



Talent Acceleration Program

Workbook



tap.kiitos.tech

Week 2

“Time is the scarcest resource; and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed.”

Welcome to **week 2** of the Talent Acceleration Program!

On the *Technical Skills* side,

- ❖ The Frontend specialization will go deeper into the core concepts of Single Page Applications (SPA): component-based thinking, the rendering lifecycle and state are found in any of the popular SPA frameworks. As it's the most popular at the moment, we'll use React.js as the one to illustrate these concepts with!
- ❖ The Backend specialization will learn more about the key roles the backend fulfills: Application Programming Interfaces (API), the architectural pattern Representational State Transfer (REST) and lastly, database management (and its most important operations: CRUD).

On the *Soft Skills* side you will get familiar with another fundamental topic: time management. More importantly, how to take ownership of your time so that you can be more productive.

Good luck!

The TAP Team

PART 2: Soft Skills

Week	Topic
1	Mindsets
2	Ownership
3	Business communication
4	Customer centricity

Where technical or hard skills are the basic minimum requirements to do a job, the development of your soft skills will be what defines your career success.

Learning goals:

- ☐ Learn the meaning of being productive and its opposite, procrastination
- ☐ Get insight into the importance of ownership
- ☐ Understand why time management is crucial to your success in life
- ☐ Gain familiarity with tools for better managing your time

Foundations Module: Week 2

A big part of working professionally means *being responsible for the results of your actions*. What does it mean to “be responsible”? We can summarize it in 1 word: ownership. In the following sections you’ll learn all about it...

TIME IS THE MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE YOU HAVE

Have you ever double booked an appointment? Or arrived late at a meeting? If so, you have mismanaged your time.

But why is this so important, and what is time management anyway?

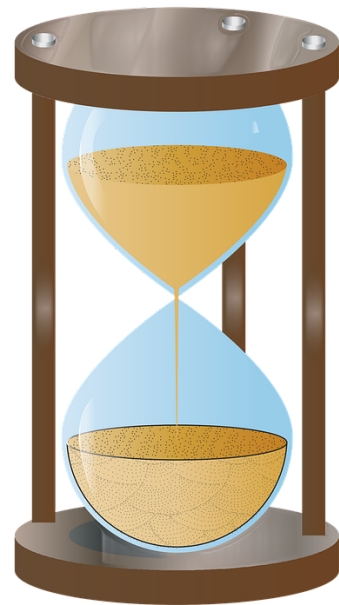
We live in a remarkable time. Today we have access to an infinite wealth of information right at our fingertips, all thanks to the internet and smartphones. And the best thing is: it's all for free.

Or is it?

When you were born you were given a set amount of the most precious resource there is. It's not your brains, nor your family; it's time.

Every moment you're engaging in things that will not improve the quality of your life, like mindlessly browsing social media, you are actually paying for it. It's not money you spend, but time!

And that's one resource you can never get more of: once it's used it's gone *forever*.



Learning Materials

- [This is how short life is](#)

- [How to Master Your Most Valuable Resource](#)

PRODUCTIVITY

In business we strive to use our time as productively as possible. Let's imagine you are running a lemonade stand. Your business goal is to *sell as much lemonade as possible*.

In order to start selling, you need to produce lemonade. You first need to get the required ingredients. Then you need to spend time actually making it. If you're a beginner you're probably inconsistent, so the quality might not always be the best. So sometimes it takes an hour to make a good batch, other times you have it right on the first try.



Your ability to be more consistent in the quality you deliver is what we could call “being productive”.

A simple definition of productivity, therefore, could be:

*the amount of business value that can be created,
in as short a time as possible.*

And what's that business value? Anything that the business could use to realize their goals; whether that's making profit, social impact or just plain fun.

In the case of your lemonade stand, examples of business value are (1) the quality of your ingredients, (2) your production method and (3) selling skills. The better those are, the more productive your business is!

Learning Materials

- [What Is Productivity?](#)
- [How To Be 10X More Productive](#)

PROCRASTINATION

All this might sound quite nice, but you're not a machine. Sometimes you don't 'feel like it' and thus procrastinate.

In your private life you are free to do so if you don't feel like it. You don't *have* to exercise every week, right?

Things are different in business: maybe you need to make a deadline, or your

colleagues are waiting for you to finish so they can move forward. You also have much more at stake: your financial security.

Regardless of the situation, there are many reasons for putting off what you're supposed to do. Not knowing what to do, perfectionism, or just plain laziness. What are the sources of your procrastination?

Learning Materials

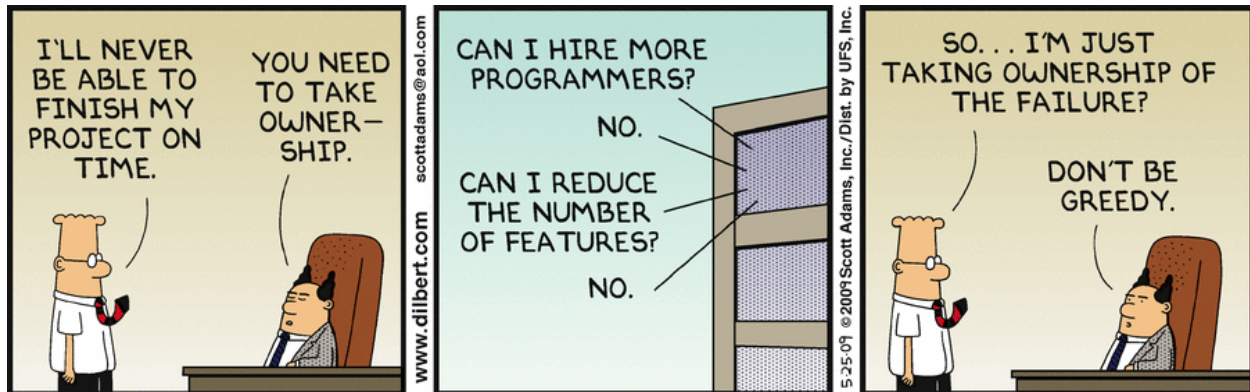
- [Why do We Procrastinate?](#)
- [Procrastination](#)

OWNERSHIP

Taking responsibility for your actions means that you own them, thus we arrive at the concept of ownership.

Many people avoid responsibility in the workplace - due to procrastination, a lack of interest, or a fear of failure. Whatever the reason, it doesn't really matter. What does matter are the consequences!

When people avoid responsibility - and do not take ownership over their work - problems will start to happen in business: deadlines are not met, customer needs are not satisfied or your colleagues might not be able to do their work properly.



If you do not meet a deadline, whoever is relying on you to get the work done so they can get theirs done, will then *struggle to meet their own deadline* or fail to do so entirely. You can imagine this being like falling dominoes, when one piece drops the rest will follow in no time.

Consequences of failing to take ownership of your work could be:

- Degradation of trust in teams. In practice this means that people will plan around you rather than with you in mind. You become an impediment to success.
- Reputational damage. If the failure reaches the customer, it's very likely they'll stop working with your company. Even worse, they might spread bad ideas to other people!

Some managers respond to a lack of ownership / responsibility from you, because they know you're inexperienced. As a result they start *micromanaging* you. This means that they're watching your every move and making sure you do what you're supposed to do.

Has this ever happened to you before? If so, did it make you feel more or less

motivated? In all likelihood, the answer is that it was demotivating (and quite irritating!)



Learning Materials

- [What is Micromanagement?](#)

WAYS TO PRACTICE OWNERSHIP

So then how do you ensure that you take full responsibility for (and ownership over) your work? The following is a list of 3 ways you can try to improve your ability to have ownership:

1. End-to-End Ownership
2. Being solutions-oriented
3. Prioritizing your work

End-to-End Ownership

This concept of *end-to-end (E2E) ownership* means when any task is assigned to you, you are ultimately responsible for its result. When somebody is not

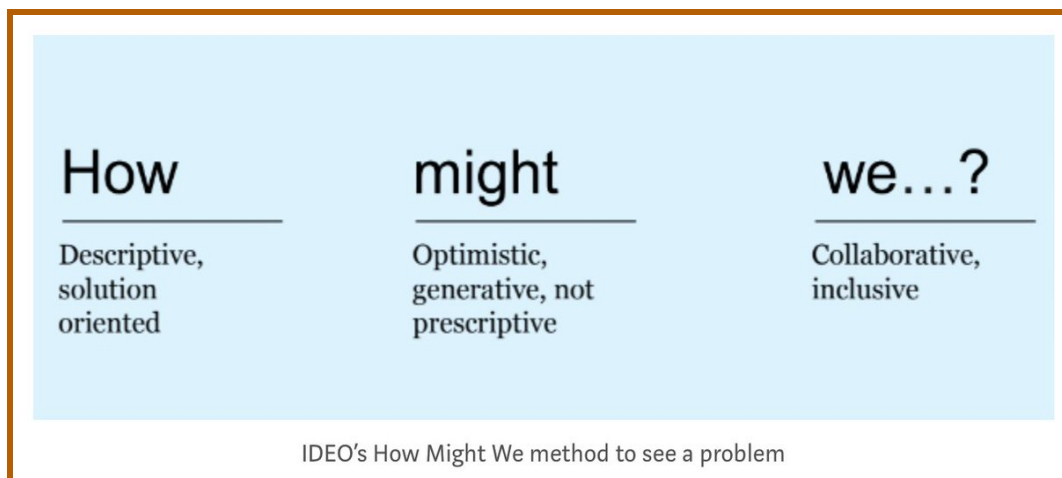
delivering what you need in order to complete your task, it's your job to *proactively* seek them out and communicate your needs!

Solutions-orientation

Feeling overwhelmed by the issues or tasks in front of you is a sign that you are focusing on the problem rather than the solution.

Although it is important to understand a problem - to know the source of it and reason behind it - dwelling on it can become problematic in and of itself. You can get stuck on a problem.

Solutions orientation means you assess the underlying causes, but ensure your focus is on what will make the situation better (not worse).



A practical way you can practice your ability to think in solutions is to use the following structure: “*How... Might... We...?*” This method allows you to reframe a problem in a way where you focus on solving the problem, rather than dwelling on why the problem is so bad.

Learning Materials

- [Are You Problem-oriented or Solution-oriented?](#)
- [How to Reframe your Thoughts](#)

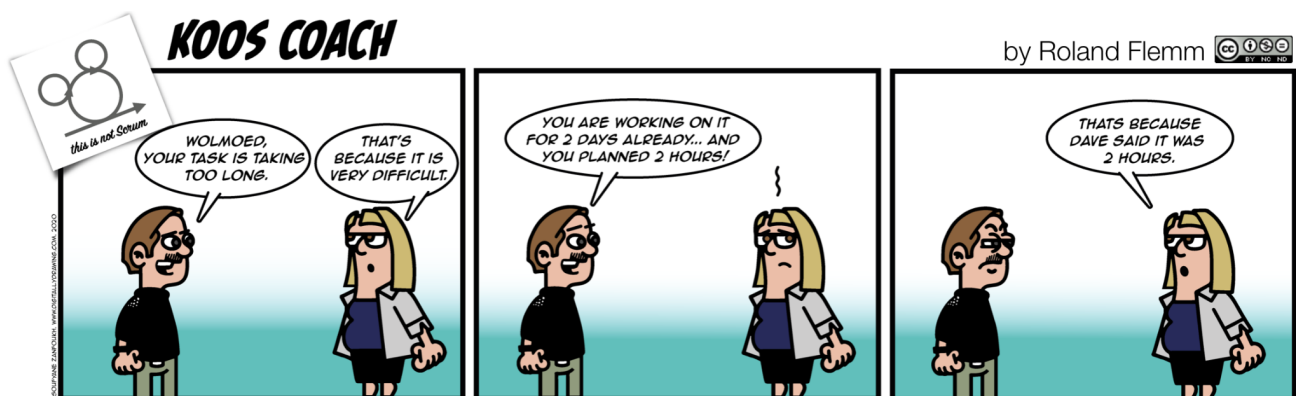
Prioritize

When you do not prioritize you cannot do your job efficiently. This means that you are doing tasks in the wrong order, are unaware of dependencies, and can cause blockages in your teams.

If you learn to prioritize you are more likely to be an asset as a team member which showcases your value to your company.

Particularly in your first years of working as a software engineer your prioritization is decided by *team leads/product managers*. But what happens when you have competing tasks between multiple projects?

Other people will set deadlines for you - but they do not know the full picture which can result in unrealistic expectations. If you do not learn to prioritise, those unrealistic expectations are because you are not communicating and prioritising.



TIME MANAGEMENT VS. ENERGY MANAGEMENT

So time management is important, because our lives are short and we want to make sure we spend our time (aka our life) on the things that matter. In business this means making sure we own our tasks and therefore prioritize to make sure we can create solutions as productively as possible.

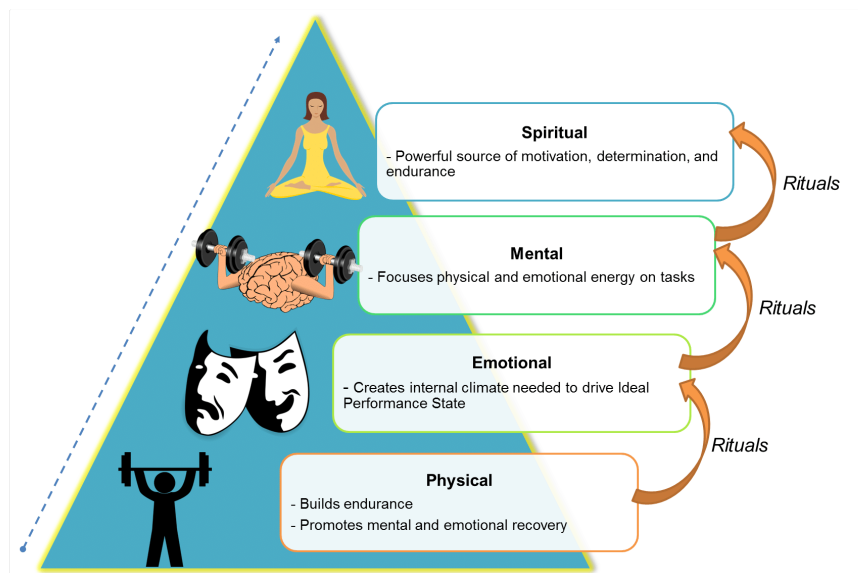
This is nice and all, but we all have moments where it's just too hard to do the right thing in order to be effective.

Let's imagine you have a long to-do-list, but you just can't get to it because *you're tired*. Is time management really what you should be concerned with?



If you think about it, it's actually energy that allows you to do tasks in the first place. Of course, it's still important to keep track of time and make sure you plan effectively. But managing yourself should always be the foundation.

Like anything, there are several theories on this. One worth looking into is the High-Performance Pyramid by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz.



Looking at the image above, you see 4 sources of energy. As software developers you can imagine that we use mental energy most of the time. Writing code is hard work and the brain burns a lot of calories doing it!

Since it's energy we're talking about, is it weird to assume that it will run out at some point? And if it does, the logical next step is to take a rest.

Learning Materials

- [Making Time Management Work for You](#)
- [The Pomodoro Technique](#)
- [Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time](#)
- [The Power of Full Engagement](#)

Tools

- [Tomighty \(Pomodoro Timer\)](#)
- [Google Calendar for Slack](#)