



Activity Logs

Finding Out How You Really Spend Your Time

How long you spend each day on unimportant things? Things that do not really contribute to your success at work, for example: reading junk mail, talking to your colleagues, drinking coffee and eating lunch?

Activity logs help you to analyze how you spent your time. The first time you use an activity log you may be shocked to see the amount of time you waste!

How to Use the Tool

Use the handout "Activity Log". Without modifying your behaviour, note down the things you do as you do them on the activity log template. Keeping an activity log for several days helps you to understand how you spent your time and when you perform at best. Every time you change activities, whether opening e-mail, working, making coffee, gossiping with colleagues or whatever, note down the time of the change.

As well as recording activities, note how you feel, whether alert, flat, tired, energetic, etc. Do this periodically throughout the day.

Learning from Your Log

When you are logged your time for a few days, analyze your daily activity log. You may be alarmed to see the amount of time you spent doing low value tasks!

You may also see that you are energetic in some parts of the day and flat in other parts. A lot of this can depend on the rest breaks you take, the times and amount you eat, and quality of your nutrition. The activity log gives you some basis for experimenting these variables.

Your analysis should help you to free extra time in your day by applying one of the following actions to most of the activities:

- Eliminate the jobs that your employer shouldn't be paying you to do or the tasks that corresponding to your role in the project. These may include tasks that someone else in the organization or in the project should be doing, possibly at a lower pay rate, or personal activities such as sending non-work e-mail.
- Schedule your more challenging tasks for the time of the day when your energy is highest, that way your work will be better and it should take you less time.
- Try to minimize the number of times a day you switch between types of tasks. For example read and reply to e-mails in blocks once in the morning and once in the afternoon only.
- Reduce the amount of time spent on legitimate personal activities such as making coffee (take turn in your team to do this - it saves time and strengthen team spirit).

