

MANAGING WORKLOAD – DO YOU HAVE TOO MANY TASKS?

Questions to consider when reviewing your work.

1. Why is this task necessary?

- Do all of your tasks have a meaningful “why”?
- Are all tasks priorities or necessary to keep the trains running?
- Can you eliminate, say, an update meeting and replace it with a weekly email?

Ascertaining “why” can ensure that critical jobs are prioritised and aligned with the big picture whilst others are delegated or left undone.

2. Does it fit into my “time portfolio”?

- Create a portfolio for your most precious resource: your time
- Divide your time into core activities, eg manage the team, manage up, track the top five projects, create a vision to support business growth, sponsor a key customer account, present at two annual conferences, process emails
- Assign the ideal percentage distribution across these buckets
- Map time spent on each and set goals to achieve the ideals
- Decide where more or less time needs to be spent and how you will achieve this
- Be mindful about the responsibilities to which you attend

3. What would happen a month from now if it isn’t done?

- Before hastily agreeing to a request, visualise its future impact on you, your stakeholders and your business
- You may avoid effort spent on things that are best consigned to corporate oblivion right now

4. Who wants this task done - and who is the right person to do it?

- Ask yourself not just who could do the task, but who the *right* person is for the task
- Then liberate time through delegation and allow your teammates to appropriately own their work

5. How often do you give more importance to a task than it is actually worth?

- Evaluate your assumptions about the task’s speed and importance
- Assign accountability where it belongs; focus on the action items that are truly pressing and truly yours

6. What’s the story I’m telling myself?

- What dire consequences do you imagine if you do not accomplish everything: “People will think I’m rude”; “My direct reports are already burdened”; “I will look incompetent and weak”? Balance fact vs fear (fear, uncertainty and doubt arising from the internal narrative in our heads)
- If many of your must-do items originate from a must-do story, generate a similar list to trim your work