

QUADRANT II TIME MANAGEMENT

In what he refers to as Quadrant II Time Management, author Stephen Covey identifies tasks and activities that take up a great deal of our time, but which can or should be eliminated to improve effectiveness.

He explains that most time-management tools focus on “prioritizing and accomplishing the urgent activities of Quadrants I and III. Focusing on daily planning, these tools help people become more efficient... but not more effective.”

Focusing on the important but not urgent activities of Quadrant II makes the vital difference in personal and organizational effectiveness.

Quadrant I activities are driven by crises. For example, firefighters often live within Quadrant I, but they improve their odds by spending time on prevention and education aimed at preventing a crisis. Staying in Quadrant I mode for long leads to stress and burnout, based solely on crisis management and puffing out fires.

Individuals should ideally spend 65 to 60 per cent of their time in Quadrant II, and 15 per cent in Quadrant III. A Quadrant II approach ultimately leads to the greatest success. The results include vision, perspective, balance, discipline, empowered people and few crises.

Quadrants I and III activities are driven by an urgency addiction that ultimately destroys relationships, Covey said. The challenge is to build immunity to the addictions of Quadrants I and III, and develop a culture conducive to Quadrant II functioning. He recommended that individuals begin by identifying Quadrant III items and neglecting them with impunity.

QUADRANT II

Most of the activities essential to the development of an effective person or organization fall within Quadrant II. Covey said these activities are vitally important, but because they are not urgent, they often do not get done,

He said following these steps would lead to becoming effective, and therefore truly efficient:

- Creating a personal or organizational mission statement

- Connecting to your mission
- Reviewing your roles at work and at home and thinking them through
- Identifying long-range goals
- Evaluating each of the roles and goals regularly
- Organizing weekly instead of daily, but being ready to adapt moment by moment
- Creating win/win agreements (or no deal?)
- Obtaining regular physical, spiritual, mental and social/emotional renewal
- Exercising integrity in the moment of choice, and
- Trying to double the amount of time you spend in quadrant II each month.

QUADRANT II TIME MANAGEMENT

		Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Crises ◆ Pressing Problems ◆ Deadline-driven projects, meetings, preparations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Preparation ◆ Prevention ◆ Values Clarification ◆ Planning ◆ Relationship building ◆ True-recreation ◆ Empowerment
Not Important	III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Interruptions, some phone calls ◆ Some mail, some reports ◆ Some meetings ◆ Many proximate, pressing matters ◆ Many popular activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Trivia, busywork ◆ Some phone calls ◆ Time wasters ◆ “Escape activities ◆ Irrelevant mail ◆ Excessive TV

©1995 Covey Leadership Center, Inc.