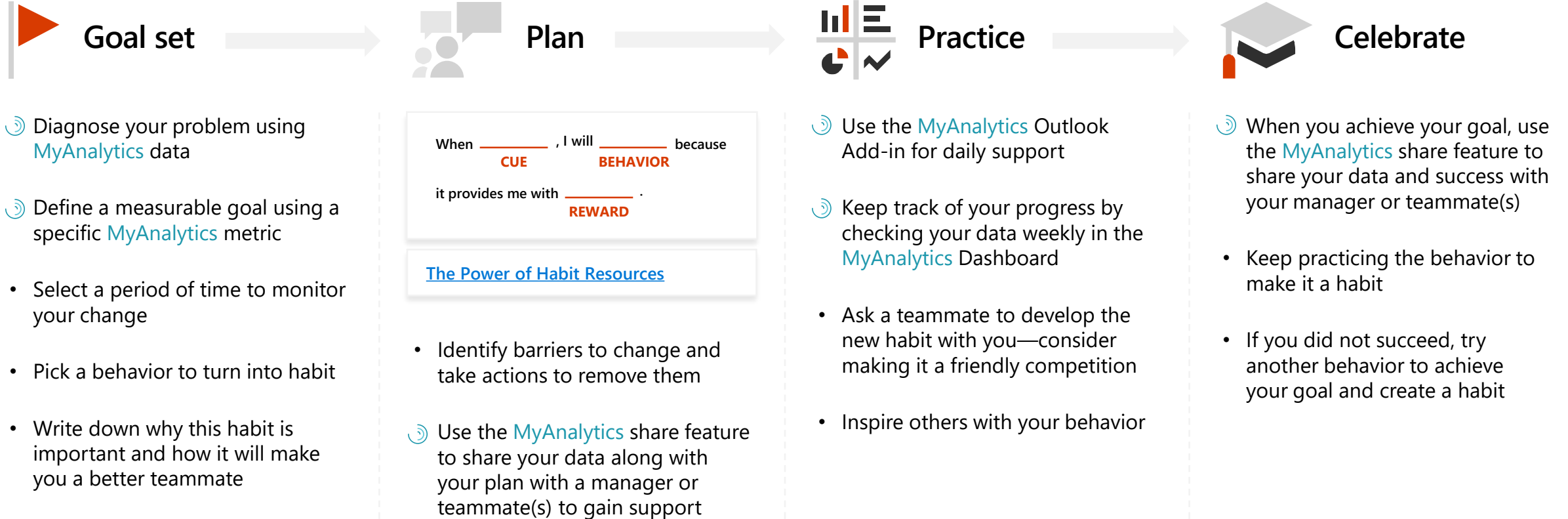# How do I turn behaviors into habits?

How to make it a habit

"Typically, doing just four to five things differently can enable people to claw back 18% to 24% of their collaborative time."[1]

Rob Cross, Professor of Global Leadership, Babson College

[1]**Reclaiming Your Day Research**

Goal set

- Diagnose your problem using MyAnalytics data
- Define a measurable goal using a specific MyAnalytics metric
- Select a period of time to monitor your change
- Pick a behavior to turn into habit
- Write down why this habit is important and how it will make you a better teammate

Plan

When _____ , I will _____ because
       CUE   **BEHAVIOR**

it provides me with _____ .
                        REWARD

The Power of Habit Resources

- Identify barriers to change and take actions to remove them
- Use the MyAnalytics share feature to share your data along with your plan with a manager or teammate(s) to gain support

Practice

- Use the MyAnalytics Outlook Add-in for daily support
- Keep track of your progress by checking your data weekly in the MyAnalytics Dashboard
- Ask a teammate to develop the new habit with you—consider making it a friendly competition
- Inspire others with your behavior

Celebrate

- When you achieve your goal, use the MyAnalytics share feature to share your data and success with your manager or teammate(s)
- Keep practicing the behavior to make it a habit
- If you did not succeed, try another behavior to achieve your goal and create a habit

Here are some **examples**

Habit playbook
Schedule shorter meetings

When we schedule long meetings we lose the group's attention and waste time. Work expands to the time allotted for it so we typically use the full amount of time scheduled for a meeting even when it is unnecessary. In a study where people working at a range of companies were challenged to schedule forty-five minute meetings rather than hour meetings and twenty- or twenty-five-minute rather than thirty minute meetings, people found they could get more or less the same amount of work done with the enormous cognitive benefit of regular breaks.

Source: How to Have a Good Day, by Caroline Webb

Goal set → Plan → Practice → Celebrate

Specific example

Over the next 2 weeks, reduce the number of hours of meetings I schedule by 20%

Ideas

When I organize meetings, I will schedule shorter meetings because it provides me with a way to give back time to my team.

When I organize meetings, I will schedule shorter meetings because it provides me with breaks to boost my brain power.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Meeting hours

📅 12.3 hrs +1.8▲

7.3 hrs company average
2.5 hrs you scheduled
9.8 hrs others scheduled

Meeting habits

Conflicting meetings — 1
Longer meetings

MyAnalytics Dashboard

◌ Share

Habit playbook

Write reminders to send emails later while in meetings

Multitasking during meetings sends the signal, "It's OK to not pay attention." When we shoot off a quick email during a meeting, we miss that part of the conversation and have gaps in our understanding. This can lead to different interpretations of a decision, missed opportunities to provide critical guidance, or inconsistent follow-through on action agreements.

Source: If You Multitask During Meetings Your Team Will Too

Goal set	➜	Plan	➜	Practice	➜	Celebrate

Specific example

> **Over the next two weeks, reduce multitasking in meetings hours to zero.**
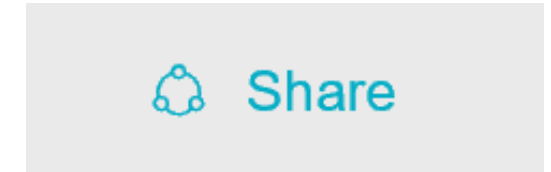
Ideas

> When I feel the need to email during a meeting, I will write a reminder to send the email later because it provides me with the satisfaction of getting the email off my mind.
>
> When I feel the need to email during a meeting, I will write a reminder to send the email later because it provides me with the confidence that I have a complete understanding of meeting discussions.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Meeting habits

Conflicting meetings	1
Longer meetings	
Recurring meetings	
After hours meetings	
Multitasking in meetings	

0   0.5   1

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share
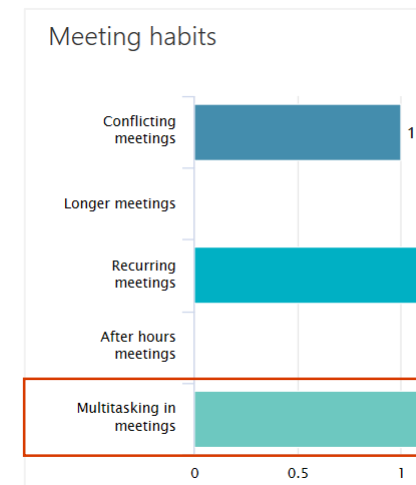
Habit playbook
Include an agenda in meeting invites

Taking the time to write an agenda enables you to carefully reflect on the need for the meeting and design an effective meeting. The habit will prevent you from organizing unnecessary meetings and help you reduce the number of meetings you schedule. Surveys indicate that people think the majority of meetings are a waste of time. In one, 71% of survey respondents said meetings are unproductive and inefficient. Avoid contributing to this problem with well-designed agendas.

Source: Stop the Meeting Madness

Goal set → Plan → Practice → Celebrate

Specific example

Over the next 2 weeks, reduce the number of hours of meetings I schedule by 20%.

Ideas

When I organize meetings, I will include an agenda because it provides me with the time to reflect whether a meeting is needed and reduce meeting hours.

When I organize meetings, I will include an agenda because it provides me with a way to design a productive and efficient meeting for my teammates.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Meeting hours

📅 12.3 hrs +1.8▲

7.3 hrs company average

2.5 hrs you scheduled

9.8 hrs others scheduled

Tip: Check out "view details" in your Dashboard meetings details chart and filter table by organizer to reflect on the meetings you scheduled during a given week.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

△ Share

Habit playbook
Book focus time in advance

We perform our best on cognitively demanding tasks when we intentionally block time to focus on them. Multitasking impairs our performance because when we process tasks in parallel, our brains are actually switching our attention from one activity to another. When switching, our brains struggle to cleanly discard the first task and move on to the next one. Constant switching creates "attention residue" and prevents us from following a train of thought long enough to stumble upon an innovative idea.

Sources: How to Have a Good Day, by Caroline Webb, **Why You Shouldn't Multitask** and **How Can I Use More of My Brain?**.

Goal set	Plan	Practice	Celebrate

Specific example

Over the next two weeks, add four hours of focus hours per week.

Ideas

When I plan my week, I will book focus time in advance because it provides me with the ability to avoid after-hours work.

When I plan my week, I will book focus time in advance because it provides me with the ability to boost my creativity.

Outlook Add-in

Stay on track. Book focus time **next week** to get work done.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Focus hours

18.8   Goal > 10 hrs

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share

Habit playbook

Batch process emails 2 to 3 times per day
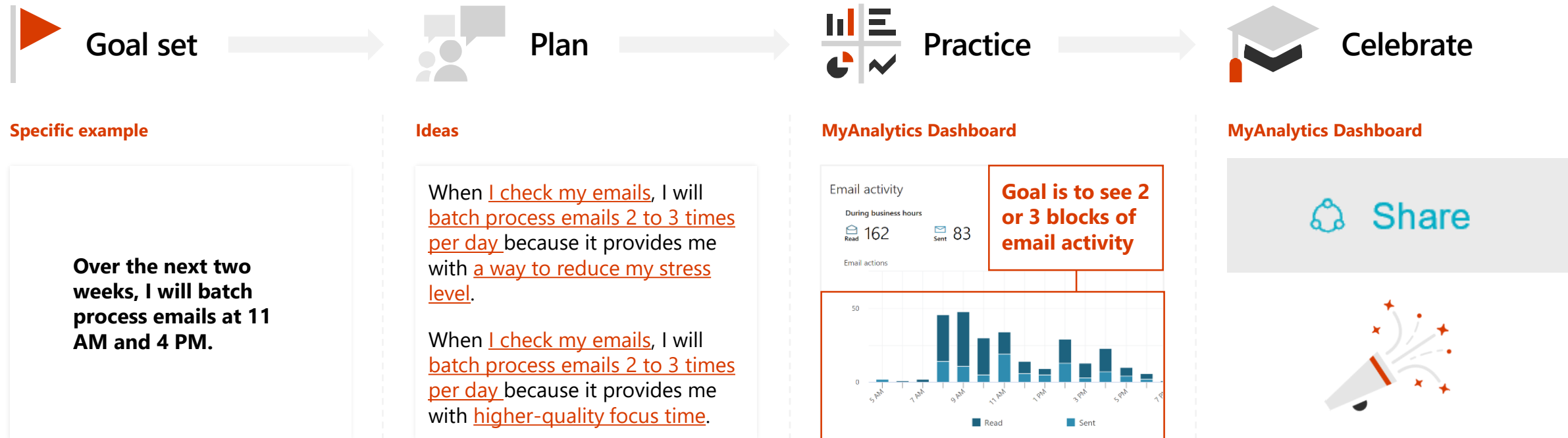
Processing emails constantly throughout the day and during our focus time subjects us to the harmful impacts of interruptions, including lower productivity and increased stress. It takes us longer than we think to fully return to a task after an interruption. Research conducted by the University of California, Irvine shows that it takes 23 minutes to get back on task after an interruption. Similarly, research conducted by Microsoft and the University of Illinois shows that it takes 16 minutes to return to a task when the interruption is specifically email.

Source: **Worker Interrupted: The Cost of Task Switching**

Goal set ➔ Plan ➔ Practice ➔ Celebrate

Specific example

Over the next two weeks, I will batch process emails at 11 AM and 4 PM.

Ideas

When I check my emails, I will batch process emails 2 to 3 times per day because it provides me with a way to reduce my stress level.

When I check my emails, I will batch process emails 2 to 3 times per day because it provides me with higher-quality focus time.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Email activity

During business hours

📖 Read 162   ✉ Sent 83

Email actions

Goal is to see 2 or 3 blocks of email activity

50

0

5 AM   7 AM   9 AM   11 AM   1 PM   3 PM   5 PM   7 PM

■ Read   ■ Sent

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share

Habit playbook
Use another form of communication

We often struggle with interpreting email because words are not the primary way we internalize messages. Research has shown that 60% of communication is understood through body language, 33% through tone of voice and 7% through the actual words. When the mind receives too little information from a sender, it composes its own story and has a tendency to emphasize negative stories over positive ones. To reduce miscommunication and email use, for quick casual questions or comments - send a chat, for complex messages - schedule a meeting, and for sensitive topics - pick up the phone or have a face-to-face conversation.

Source: One Second Ahead, by Rasmus Houggard

Goal set → **Plan** → **Practice** → **Celebrate**

Specific example

> **Over the next 2 weeks, reduce the number of emails I send during business hours by 20%.**

Ideas

> When I determine email isn't the best way to communicate, I will use another form of communication because it provides me with a way to reduce miscommunication.
>
> When I determine email isn't the best way to communicate, I will use another form of communication because it provides me with a way to strengthen my relationships.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Email activity

During business hours

Read 137   Sent 56

Email hours ✉

5.7 hrs   Goal < 10 hrs

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share

Habit playbook
Wait to send late-night emails until the AM

Working after hours sends the signal, "When I'm on, you need to be too." A significant and consistent correlation has been found between the amount of time managers send email and organize meetings after-hours and the amount of time their direct reports do the same. In one Fortune 100 technology company, data shows that every hour that people managers spend after-hours translates to 20 minutes of additional direct report time spent after-hours. The numbers vary, but significant correlations hold true for several other companies as well.

Source: **If You Multitask During Meetings Your Team Will Too**

Goal set ➔ Plan ➔ Practice ➔ Celebrate
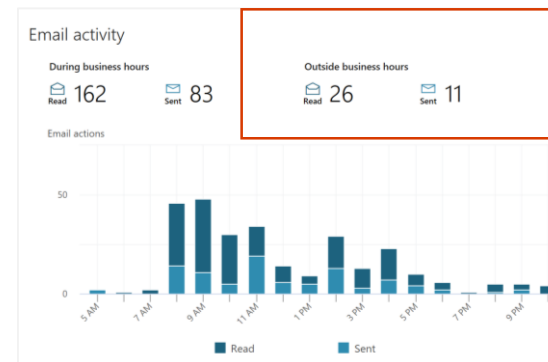
Specific example

Over the next 2 weeks, reduce the number of emails sent outside of business hours by 50%.
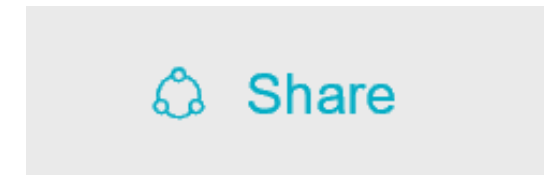
Ideas

When I choose to work after hours, I will wait to sent late-night emails until the AM because it provides me with the satisfaction that I am helping my teammates unplug.

When I choose to work after hours, I will wait to sent late-night emails until the AM because it provides me with a way to show I respect my teammates' boundaries.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Email activity

During business hours
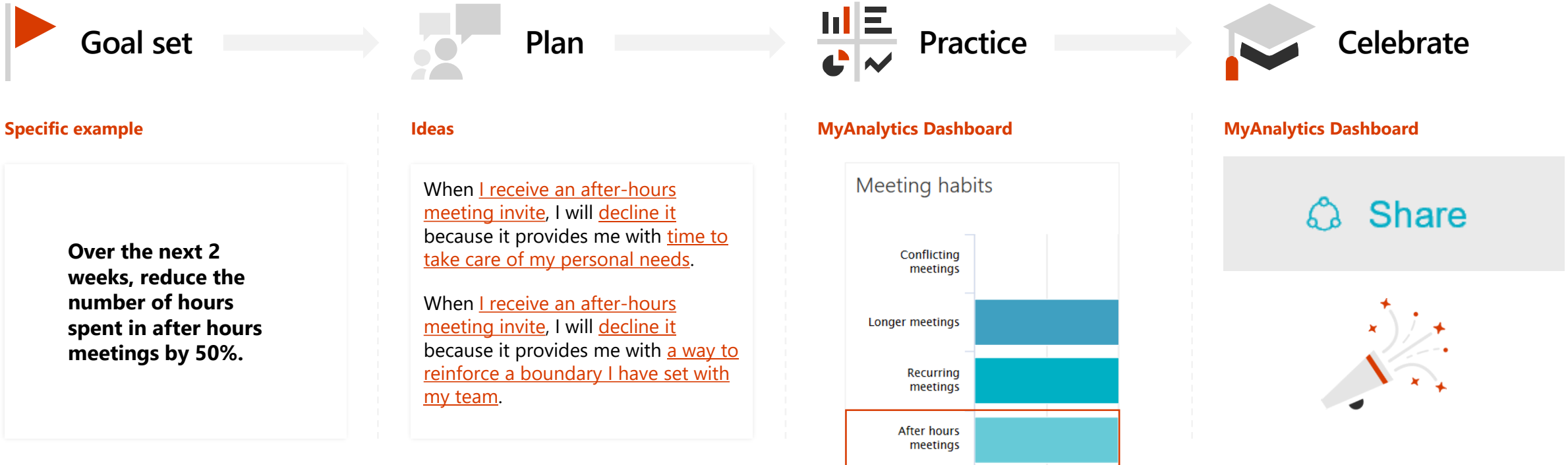Read 162   Sent 83

Outside business hours
Read 26   Sent 11

Email actions

50

5 AM 7 AM 9 AM 11 AM 1 PM 3 PM 5 PM 7 PM 9 PM

■ Read   ■ Sent

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share

Habit playbook
Decline after-hours meetings

Declining meetings after hours will enable you to reclaim personal time, reduce your stress levels and get the break time you need to perform at your very best. Over time when done consistently, your team will start to respect this boundary and hopefully also adopt it. Sometimes urgent deadlines and unusual schedule conflicts will force you to meet after hours though. When this happens, note the meeting exception in your acceptance to continue to manage expectations.

Goal set → **Plan** → **Practice** → **Celebrate**

Specific example

Over the next 2 weeks, reduce the number of hours spent in after hours meetings by 50%.

Ideas

When I receive an after-hours meeting invite, I will decline it because it provides me with time to take care of my personal needs.

When I receive an after-hours meeting invite, I will decline it because it provides me with a way to reinforce a boundary I have set with my team.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Meeting habits

Conflicting meetings

Longer meetings

Recurring meetings

After hours meetings

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share

Habit playbook

Proactively schedule "slack time"

One of the reasons we often feel overloaded is because people typically expect tasks to take less time than they actually do. We base our estimates on one standout memory rather than the average time it's taken to do similar tasks in the past. Scheduling "slack" time can help. It is a block of time on your calendar to accommodate for natural poor planning. When this time is blocked, it can't be taken by a meeting, so you have additional time to complete important tasks before the work day ends.

Source: How to Have a Good Day, by Caroline Webb

Goal set ➔ Plan ➔ Practice ➔ Celebrate

Specific example

> Over the next 2 weeks, reduce meeting hours by 1 hour for "slack" time.

Ideas

> When I plan my week, I will build in "slack time" because it provides me with a way to reduce meeting hours.
>
> When I plan my week, I will build in "slack time" because it provides me with a way to get my work done during business hours.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Meeting hours 📅

9.2 hrs   Goal < 10 hrs

Edit goal

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share