sprints' – short bursts of effort.

**Use the Pomodoro[1] technique:**

Work in focused 40-minute intervals followed by short breaks. Five to ten minutes can regenerate your energy.

[1] *"pomodoro" – "tomato", in Italian – refers to the Kitchen Timer.*

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## Manage Your Energy Levels

**Match tasks to energy levels:**

Know your personal energy levels. Then *allocate* your most critical work when your energy is at its *highest*. This is when *'focus sprints'* are more possible.

**Save routine tasks for low energy:**

Handle simple, administrative work when you feel tired.

**Schedule regular breaks:**

Take short breaks to recharge your mind—a little physical movement works wonders too.

**Control interruptions:**

There are different ways to say, "No." It's a huge time saver.

Resist the urge[1] to answer every email, or phone call *immediately*. Plan your work and work your plan[2].

[1] *Refer to the 'Eisenhower Matrix'.* [2] *"Create a plan, create a system and then DO IT." —Napoleon Hill*

## Use the Eisenhower Matrix

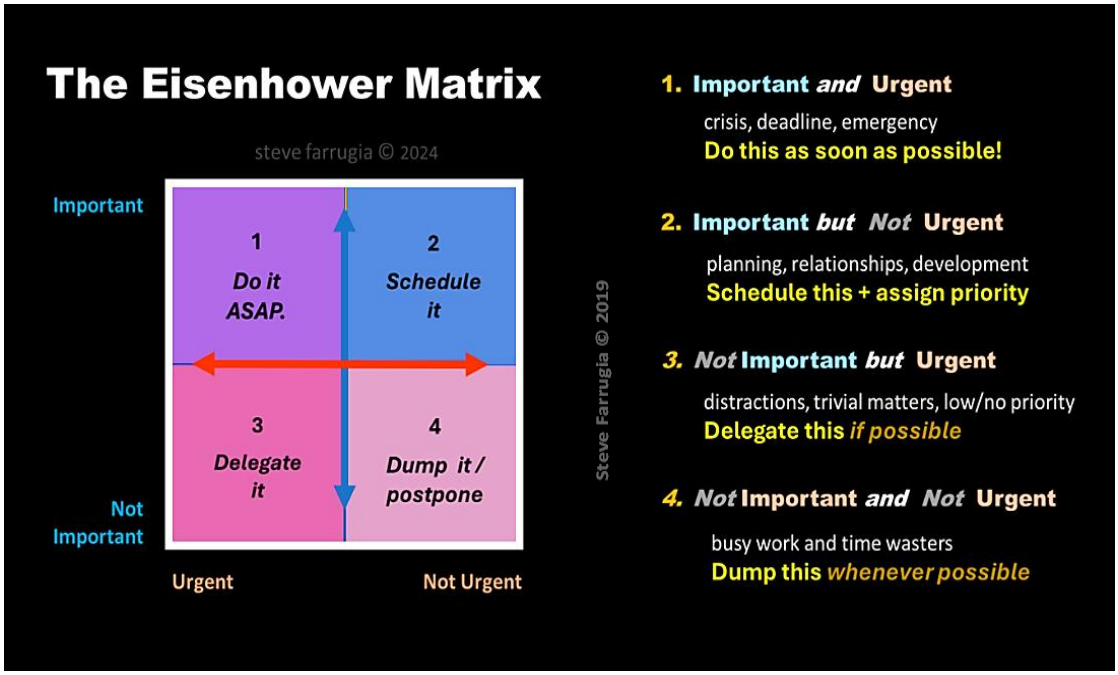
**Identify important tasks:**

Focus on activities that directly align with your long-term goals.

**Identify urgent tasks:**

If a task is *urgent* but not important, see if you can delegate it to someone else.

If it's *neither* urgent, *nor* important, it's often only eating your time / energy.
Does it even need to be done?



## Take Charge of Your Day

**Build momentum early:**

Where possible, start your morning with a quick, easy task to boost your motivation. Small wins can build energy.

**Tackle difficult tasks next:**

The best time to handle a tough job is right after a small "win," while you feel energised.

**Create a sense of urgency:**

Remain focused on your goals and do not let other people distract you.

**Focus on the "Why":**

Use our planning forms to keep your goals clear and remind yourself why each task matters.

**Plan ahead:**

Plan your schedule at the end of the previous working day.

## Next Steps for Peak Efficiency

These core habits will help you regain control of your day. However, to truly master your workload, you should also apply three proven mind skills and productivity models:

1. **The Eisenhower Matrix** (for clear prioritisation) follow link

   ***The Important and Urgent take priority, the Important but not urgent next, the purely urgent (unimportant) is delegated, and the 'neither' is abandoned.***

2. **Pareto's Principle / The 80:20 Rule** (for maximum impact with less effort)

   ***"Roughly 80% of consequences come from 20% of causes."***

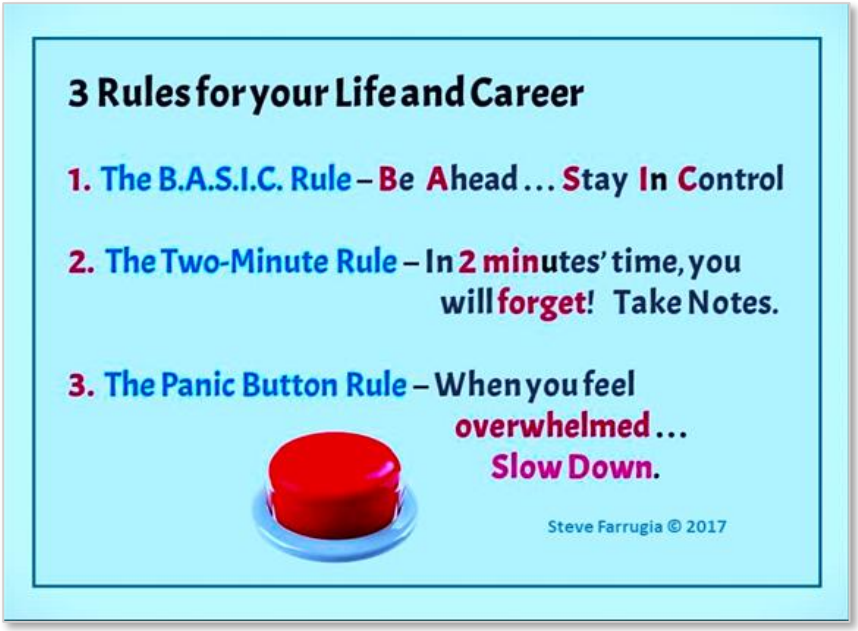
3. **Parkinson's Law** (for setting effective time limits

   "***Work expands to fill the time available***."

Remember: **it is much easier to stay ahead than to constantly have to catch up.**

There is simply no substitute for good organisation. Refer to *Rule 1: The 'BASIC Rule'* below to maintain your workplace efficiency! Timely action will save a later chaos.

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*Read the* **3 Rules** *article,* here, *for an explanation of the three rules.*

## Pareto's Principle / The 80:20 Rule

According to this principle, roughly 80% of the results – whether positive or negative – generally arise from only 20% of the competing causes.

20% of your clients provide more or less 80% of your profits,

but similarly, 80% of your problems although probably a different 20%.

Focus on what matters first. Identify your important 20%.

The rest can either wait, or be delegated, or altogether removed from your schedule.

But be careful:

Leaders often treat "the remaining 80%" as mere noise to eliminate.

In reality, that 80% often contains low-yield *operational maintenance* that cannot be discarded without systemic failure. Sometimes, in that 80% there might be still untapped potential.

The skill lies not so much in merely ignoring the bottom 80%, but in optimising or automating it so the top 20% gets uninterrupted focus.

Furthermore, what is highly recommended is to help your team identify *their* high-leverage 20% as this reduces cognitive overload faster than any 'time-management' tool.

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## Parkinson's Law

If you don't allocat a timeframe, a job could take forever. When you delegate, state your expectations regarding its completion. You might have to adjust your estimates, of course.

This is not about setting aggressive deadlines. It is rather about eliminating friction *and* artificial buffer. When time constraints are applied correctly, they force clarity rather than panic.

**Deadlines**: Setting unrealistic deadlines can backfire as team members may often sacrifice quality, or they might experience stress from over-ambitious targets.

To make Parkinson's Law work effectively when delegating, pair the timeframe with a clear definition of **"done"**. Being specific on what result is expected establishes a *quality baseline*.

**Meetings**: Time-boxing works best when combined with an "outcome-driven" agenda rather than a "time-driven" one (*e.g.* "We will end as soon as we make Decision X," rather than "We have 30 minutes"). That said, a meeting *end-time* must always be set.

> End activities the moment the outcome is achieved rather than waiting for the clock to run out.
>
> Frame the agenda around decisions. Announce at the start: "*We have 45 minutes reserved, but our only objective is to agree on the vendor choice. As soon as that decision is made, the meeting is over.*"

Whether delegating or scheduling your own work, allocated time. Adjust as necessary, but remember that time is not elastic.

| Focus Area | Common Pitfall | Parkinson's Law Solution |
|---|---|---|
| **Delegation** | Ambiguous standards often lead to overworking | Pair the *time limit* with an explicit "Definition of Done" |
| **Meetings** | Filling the full, scheduled block (drifting) | Adjourn immediately once the target decision is reached |
| **Projects** | Massive end-goal deadlines can create focus-fog / drift | Break work into short, time-bound, energetic *micro-sprints* |
| **Schedule** | Applying uniform urgency to all tasks—wasted resources | Constrain low-impact admin work; protect high-impact deep work |

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# Daily Plan

**" Failing to plan .. is like planning to fail. "**

Your One-Week Way to Personal Success (1992) John O'Keeffe

My Goals: .....

.....

.....

My Top Priorities Today: .....

.....

.....

## Action Tasks

Priorities

| # P | Project/Person | Task to-do | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

## Contact

| | reason for the call | phone / email / other |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

**Today's Reminders**

.....

.....

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## MY GOAL is to:

.....

.....

.....

☑ Is it **specific** enough ☐, **within my reach** ☐ and **quantifiable** ☐? Am I being **realistic** ☐?

## I am doing this *because*

.....

.....

.....

**My "WHY"** is my **motive** for wanting / needing to do this badly enough.

slice it

| **steps**: | **my target date**: |
|---|---|
| ..... | by: ..... |
| ..... | by: ..... |
| ..... | by: ..... |
| ..... | by: ..... |
| ..... | by: ..... |

obstacles

| ***What could possibly get in my way?*** | ***How I'll deal with it:*** |
|---|---|
| ..... | ..... |
| ..... | ..... |
| ..... | ..... |

own/help

***Resources I might require:***

.....

.....

.....

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# The Daily Plan explained

Handwritten plans/goals work better than digitised applications – higher commitment.

**My Goals**:

Reminding yourself of what your Goals are helps you decide which of your Action Tasks get priority. Only the actions that get you closer to achieving your goals are productive actions. The rest may be necessary but generally they're someone else's priorities. Not yours.

**My Top Priorities Today:**

Decide which are your 'absolute must-do tasks and objectives.' Remain focused.

**Action Tasks list:**

While you may have many tasks listed, with this form doubling as a 'reminder,' you must remember to focus first on your true priorities. Don't get overwhelmed by a long list.

If needs be, use separate lists for the 'bulk' and the day's Priorities.

**#P stands for "Order of Priority"**

Insert "1" for your highest priority Action Task, "2" for the next, continuing downwards, irrespective of where on the list they appear; limit to 3 to 5 essentials. Anything else accomplished is a bonus. You will obviously get more done!

**Project/Person**:

This includes tasks you intend to delegate, meetings and projects you are working on.

For meetings, remember to set a start/finish time in the 'remarks' slot.

**Contact:**

This is for contact details and 'message-objectives'.

Include the actual Task in the main list, adding a "time" if needs be.



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