

END

Procrastination

+ Boost Productivity ● ● ●



As an inherent part of the human condition, there are plenty of ideas, advice and suggestions on the perils of procrastination. Whilst we're all aware of it, it can show up subtly and be hard to spot. 'Putting things off' can be a silent killer, causing stress, poor decision-making and the sabotaging of goals. In a business sense, procrastination takes a big bite out of productivity.

We delve into the quiet but potent impact of procrastination on workplace productivity, looking at six reasons why we do it. Is it fear of failure? A lack of skills? A sign of rebellion? By understanding the triggers, recruitment leaders can support their teams in the best way and find the answers to improving team efficiency. We focus on thought-provoking concepts, valuable tips and how, by adopting a Customer Telephony Integration (CTI), recruiters can defeat the urge to procrastinate. Stay until the end too because we've included some handy downloadable exercises to share with your teams.

So, in the spirit of staying on point, let's begin.



The costs of low productivity

Procrastination reduces the time you have available and is a big contributor to poor productivity. Equally, productivity is a big contributor to your bottom line. Reduced profit margins, higher employee turnover and more training investments result when output is decreased. Plus, for businesses looking to grow, low productivity is a major challenge.

Here's some interesting numbers:



6 reasons for procrastination

Maintaining and improving team productivity is essential, so it's important to understand the elements that affect it, including procrastination. We've all been lost in that rabbit hole at some point, and it can go something like this: I really need to make a note of this important call. Where's my pen? Is it in this drawer? *looks in drawer*. Oh, there's my old contact book, *sifts through pages* Ah, there's another old contact, I really should call them, I wonder if they're still interested in that role? I'll just make a note of that. Where's my pen again? Whether we are aware of it or not, procrastination impacts the productive time we have. The question is: why do we do it?

The Feeling Good Handbook by David Burns suggests six explanations:

1. LACK OF MOTIVATION

● × ● This is **boring** and too much, so I'll do something else 

We can all relate to a lack of motivation when faced with an arduous task. Boredom, overwhelm, not feeling appreciated, an absence of rewarding targets - all can lead to a slump in get up and go. Demotivation encourages procrastination, and comforts the inner voice that says: '10 more minutes of scrolling won't matter'. But delaying client calls, continually postponing meetings, and rescheduling interviews stack up over time.

Burns says the first step is to understand that it's perfectly normal for your team to feel demotivated at the prospect of mundane tasks. The next, he says, is to flip the order of 'task and motivation'. Rather than feeling motivated, then doing the task, take the uncomfortable step of doing the task, then feel motivated. He also advises that coming to terms with the fact that not everything is stimulating helps. For instance, you've probably explained to your team that cold calling is not always scintillating, but will pay dividends in the future. These kinds of tasks feel more digestible when broken down into goals and steps, highlighting the destination with rewards waiting on its completion. So, set the right targets and celebrate the small wins!

2. NOT KNOWING HOW

I don't know **how,** so i'll do this instead ●




A lack of skills and knowledge can keep your teams stuck in a groove. It's understandable. Who wants to admit they don't know how to do something for fear of looking incompetent? And for those with less self-awareness, how can they stop procrastinating without acknowledging there's a problem?

Although it seems a conundrum for team leaders, it is relatively simple to resolve. Let's take the example of a team member struggling with cold calling confidence and stalling to make a start. It may seem like a lack of interest or commitment, and perhaps it is, but it may also be a skills deficit.

The only way you can really know is by taking a closer look. For instance, monitoring calls can help you see exactly where the issue lies. Call training tools are highly valuable in gaining a keener insight. They allow you to see and hear exactly what is happening during calls, to interject at the right time if needed, and to offer real-time advice. Call recordings also allow for a deeper dive into conversations and give you the chance to feedback detailed suggestions for your team.



3. FEAR OF FAILURE

I'm hopeless at this task.   I really need to do this other thing anyway 

This can be a sensitive one to handle. Although failure is a necessary part of learning, it doesn't always feel like that to those who procrastinate due to a lack of self-belief. This could look like someone filling their routines with tasks they know they do well at, subsequently, not 'having time' to complete the ones they believe they will fail at.

Failure can cut especially deep when effort has been made. This can encourage a habit of procrastinating when daunted by certain tasks. The perception is, according to Burns, that trying again will equal another failure and it will feel terrible, so by not trying at all you can say: 'at least I won't feel bad about failing'. Failure need not be an identity to hang a hat on, so teach your teams that failing is an important step, especially for new recruiters. If you suspect a fear of failure is holding someone back, look at the targets and standards you are setting and assess how realistic they are to achieve.

4. FEAR OF SUCCESS

○→ I've already **smashed** it, ● × ●
how can I possibly do better or keep it up?

Believe it or not, a fear of success is real, it's the flip side to fear of failure thinking. Instead of worrying about messing things up, there's concern that once success has been achieved, bigger things are expected and this could be impossible to sustain. Success may also result in being put in an undesirable position, for example, being next in line for promotion or taking on more responsibility.

When both of these thought patterns are at play, procrastination rears its head once more. Whilst a fear of success is understandable in these cases, as a typically unconscious act often linked to poor self-belief, it can be challenging for team leaders to identify and coach. The first step is to encourage a team member to accept and recognise they have a fear of success, and to help them reframe their perceptions by opening up a conversation about what their trigger could be. It may be worthwhile to seek external counselling support in these instances.

5. LACK OF INTEREST IN TASKS

☑ I will literally fall asleep doing this 

Yes, admin is dull. But it's necessary. Keeping records up-to-date, knowing where to quickly turn to when you need information and ensuring you have correct data to hand are critical for good conversations that ultimately place new hires. However, a brain that feels unstimulated will hunt for the feel-good hormone, dopamine until it feels inspired again. [Cleveland Clinic](#) says that low dopamine levels lead to tiredness, unhappiness and boredom. When there's a lack of interest in a task, one solution is the 'just do it' technique. In other words, keep on doing what you need to and give yourself more time and freedom to enjoy more interesting pursuits as a result. Although it won't increase interest levels it will remove the burden of having to do it. This isn't the only solution though.

Another practical way of removing the mundane is to adopt a [telephony system](#) that will take on the cumbersome tasks for your team. Not only will this improve productivity, but it will also introduce greater work pleasure, therefore more motivation and better results.



6. REBELLION

I feel **micromanaged** with all these

- imposed schedules 
-

For some, procrastination is a form of defiance. It can often occur in those who feel capable and confident in their ability, but feel saddled by over-monitoring and strict regimens. The upshot of this is rebellion via procrastinating behaviours. For example, you may have asked a team member to send a report on their new hires for last year, but as their real ambition is to progress to senior management level, they are keener on spending their time smashing targets to prove themselves. Burns says; "Delaying tactics can be a form of rebellion against imposed schedules, standards and expectations. The expectations are often those of a power struggle, usually not on a conscious level."

When forced in a different direction, a team member may forget to gather all the information they need ahead of the meeting and be unprepared as a result. Or, if you have asked them to rewrite a client proposal, they may rebel by not sending it back on time or miss out information. As a manager, it can take a keen eye to see the reasons behind the continual delaying of phone calls, the busy perfectionist who doesn't get time to give the presentation they promised, or the report that you have waited two weeks to receive. Most of this looks like a simple lack of effort, but there's often a bit more to it. Appreciating the multiple and sometimes complex reasons behind procrastination is a necessary starting point for making your recruiters more productive. The next step? How to combat it.



How do you combat procrastination?

To convincingly 'kill' procrastination you need the antidote: productivity. According to The Productivity Project author, Chris Bailey, productivity is more about how much you accomplish, rather than how much you do. He claims that there are three basic ingredients to improving productivity: time, attention and energy. It's built on the theory that procrastination happens when we waste time; distractions occur when we don't manage our attention, and burn out strikes when energy levels are not tuned into

Let's break things down and see how you can give your recruiters more time, raise their attention and boost energy levels in the quest for greater productivity.

1. TIME: RE-THINK TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management is effectively a fallacy, we as humans cannot actually control it. While we have some agency over energy and attention, time is in the hands of the universe. We can manage the 'when' and 'for how long' elements of time though, and when we are doing this, we are effectively creating our own attention limits and energy boundaries. For instance, if you are scheduling time in your day for developing new client and business relationships, you are establishing a boundary around the focus you are going to give it, and creating a deadline that will encourage you to work more efficiently and reduce procrastination. (check out our time-management suggestions in our Tips to Make Teams More Productive section).

2. ENERGY: EXPLORE YOUR ENERGY LEVELS

Shaping your energy for greater productivity means committing to the most high-impact tasks when you have the energy to do them, rather than the time to do them. This Biological Prime Time (BPT) as Bailey calls it, allows for a much better job to be done with tasks finished quicker because heightened energy levels will speed you up during BPT time. To figure out your BPT, run a self-assessment of your energy levels. For example, consider if you feel more energised and efficient first thing in the morning. Jot down your findings as close to the minute as you can. Over time, the more you line up your energy levels with high-impact tasks, the less often procrastination will interrupt your day.



Tips for boosting energy

Diet

Drink more water and consume less alcohol and sugar. Caffeine does not make you more productive but it can be useful if you use it mindfully. For example, to avoid a slump in energy at noon, consume caffeine between 9.30- 11.30 or before a high or demanding task and not before creative tasks.

Exercise

Schedule exercise strategically to optimise brain function. It's a powerful way to increase personal productivity. Working instead of exercising may lead you to believe you are being more productive but actually, long term, you will achieve less. The energy boost from exercise allows for greater focus and helps you achieve the same result in less time.

Sleep

Cutting back on sleep to get more done is a false economy. But consistent sleep of 7-9 hours per night, gives us more energy and improves productivity over time. Poor sleep affects many aspects of brain function, from concentration, mood and memory, to the ability to reason, learn and solve problems. When you do 'borrow time' from the next day by working late, you rarely get the productivity pay off you want.

3. ATTENTION

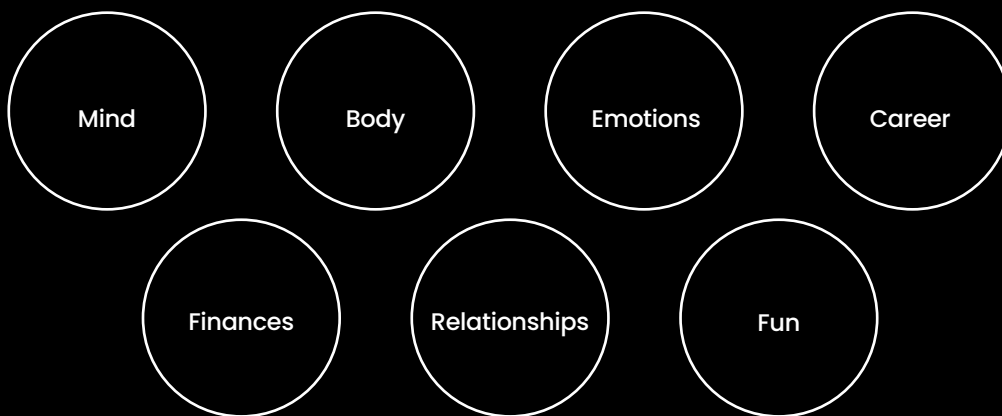
Write down the items that need your attention to help you decide if they are actionable and if they are, what steps you must then take with them. This externalises what you need to do, frees up mental space and allows for clearer thinking. You can break this down further by segregating your lists to include;

- Things you need to do
- Things you are waiting for
- Things to worry about
- Project lists
- Inbox review list

To gain the productivity benefits, you must take action and stick to the lists.

'Tilt' using hotspots








Another method is tilting hotspots, a holistic approach that covers the seven fundamental areas of your life that all our tasks fall into:



Review these once a week and think carefully about the time you put into each, after you have done this, then distribute your time for the coming week. Bailey refers to this as 'tilting' where you can swap between one hotspot and another depending on what you need to focus on. Being able to tilt in this way should lead to greater productivity. More productive people are often those who can tilt each week and become more productive over time by knowing where to place the emphasis in their hotspots.

Attention Tips



	<p>Adopt the mind capture ritual</p>	<p>Attention wanders, even in the most focused people. Allowing time for your mind to meander frees up more space for attention that boosts creativity, problem solving, and brainstorming, for example. It is a great technique for those days when you feel especially overwhelmed and need time to focus. To let your mind wander, every day or two, set a 15-minute timer and take a sheet of paper and a pen to write down thoughts and ideas that rise to the front of your mind.</p>
	<p>Try single tasking</p>	<p>Contrary to popular belief multitasking is not productive. Just because you are busy, doesn't mean you are productive. In actual fact, single tasking gives you permission to dedicate all your energy and time on one task and ultimately accomplish more.</p>
	<p>Meditate and limit interruptions</p>	<p>Another means of strengthening attention is through the art of meditation. Meditation connects you back to yourself and help prevent you from taking impulsive actions that can contribute to procrastination.</p>
	<p>Work deeply</p>	<p>Cal Newport's Deep Work introduces the notion of deep work for professionals who need to think intensively and perform well. This translates to working in an environment with no distractions to drive cognitive capabilities. He says that without deep work, reaching intellectual capabilities is not possible and this impacts productivity. He says the issue is that most of our time is spent doing shallow activities or "non-negatively demanding, logistical-style tasks, often performed while distracted."</p> <p>It's easy to fall into the shallow work of booking appointments, organising meetings and cleaning up your desktop, but this can drain your time surprisingly quickly. Take time to plan your day, putting aside times when you can do either shallow or deep work. Aim to finish work at a set time to focus your efforts on completing a task and giving yourself a meaningful brain rest.</p>
	<p>Log out of social media</p>	<p>Although it's not always feasible to close down social media accounts, you can begin by at least checking in less frequently. This may be logging in only a few times a week, limiting the number of sites you use and looking at the amount of time you spend scrolling. According to Grace Beverly's productivity tips, we should beware of social media. She says: "Doing away with it all isn't realistic, so consider how you can implement boundaries without feeling like you're constantly failing because you haven't deleted your social media accounts."</p>
	<p>Avoid the focus-distraction trap</p>	<p>Boredom has negative connotations but actually, it can help with focus. When you have been in a state of deep work, don't revert to a distraction. Instead, give your mind a break and turn it off completely. Don't use the time for non-essential tasks. Going back and forth between focus and distractions teaches our minds to multitask, even though this may feel productive.</p>
	<p>Plan not to schedule too much</p>	<p>Finally, time, attention and energy scheduling along with setting goals and logic will improve productivity. But don't take things too far and over-plan your productivity. Cherry-pick the best strategies that work for you and disregard the rest. Don't over-commit to a completely different regime straight away, and understand that small alterations in your approach to work are best over time.</p>

Tips for making your team more productive

With a team of diverse recruiters to coordinate, motivate and energise, improving productivity can feel like steering a juggernaut for managers. Customer Relationship Management software has been helping recruitment teams increase sales, improve efficiencies, enhance customer engagement and drive sales for decades. It's the fastest growing digital technology across the board (WebFX) and in the recruitment world, it's a vital staple. But here's the rub: if your CRM is not integrated via a Computer Telephony Integration (CTI), you probably won't be gaining the maximum productivity benefits from it. Let's home in on what you need to do.

Did you know that **52%** of recruitment businesses report that using a phone that doesn't integrate with their CRM slows them down?



GET THE RIGHT TECH

Getting the right tech is a key move in the pursuit of greater productivity. Computer Telephony Integration brings together computer applications and business phone systems, such as VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) technology. When VoIP is linked with an existing CRM, all data is automatically synced and all conversations, recordings and texts are captured instantly, doubling the advantages of an integration.

There is no need for a physical phone as both inbound and outbound callers use a softphone which is an application installed on their device. This means teams making high-volume calls can get more done faster, as picking up the phone for every call becomes a thing of the past. A productivity tick in the box? We think so. Removing the small and frustrating tasks of finding call notes, picking up the phone separately for each call, eats into time that could be used making more high quality calls and being productive.

Workflow automation tools powered by CTI, like Screen Pops for example, allow callers to see all relevant contact data as soon as they pick up a call. For your team, these automated workflows remove the mundanity of admin work that can put callers off their game. It gives them time back for more rewarding goals like finding candidates, scheduling interviews, and placing more new hires. New team members will bring faster results too as onboarding is much easier. Plus, with real-time coaching, you can get a much closer view of your team's performance, anywhere.

BE FLEXIBLE WITH SCHEDULES

Not all employees work best at the same time of the day. Help your team plan their working hours and time around the periods when they are most productive. Encouraging them to schedule time for regular activities also helps. For instance, working in weekly or daily time for following up leads or sourcing candidates. Or, when deep work, such as screening candidates

and reviewing resumes is needed, block out time for zero interruptions and distractions. With access to the CRM anytime, anywhere, using tools like [CloudCall's mobile APP](#) a more flexible schedule is possible. Plus, as recruiters are often away from the office, using the app means they do not have to return to input notes from their personal devices onto the CRM – a big plus for those demotivated by the prospect of a heavy data input session! Working in this way keeps workflow buoyant and will help drive your team to stay on task and achieve targets.

This kind of technology also allows recruitment businesses to compound the established productivity benefits of working from home. Business News Daily reports that tech developments have paved the way for remote employees, highlighting US research from [Ergotron](#) that states workers are more productive in a home environment. Staying connected while working remotely will also help strengthen team focus. When recruiters know they can access live support, stay updated by accessing one single source of truth through a [CRM integration](#) and Instant Message colleagues for quick responses, the chances are they will naturally veer away from procrastinating. Have a read of our [Work From Home Guide on Creating the Perfect Remote Working Schedule](#).

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Avoid procrastination highs and productivity lows by understanding more about your individual team member's performance. Recruiters are communicating with candidates and clients for a large portion of their day. [Call reporting](#) stores all this call data to produce useful analytics that will help you gain a better understanding of not only the busiest times and days, but also how conversations are impacting revenue. This information can be used to create valuable KPIs that align with individuals' personal goals and provide new valuable targets. For instance, you can assess the total number of calls, or use real-time numbers to see who your up-to-the-minute top performers are. Analysing this data then applying the right targets will get your [Employee recognition](#) schemes paying dividends.

KEEP ENERGY LEVELS HIGH

For recruiters, high energy levels are a must. It is an industry bursting with incentives, perks and various forms of recognition for a reason. But are your targets stacking up with what your team really needs to make them more productive? With a [live-dashboard](#) you can track calls at any time and discover where performance is high, and where support is needed. More satisfying calls and conversations also help energise teams, but when call quality is low, it's demotivating. High quality calls are a hallmark of VoIP telephony, and when teams know they can rely on this, they're not in danger of an enthusiasm lull. The same applies for when calls go unanswered which can put a fence up to achieving the rewards they want. Support your team by adopting [local area presence](#) to increase the chances of call recipients picking up the phone and to keep motivation on track.

MAKE PRIORITISATION EASY

Prioritisation is the enemy of procrastination. Use the data from your Customer Telephony Integration

to create smart and clear weekly objectives to help your team visualise what they need to place as a priority. According to [Hyercontext's 2022 State of High Performing teams in tech](#) report, the more you talk about goals, the more likely they are to be realised. Help them recognise what is considered urgent and what is important. For example, if your team is spending all their time trying to develop new business while not responding to time-sensitive client enquiries, this could impact reaching their goals. Past call recordings from your CRM can provide a good basis to coach prioritisation.

Using tools like [Voicemail Drop](#) can help callers prioritise. For example, when recruiters cannot get through to candidates, these tasks may be added to their to-do-lists, these lists can stack up, causing overwhelm and procrastination. By leaving a pre-recorded message directly to a voicemail box means this task can be addressed straight away. Of course, it also demonstrates to clients and candidates that contacting them and providing the information they need, is a priority.

REMOVE DISTRACTIONS

According to [Upwork's Chief Economist](#) one of the top three benefits of remote working was reduced distractions at the office. But a distraction-free environment is virtually impossible. Help your teams stay on task by scheduling in periods for uninterrupted work, and regular breaks throughout the day to prevent burn out. Encourage them to create calendar alerts to plan in breaks and to not to over-schedule their day with tasks, and leaving room for impromptu meetings and calls if needed. It's also helpful to communicate their schedule to managers and colleagues. This establishes boundaries from the start and will help with focus on tasks. Removing distractions is especially important when we are doing 'deep work' which can be challenging when most of us work in an online environment.

AUTOMATE PROCESSES

The very concept of automation is to improve productivity with reduced human input. Automating processes with smart technology removes the humdrum but necessary admin work of a recruiter. A CTI integration allows callers to make more calls, spend more time on meaningful conversations that bring rewards and ultimately, hit targets and improve margins. Using a feature like [click to call](#) can increase productivity by 25%. The only time needed is to click on a number with the CRM database and the contact is automatically dialled. Manually dialling numbers may only take a few seconds but when there's hundreds of calls to make, productivity is impacted when those numbers are dialled incorrectly.

Automation also comes into its own through the auto-capture of notes during calls which are saved to the CRM. Data is more accurate and it's less time-consuming to collect and analyse. The click of a button is also all it takes to send out bulk SMS messages. With [broadcast messaging](#), important information can be delivered to contacts quickly, and all text conversations are recorded in the CRM.

Tips for recruiters

When talking to your teams about productivity, it helps to have some resources, theories and techniques to hand. Productivity coach Dan Silvestre bases his techniques for killing procrastination on Newton's first law of motion: "An object at rest stays at rest and an object in motion stays in motion." In other words, by starting a task again and again you will overcome your resistance to it. He goes further by offering some useful ways to get started:

JUST GET STARTED

The 'just' approach is ideal if you have overwhelming and daunting tasks to do and you need to break them down. Easing yourself into a task helps you slowly transform your mind into a 'work setting'. So, begin with something small and simple. For example, if you need to run through a large list of candidates to assess their eligibility for a role, begin by turning on your device. Or, if you need to write a report, just write down the structure of it first. Silvestre says 95% of the procrastination battle is about addressing the apathy in the beginning. Once you have 'just' made a start you are likely to take more small steps to get the job done.

THE 2 MINUTE

Another approach is the 2-minute rule which helps tick off items on your to-do list like there's no tomorrow. There are two parts to it. Firstly, the theory is that if you can get a task done in two minutes- then just do it. Stop writing it down on your to-do-list, put it to the back of your mind or ask someone else to do it. 'Just' respond to your colleague, 'just' make that quick call and 'just' book that appointment.

Here's the other side of the two minute rule: If a task will take you longer than two minutes, start doing it and assign two minutes to it. It's easier to keep up the momentum and refrain from procrastinating once you have begun. For example, if you have allocated an hour for writing up

interview notes, write the first paragraph in two minutes. If you aim to contact 50 job searchers today, contact one in the next two minutes.

IF THEN INTENTIONS

This technique was first created by psychologist, Peter Gollwitzer, to develop and implement new daily productivity routines. It helps to instil new automatic behaviours using the natural reactions of our brains. An if-then statement works on the formula of: "If X happens, then I will do Y." So, if you want to have more time for following up leads on a daily basis, for instance, you could say: "If I finish checking my emails by 10 am, then I will start making new business calls." It's effective because it taps into how our brains work, and develop habits over time and through repetition. When the 'if' enters your mind you will be reminded of the second part, the 'then'. Begin using this by first looking at the key times you procrastinate and use it then.

MAKE TIME TO DO NOTHING

It's true, doing nothing can be remarkably productive. Our brains need a natural break to refresh and reboot. Creative Thinking Handbook authors, Chris Griffiths and Caragh Medlicott say you need to 'reframe the idea of doing nothing. They say: "Doing nothing alone won't help you get more things done, but when you use the power of doing nothing correctly, it can actually increase your productivity and boost your energy, so you can better tackle a heavy workload." Make sure you are using your tech tools properly and blocking time out each day for a quick recoup. Doing nothing is



literally that too. It takes practice, but this means not scrolling, not rerunning scenarios or worries in your mind or thinking about what you are going to do next.

DO MORE OF THE RIGHT THINGS

Being productive means doing more of the right things. Take time to think about what tasks you need to do that are essential for your success. You could try splitting your list into essential v non-essential tasks to help you choose what needs to be done first and what can wait. One popular method for prioritisation is the Eisenhower Matrix which separates tasks into urgent and non-urgent quadrants. All of us are faced with masses of information from various sources on a daily basis, so this visual tool helps release this information-overload from your brain and see everything in one place. It suggests the following approach:

1. **Do first** – begin by focussing on important tasks that need to be done today/tomorrow. E.g., reviewing an urgent report
2. **Schedule** – look at important tasks that need to be planned in e.g. arranging a meeting with a potential new candidate
3. **Delegate** – write down urgent tasks that can be handled by a colleague. E.g. unexpected request for a CV
4. **Don't do** – if it's not important or urgent, don't do it e.g. sort through your stationery cupboard

Grace Beverley shares her approach: "Once I've done the Eisenhower method and know which tasks actually need doing, I feed each into a to-do table at the beginning of every day. It also includes items that aren't going to get done that day but that I need to keep an eye on."

ADOPT THE 80:20 RULE

You can prioritise effectively using the 80:20 rule too. It's a well-known concept, and you may know it as the Pareto Principle. It's all about doing the right things, not more things. The principle of the 80:20 rule is that productivity and progress are made from just 20% of all the things we do. It is a method that helps determine which factors contribute most to success. It does not mean that you should ignore all the other items on your list but instead, focus your energy on the actions that deliver the best results. It's all about prioritising.

To employ the technique, start by:

- Writing a list of all your tasks and responsibilities
- When looking at the list, ask yourself, which of the items on the list generate the most productivity

- Given the space for one more item from the list to help you achieve the most, what would it be?

USE THE EAT THAT FROG TECHNIQUE

Brian Tracy offers 21 ways to overcome procrastination in his book, Eat That Frog where he shares productivity techniques, strategies and tips. The concept is that there's often one activity on your list of 10 to-do tasks, with one that is more valuable than the others together. This is the one you should tackle first – the 'frog'. It's also usually the one that you procrastinate on the most. He advises to get into the habit of 'eating the frog' first, and if there are two equally important tasks, eat the least desirable one first i.e. the most important.

USE THE RULE OF 3

Three, is a powerful number. It's used in speech writing, advertising messages and it has a compelling and rhythmic quality to it. So use it in your to-do-lists. Begin each day by writing down the three most important things you want to accomplish. You can do this at the start of the week too. Figure out what your high-impact tasks are and when your BPT will be. You can even keep a log of where you are currently spending your time to see more accurately where you should improve. Productivity influencer and author, Grace Beverly, suggests taking the following approach:

Split your to-do-list into 3 categories

1. **Quick ticks** – those jobs that take five minutes or less to complete
2. **Tasks** – those that take 5-30 mins to complete
3. **Projects** – those bigger ones that take more than 30 minutes to complete

*For large projects that could take days, Blakely suggests breaking them down further into steps you can take each day on the same project, as this task would be impossible to complete in one day.





Finally

Procrastination may have many layers to it but there are ways to address it. The first step is to acknowledge that it happens, then take a closer look at the why behind procrastination in your teams. Look at the areas where you can improve productivity and provide new techniques and support to address them. Make sure you are using your technology in the best way too. If you have an existing CRM, ask yourself if you are gaining the most productivity benefits from it and how the specific features and advantages of a Customer Telephony Integration could significantly boost team efficiency.

Productivity exercises

Communicating the techniques for your team through the use of technology is pretty simple. Explaining the concepts and philosophies is often easier to digest in written format. Here are some useful and printable exercises to share with your teams.

The Eisenhower Time Management Matrix®

1. Begin by writing down all the tasks you need to do from your to-do-list that cover the next month or so
2. Include the smallest to the biggest tasks
3. Create the quadrant as below
4. Categorise the tasks based on their level of importance
5. When complete, address each of the tasks in your urgent pile

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write follow-up report • Create client proposal • Prepare for upcoming Interview • Reply to client phone call or email 	<p>DECIDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make new business calls • Searching for new candidates • Annual report writing • Professional development and training
Not Important	<p>DELEGATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book travel • Reply to non-urgent emails • Look for candidates with certain skill sets on LinkedIn • Plan staff social 	<p>DON'T DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check social media • Alphabetise email inbox • Look for new screensaver images • Reply to external sales emails

Now it's your turn

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	<p>DO</p>	<p>DECIDE</p>
Not Important	<p>DELEGATE</p>	<p>DON'T DO</p>

The Eisenhower Matrix [How to be More Productive by Using the "Eisenhower Box" \(jamesclear.com\)](http://jamesclear.com)

The Pomodoro technique®

The Pomodoro Technique is a time management method developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s. It's designed to improve focus, productivity, and time management by breaking work into intervals, traditionally 25 minutes in length, separated by short breaks. These intervals are called "Pomodoros," and after completing four of them, you take a longer break. The technique is based on the idea that frequent breaks can improve mental agility and overall productivity. Here's a visual representation of how you can plan your day using the Pomodoro Technique:

MORNING:

8:00 AM – 8:25 AM Pomodoro 1 (Focus)

Work on Project A

8:25 AM – 8:30 AM Short Break

Stretch and Grab Coffee

8:30 AM – 8:55 AM Pomodoro 2 (Focus)

Continue Project A

8:55 AM – 9:00 AM Short Break

Check Emails

9:00 AM – 9:25 AM Pomodoro 3 (Focus)

Work on Project A

9:25 AM – 9:30 AM Short Break

Walk Around

9:30 AM – 9:55 AM Pomodoro 4 (Focus)

Finish Project A

9:55 AM – 10:30 AM Long Break

Review Progress

LATE MORNING:

10:30 AM – 10:55 AM Pomodoro 5 (Focus)

Start Project B

10:55 AM – 11:00 AM Short Break

Grab a Snack

11:00 AM – 11:25 AM Pomodoro 6 (Focus)

Continue Project B

11:25 AM – 11:30 AM Short Break

Check Messages

11:30 AM – 11:55 AM Pomodoro 7 (Focus)

Project B

11:55 AM – 12:00 PM Short Break

Quick Stretch

12:00 PM – 12:25 PM Pomodoro 8 (Focus)

Finish Project B

12:25 PM – 1:00 PM Long Break

Lunch and Relax

AFTERNOON:

1:00 PM – 1:25 PM Pomodoro 9 (Focus)

Begin Project C

1:25 PM – 1:30 PM Short Break

Rehydrate

1:30 PM – 1:55 PM Pomodoro 10 (Focus)

Project C

1:55 PM – 2:00 PM Short Break

Quick Walk

2:00 PM – 2:25 PM Pomodoro 11 (Focus)

Finish Project C

2:25 PM – 2:30 PM Short Break

Meditate

2:30 PM – 2:55 PM Pomodoro 12 (Focus)

Start Project D

2:55 PM – 3:00 PM Short Break

Reflect

3:00 PM – 3:25 PM Pomodoro 13 (Focus)

Continue Project D

3:25 PM – 3:30 PM Short Break

Check Progress

3:30 PM – 3:55 PM Pomodoro 14 (Focus)

Finish Project D

3:55 PM – 4:30 PM Long Break

Wrap Up and Review

The Pomodoro technique®

Now it's your turn

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8:00 AM – 8:25 AM Pomodoro 1 (Focus)

Work on Project A

8:25 AM – 8:30 AM Short Break
Stretch and Grab Coffee

8:30 AM – 8:55 AM Pomodoro 2 (Focus)

Continue Project A

8:55 AM – 9:00 AM Short Break
Check Emails

9:00 AM – 9:25 AM Pomodoro 3 (Focus)

Work on Project A

9:25 AM – 9:30 AM Short Break
Walk Around

9:30 AM – 9:55 AM Pomodoro 4 (Focus)

Finish Project A

9:55 AM – 10:30 AM Long Break
Review Progress

LATE MORNING:

10:30 AM – 10:55 AM Pomodoro 5 (Focus)

Start Project B

10:55 AM – 11:00 AM Short Break
Grab a Snack

11:00 AM – 11:25 AM Pomodoro 6 (Focus)

Continue Project B

11:25 AM – 11:30 AM Short Break
Check Messages

11:30 AM – 11:55 AM Pomodoro 7 (Focus)

Project B

11:55 AM – 12:00 PM Short Break
Quick Stretch

12:00 PM – 12:25 PM Pomodoro 8 (Focus)

Finish Project B

12:25 PM – 1:00 PM Long Break
Lunch and Relax

AFTERNOON:

1:00 PM – 1:25 PM Pomodoro 9 (Focus)

Begin Project C

1:25 PM – 1:30 PM Short Break
Rehydrate

1:30 PM – 1:55 PM Pomodoro 10 (Focus)

Project C

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3:55 PM – 4:30 PM Long Break
Wrap Up and Review

Get Things Done®

The GTD (Getting Things Done) method, developed by David Allen, is a powerful approach to increase productivity and reduce stress. It consists of five key steps. Here's a brief description of each step, followed by some space for you to get started:

1. CAPTURE:

Collect all your tasks, ideas, and commitments in a central inbox. This step is about getting everything out of your head and into a reliable system.

2. CLARIFY:

Review each item in your inbox and decide if it's actionable. If it is, determine the specific next action needed. If not, decide if it's trash, reference material, or something to be dealt with later.

3. ORGANIZE:

Place actionable items in categories or contexts that make sense to you, such as "Work," "Home," "Errands," "Calls," or by project. Create lists for these categories and organize tasks accordingly.

4. REFLECT:

Regularly review your lists and commitments. This step ensures that you remain current and up-to-date on your tasks and priorities.

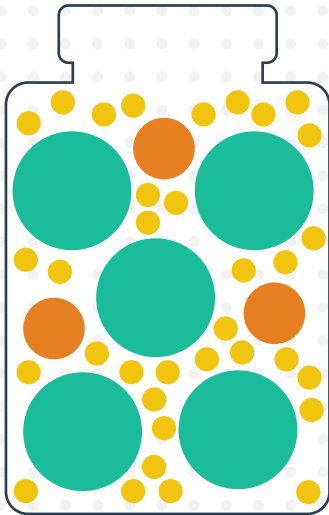
5. ENGAGE:

Act on your tasks based on context and priority. Use your organized lists to guide your daily actions, making decisions on what to do next.

Start your list here:

Pickle Jar theory

Imagine your work as a pickle jar you're trying to fill with sand, pebbles, and rocks. Each element represents different tasks and priorities in your life:



Rocks:

These are your most important and high-priority tasks and goals. They should go in first, filling the bottom of the jar.

Pebbles:

These are your medium-priority tasks and commitments. They fit between the rocks and fill the spaces.

Sand:

These are your small, less important, or routine tasks. They fill the remaining gaps.

How to Apply the Pickle Jar Theory to Productivity:

1. **Prioritize Your Rocks:** Identify your most critical tasks and goals. These should be your top priorities.
2. **Plan Your Pebbles:** Determine the medium-priority tasks and commitments that support your rocks. Allocate time for them.
3. **Fill Gaps with Sand:** Use the remaining time for smaller, routine tasks or low-priority items.
4. **Balance Your Jar:** The key to productivity is finding the right balance. Don't let sand overwhelm your jar at the expense of rocks and pebbles. Your top priorities (rocks) should always come first.
5. **Regularly Review and Adjust:** Periodically empty your jar, review your priorities, and adjust as needed. Ensure that your rocks remain at the bottom, supporting your goals.

Pickle Jar theory

Now it's your turn



Rocks:

Pebbles:

Sand:

The Rapid Planning Method (RPM)®

The Rapid Planning Method (RPM) is a powerful and results-oriented approach to productivity and goal achievement. RPM is not just about managing your time but focusing on your life and outcomes. It's about creating a compelling vision and a clear path to turn your dreams into reality.

RPM is divided into three core steps:

1

Results: Define the precise results you want to achieve in each area of your life.

Start by setting clear and specific goals for your team. What do you want to achieve in the short term and long term? Make these results inspiring and measurable.

Define the outcomes you want for each project or task, making sure they align with your team's and organization's objectives.

2

Purpose: Discover why these results are essential, what they will provide, and what drives you to achieve them.

Identify the "why" behind these goals. What motivates your team to achieve these results? Understanding the purpose behind your actions provides the drive to excel.

Connect your team's goals with the broader mission and values of your company to create a sense of purpose and alignment.

3

Massive Action Plan: Create a step-by-step plan to turn your vision into reality. Identify the critical actions and focus on high-impact activities.

Break down your goals into actionable steps and tasks. Use tables or visual aids to map out the steps needed to reach your results.

Prioritize tasks based on their impact on your desired results. Focus on high-value, high-leverage activities.

Create a timeline for your plan, allocating time for each task, and establish deadlines to maintain accountability.

Here's an example of how you can apply the RPM method to a recruitment company using a simple table:

Project/Task	Result	Purpose	Action Steps	Deadline
Talent Acquisition	Skilled Candidates	Build a strong talent pool	Job posting, resume screening, initial interviews, assessment tests, final interviews	15/11/2023
Client Engagement	Happy Clients	Provide top-quality candidates	Regular client communication, needs analysis, candidate sourcing and selection, feedback follow-up	01/12/2023
Staff Development	Highly Trained Team	Ensure continuous improvement	Training needs analysis, staff training programs, performance reviews, skill enhancement	01/02/2024

Project/Task	Result	Purpose	Action Steps	Deadline

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