Disruptions Log

Template

One thing that gets in the way of effective time management is disruptions. Whether these disruptions come in the form of people approaching your desk, a phone call or email, they all prevent us from managing our time and getting things done. Disruptions can be frustrating, and we often waste a lot of time dealing with them.

There are a lot of ideas out there on how to deal with disruptions, but before you manage or minimize them, it’s a good idea to find out where they are coming from and why.

Step 1:

Each time you get disrupted (meaning each time you have to stop a task because your attention is drawn away) fill in the Disruptions Log. Here is what to record:

* Time – What time did the disruption occur?
* Type – What exactly was the disruption?
* Action – How did you deal with the disruption?
* Why – Was the disruption valid or urgent?
* Duration – How long did it take to deal with the disruption?
* Impact – What was the impact of the disruption on you?
* Reflection – How would you manage the disruption differently next time?

Do this for at least one day, preferably up to five days and then analyse the data. Look for trends and also look at how much time you have spent dealing with disruptions. Use the data to proactively put fixes in place to reduce or remove as many disruptions as you can. This will go a long way in improving your time management so you are more focused and productive.

Tips for getting the most value recording a personal disruption log.

* Record as much detail as possible about the disruptions.
* Update your log as a disruption occurs – don’t try and remember all the disruptions at the end of the day.

Day 1

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| Time | What was the disruption? | How did I deal with the disruption? | Was it valid or urgent? | How long did it take to deal with it? | What was the impact of the disruption? | What would I do differently next time? |
| 11.20 am | Messages on social media | I checked from the notification. It wasn’t as important so I put my phone on silent mode. | Not urgent | 60 seconds | My flow of work was disturbed | I will keep my phone on silent and aside before I start working on my tasks. |
| 4.00 pm | Video Conferencing from friends | I picked up the call and conveyed about me being at work. | Not urgent | 2 mins | My flow of work was disturbed | I will schedule a different time for video conferencing beforehand. |
| 6.00 pm | Emails | I replied to all the urgent and important mails. | Urgent | 15 mins | I took a long break and focused on my tasks again after an hour. | I would set a time for replying all the important and urgent mails after my work is completed. |
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Step 2:

Analyze your Disruptions Log. What trends do you notice? What does your Disruptions Log tell you?

1. **To keep my phone aside while working.**
2. **To keep my cellphone on DO NOT DISTURB mode.**
3. **To set a timeline for my work.**
4. **To set a time for replying all the urgent emails.**

Step 3:

How will you manage or minimize disruptions more effectively? What specific strategies will you put in place?

* I will turn off all the notifications while I plan to work.
* I will set a time for connecting socially with my friends.
* I will turn on the Do not Disturb mode.