6 Monochronic and Polychronic Views of Time

Just as a person's overall personality is made up of and represented by his or her traits, a person's time personality is made up of a series of time styles – monochronic or polychronic. It is expected that a person's awareness of the monochronic/polychronic side of personal time style affects his or her overall approach to time use, perceptions of time pressure and the amounts and order of time spent on tasks. This, in turn, affects his or her personal efficiency.

Monochronic approach to time management is essentially objective and lays emphasis on promptness, speed, brevity and punctuality. It is a very efficient and focused way to manage work and life. Monochronic time managers are those who thrive on detailed planning and organization. They prefer to focus on one task at a time and they follow a schedule from which they don't like to deviate. They tend to get upset by distractions or interruptions and are inclined to put new tasks off until a later date, when they can be worked into the schedule.

Polychronic approach to time management is subjective and lays emphasis on inspiration, imagination, flexibility, intuition and dedication. Trust, bonding, pleasure and quality of life influence more strongly the decisions of a person who 'ticks' in polychronic time. Polychronic time managers prefer to have many projects under way simultaneously, enjoy changing from activity to activity and are unflustered by distractions and interruptions. Unlike their monochronic counterparts, polychronic managers believe they perform well under pressure.

Monochronic Managers	Polychronic Managers
do one thing at a time	do many things at once
concentrate well	are highly distractible and subject to interruptions
take time seriously	consider time commitments and objective to be achieved, if possible
low context, need information	high context, have information
are committed to the job	are committed to the people
adhere religiously to plans	change plans often and easily
are concerned with not disturbing	are more concerned with others closeness than privacy
seldom borrow or lend	borrow and lend easily
emphasize promptness	base promptness on the relationship
are accustomed to short-term relationships	strong tendency to build lifetime relationships

Clearly, monochronic approach is better suited for dealing with routine and predictable tasks, while polychronic approach is better suited in dealing with things such as creating a new concept or resolving an argument. Conflict arises when managers apply a monchronic style to a situation that demands polychronic time, or managers prefer polychronic style while the situation warrants the use of monchronic style.

So how do the managers cope with a healthy need for subjective, polychronic, self-imposed time and at the same time fit in with the monochronic and objective time measures? The only way managers can figure out which method works best in a given situation is based on sound reasoning and acumen.

How can you get an extra hour out of each day?

Here are some tips to help you squeeze those extra minutes out of your day. Of course, you can adapt these so that they will fit in with your situation.

1. Get up earlier

2. Watch less TV (I mean how many Law & Order spinoffs does one need to watch?)

3. Avoid allowing others to waste your time

4. If you don't have to drive to work, use that time to study or plan. If you do drive to work listen to a motivational tape on the way to work instead of that mindless dj talk.

5. Organize your work; do it systematically.

6. Make creative use of lunchtime.

7. Delegate authority if, possible.

8. Spend less time on unimportant phone calls.

9. Think first, and then do the task.

10. Do what you dream about doing, instead of just dreaming about it.

11. Work hardest when you're the most mentally alert

12. Eliminate activities that make the smallest contributions to your life.

13. Always do the toughest jobs first.

14. Before each major act ask, "Is this really necessary?"

15. Choose interesting and constructive literature for spare time reading.

16. Learn how to sleep. Sleep soundly, then work refreshed.

17. Skip desserts.

18. Stop smoking.

19. Write notes or letters while waiting for others.

20. Always carry an envelope with paper in it and a few stamps.

21. Combine tasks that are done in the same area.

22. Be prompt for all appointments.

23. Lay out your clothes the night before.(I need to remember this myself)

24. Call on specialists to do work that you cannot do efficiently

25. Learn to read more rapidly.

26. Take a nap after dinner. Then take a shower. Begin the evening hours
    relaxed and refreshed.

27. Avoid interruptions.

28. Avoid making a big production out of tiny tasks.

29. Search out job shortcuts.

30. Know your limitations.

31. Work to your full capacity. I know it's tough to break bad habits. However,
    it is necessary to make sacrifices so that your business can be successful.

Don't try to implement all of these ideas at once. Implement them one at a time and repeat them until they become a part of your daily routine.

Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=DeAnna_Spencer

7 The 'Five Time Zone' Concept

To accelerate the ability to manage their time, managers need to strike a proper balance between monochronic and polychronic aspects of time management.   The 'Five Time Zone Concept' advocated by Lewis, Justus and Storz, Moni Laui (Switch on Your Mind: Accelerative Learning Strategies at Work.) enables managers to bring about that balance. The five links in the 'Five Time Zone' approach are - vision, plans, personal organisation systems, commitment and energy.

- **Developing Zone 1 - Vision and Goals:** Managers must search for visions, not tasks. These visions are guided by their personal standards and values, and the direction they want to take. Once their visions are crystallized, they need to do some thinking to create goals from their visions and action steps from their goals.

> **My vision and goals . . .**
>
> • What is most important to me?
>
> • What would I like to do if there were no limitations?
>
> • What things in my life would I like to be different?
>
> • My visions for myself are . . .

- **Developing Zone 2 - Plans:** Having established goals, managers now can move into zone two - plans. A plan is needed to turn visions and goals into action. Writing things down and using some form of planning 'tool' are keys to successful planning. Once they have drawn up the plan, they need to review it. They should plan for high-payoff and low-payoff activities for high and low priorities.

- **Developing Zone 3 – Personal Organization Systems (POS):** Zone three encompasses a manager's personal organisation system. Organising the desk, follow-up, paperwork, physical environment are all part of personal organization system. The personal organization system should focus on –
    - Creating an interesting and relaxing work-space
    - Providing easy access to basic tools and materials
    - Grouping similar tasks together to optimize time

- Devising a good follow-up system that works well
- Enabling efficient handling of each piece of paper
- Ensuring a wider reach of people

My action plan to develop my POS
1
2
3
4
5

- **Developing Zone 4 – Commitment:** The fourth time zone is the zone of commitment, in which managers correct any tendencies they might have towards procrastination. Procrastination can be overcome by identifying why one is procrastinating, breaking the mental blocks and visualizing the successful completion of a task while in a relaxed state. One way to do this it to identify the real reason for the procrastination - personal, logical, emotional or ethical barrier to action. Once this has surfaced from the subconscious to the conscious, strategies can be brought into play to deal with it.
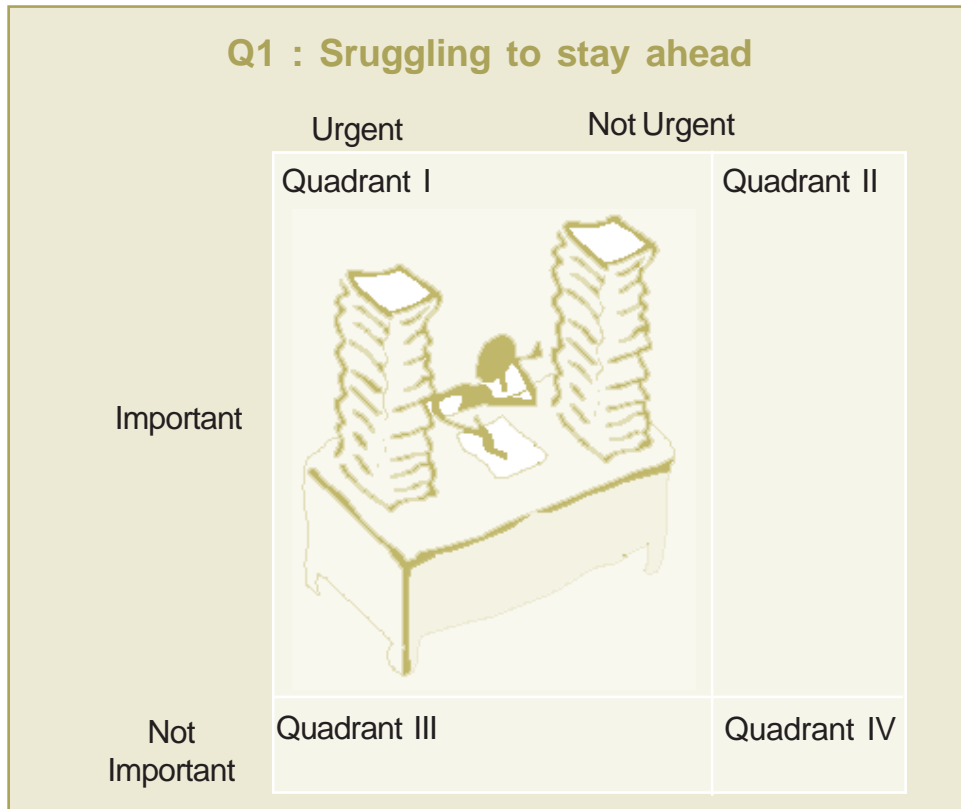
Reasons why I procrastinate . . .
1
2
3
4
5

- **Developing Zone 5 – Energy:** The final factor that keeps the chain together is zone five, the energy zone. Managers must check their office surroundings, as the environment they work in can sap or strengthen their energy levels. They must also identify the prime time - the time of day when they are most energetic and alert – they can schedule high-priority, high-payoff tasks or activities for these times.

- Find your prime time

- Internal and external prime time

- Cognitive tasks for the morning

- Complete high-energy tasks in high-energy periods

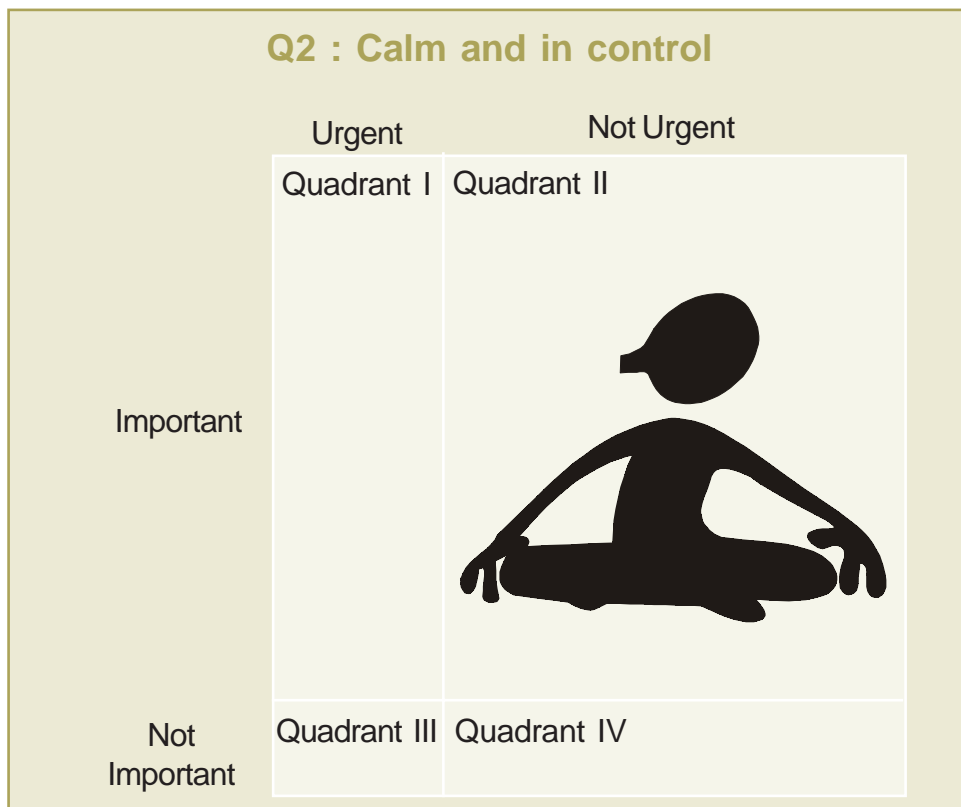- Take energy breaks

8   Time Management Matrix

Time management experts like Stephen Covey S R (The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People; Simon & Schuster) have developed a model called a time management matrix. This model enables managers to prioritize their activities and use their time more effectively. With the help of the model, they can evaluate their activities in terms of importance and urgency.

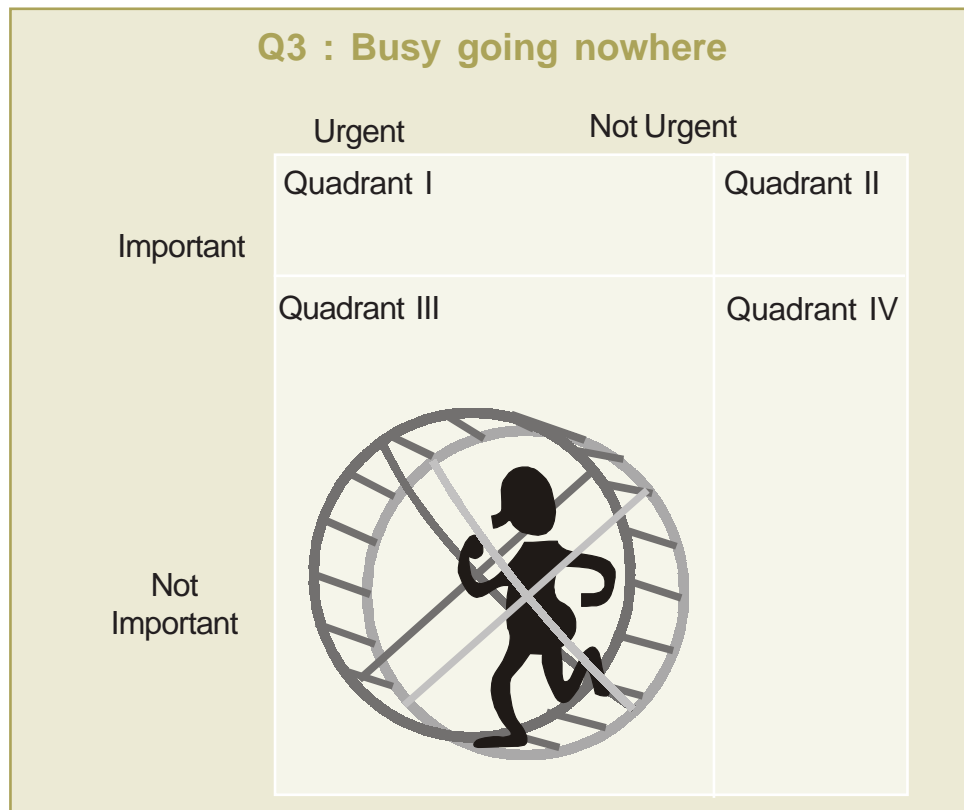| Time Management matrix	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	**Quadrant I** Crises, Projects, accidents, etc.	**Quadrant II** Planning, exercise, relationships, etc.
Not Important	**Quadrant III** Phone calls, visitors, small talk, etc.	**Quadrant IV** Daydreaming, TV, procrastination, etc.

Tasks can be categorized as urgent/ not urgent or as important/ not important as shown below. Each of a manager's activities can be distinguished as one of four types, represented by the four quadrants of the time management matrix. Categorizing a manager's activities in these quadrants helps him identify what is important and avoid unimportant tasks and activities. It also helps him prioritize important tasks and activities.

Q1 : Sruggling to stay ahead

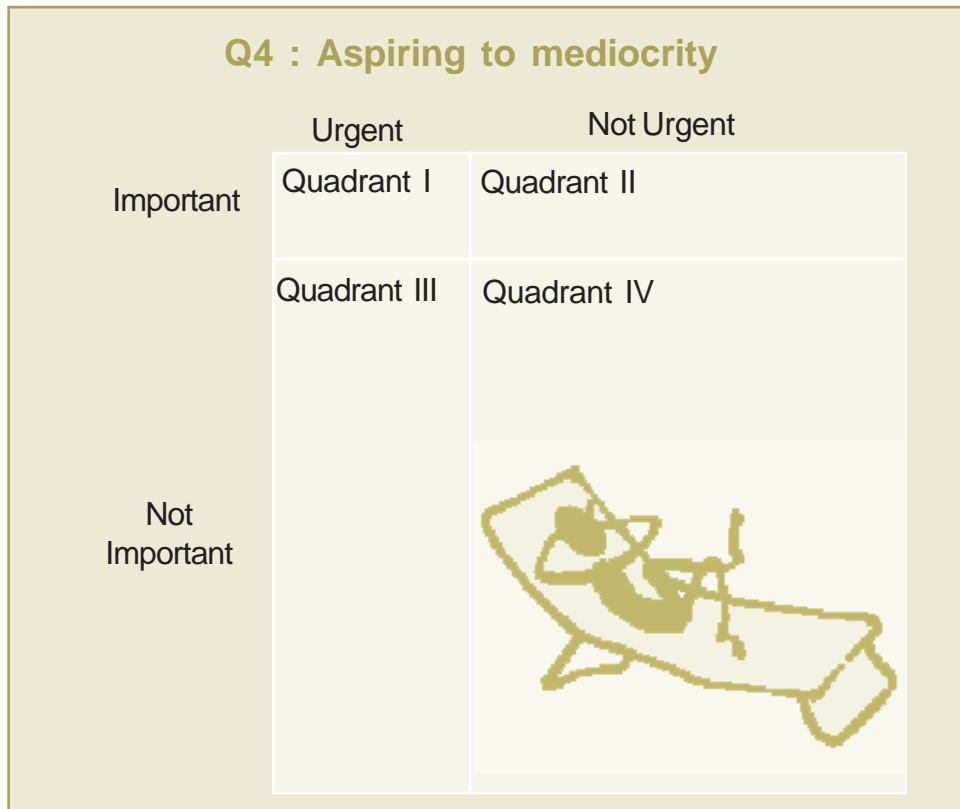|	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Quadrant I	Quadrant II
Not Important	Quadrant III	Quadrant IV

The activities in Quadrant 1 are both important and urgent. These include deadline-driven tasks and important daily chores. The results of operating in this Quadrant are stress, burnout and crisis management

Q2 : Calm and in control

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Quadrant I	Quadrant II
Not Important	Quadrant III	Quadrant IV

The activities in Quadrant 2 are important but not urgent. These activities are characterized as preparation, planning, crisis prevention, and deadline-avoiding tasks. Operating in this Quadrant will mean a manager having a proper perspective, vision, balance, discipline, control and few crises.

The activities in Quadrant 3 are not important but urgently press upon us and interrupt our more important activities. These include responding to drop-in visitors, phone calls, meetings, and mail that do not increase productivity and effectiveness. Operating in this Quadrant will mean short-term focus, crisis management, worthlessness of goals and plans, feeling of victimization and broken relationships.

Soft Skills for Public Managers

The activities in Quadrant 4 are neither important nor urgent. Busywork, time wasters, junk mail, and some phone calls are the type of activities that are a part of this quadrant. Operating in this Quadrant will mean total irresponsibility and over-dependence on others in addition to outcomes in Quadrant 3.

From a study of the Time Management Matrix, the following observations can be made:

1. Activities in Quadrant I and Quadrant II may be equally important. Some activities in Quadrant II may even be more important than activities in Quadrant I, but not necessarily more urgent.

2. Activities in Quadrant I assume critical importance and top priority.

3. Spending most of the time on Activities in Quadrant I results in stress and burnout.

4. Focusing on activities in Quadrant II can reduce the activities in Quadrant I, in the long run.

5. Focusing on activities in Quadrant II will mean avoiding all unimportant activities in Quadrant III and IV.