



TIME MANAGEMENT - The Urgent/ Important Matrix



BACKGROUND

Former US President Eisenhower used the so-called 'Eisenhower principle' to organise his tasks. He is quoted as saying, "What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important."

Dr Stephen Covey made these concepts mainstream calling it 'The Urgent/ Important Matrix' in his famous book 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People'.

How do you spend your time? Are you constantly interrupted by others? Do you always seem to move from one crisis to another? Perhaps you are not prioritising your time as well as you could... Time is obviously best spend in Quadrant 2 - **Important but Non-Urgent** tasks. But first:

1. Look at your chart and consider where you spend most of your time.
2. **What % of time do you spend in each quadrant?** Write the percentage below next to each quadrant. NB – Make sure this is a gut-feeling, your first instant response.
3. **List specific examples** that are relevant to YOU for each quadrant and add to the blank lines below.

Covey's time management grid template

<p style="text-align: center;">Quadrant I: Urgent & Important CRISES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor and major crises • Pressing problems • Deadlines • Meetings • Projects • • 	<p style="text-align: center;">Quadrant II: Not Urgent & Important GOALS & PLANNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation • Prevention • Planning • Values Clarification • Building relationships • Clarifying priorities • Goal setting • •
<p style="text-align: center;">Quadrant III: Urgent & Not Important INTERRUPTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needless interruptions • Interruptions from others • Unimportant meetings • Unimportant phone calls • Unimportant mail/ Email • Other people's minor issues • • 	<p style="text-align: center;">Quadrant IV: Not Urgent & Not Important DISTRACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trivia • 'Busy' work • Some phone calls • Your own special time-wasters • 'Escape' activities • Irrelevant mail or email • Excessive TV, Internet usage • Excessive relaxing/ sleeping • Self-critical thoughts • •

The Bottom Line: Do Important Things First!