

TIME MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

UNDERSTANDING HOW TO USE TIME WISELY

Sherrie Blankenship
sblankenship@manercpa.com

Steve Piesko
spiesko@manercpa.com

Topics We Will Cover:

- **Time Management Basics**
- Time Management Matrix
- Big Rock Planning
- Managing Interruptions



Time Management Basics

Time management is one of the biggest challenges of today's leaders, as competition for our time and energy is intense.

Time Management Basics

- What is Time Management?
 - Time management is the way you organize and plan how long you spend on specific activities.
 - Managing time **effectively** so that the right time is allocated to the right activity.

Time Management Basics

- Why do we need time management?
 - To function productively and effectively
 - To save time
 - To reduce stress
 - To have more control over our job responsibilities
 - To have greater opportunity to achieve important life and career goals

Time Management Basics

- Undesirable consequences of poor time management:
 - Missing deadlines
 - Inefficient work flow
 - Lower quality of work
 - Poor professional reputation
 - Higher stress levels



Time Management Basics

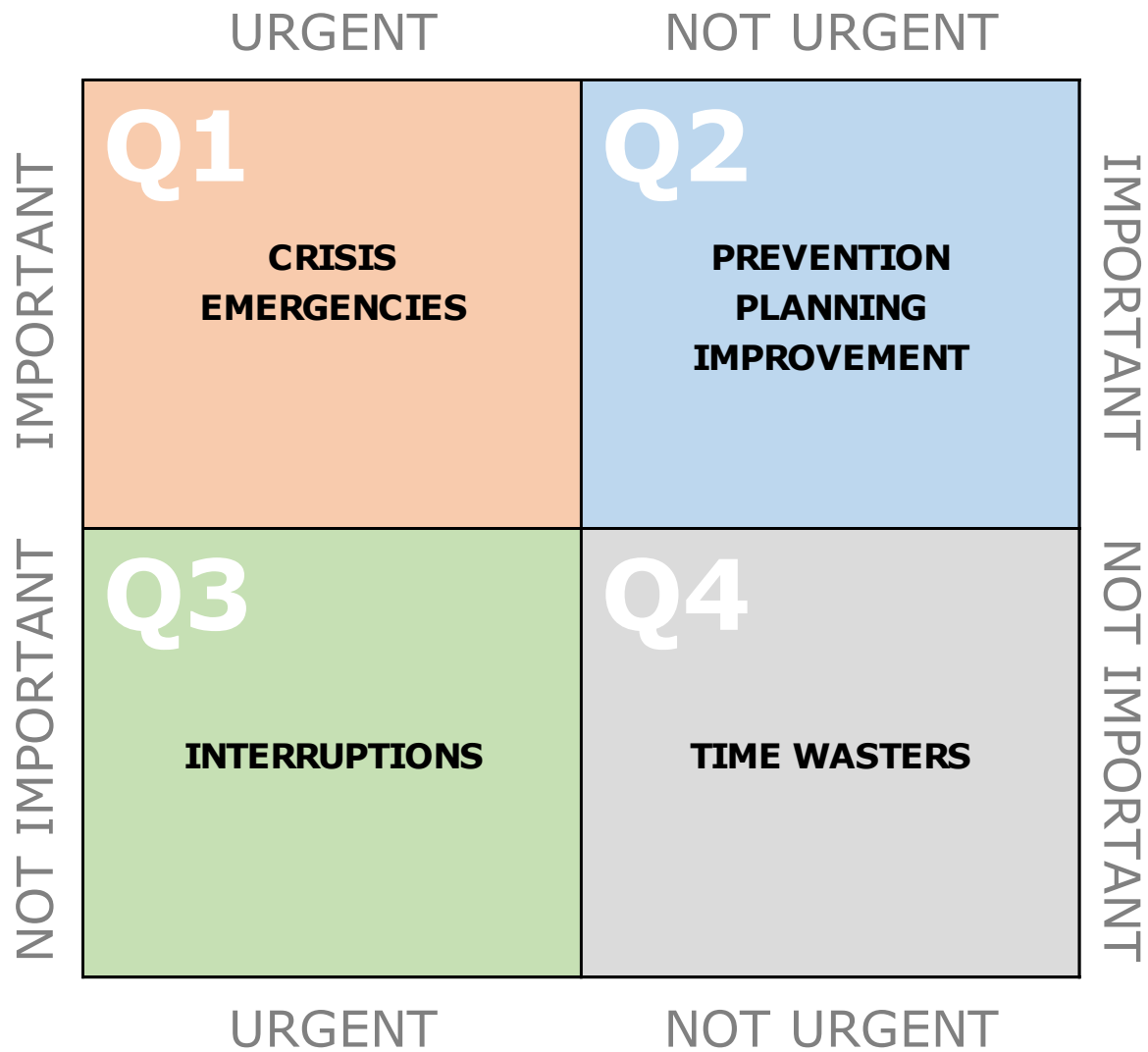
- How do we obtain time management?
 - Effective planning
 - Setting goals and objectives
 - Establishing deadlines
 - Delegating responsibilities
 - Prioritizing activities based on their importance

Topics We Will Cover:

- Time Management Basics
- **Time Management Matrix**
- Big Rock Planning
- Managing Interruptions

Time Management Matrix

- Everything you do can be classified by its urgency and by its importance. Urgency is “How soon does it matter?” and Importance is “How much does it matter?”
- This creates a four quadrant matrix



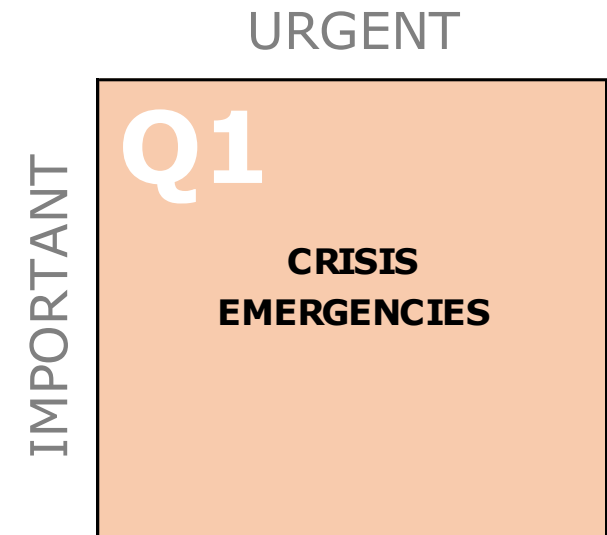
Source: Stephen Covey, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

Time Management Matrix

- Emphasis can often be on the Urgent items rather than the Important ones.
- You need to ask yourself: “Am I doing this because it is truly important or because it is urgent?”

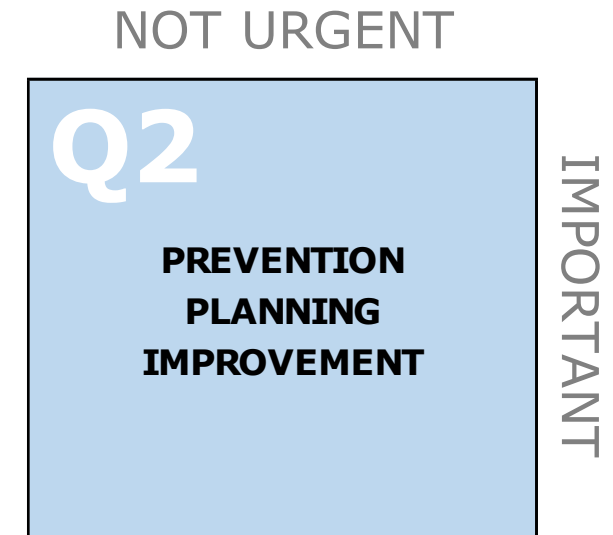
Time Management Matrix – Quadrant 1

- Important and Urgent
 - Manage short-term crisis and problems
 - Fire fighting mode, real hard deadlines
 - Items that can't be ignored
 - Too much time in this quadrant will lead to stress and burn out



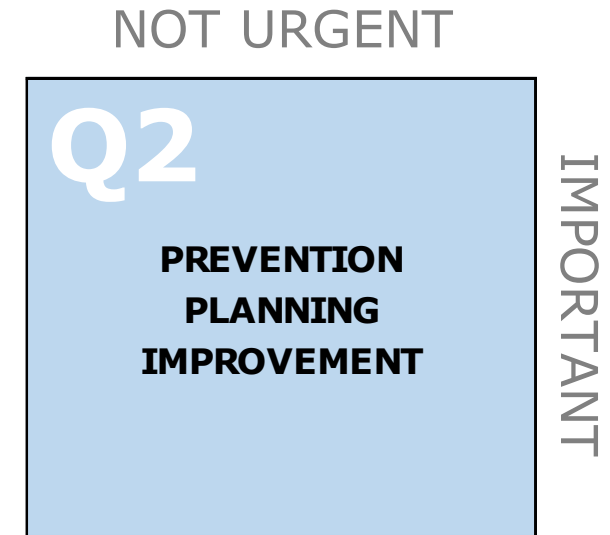
Time Management Matrix – Quadrant 2

- Important but not Urgent
 - Focus on long-term strategic goals
 - Preparation, planning, and prevention
 - Capability improvement
 - Relationship building
 - Recreation/relaxation



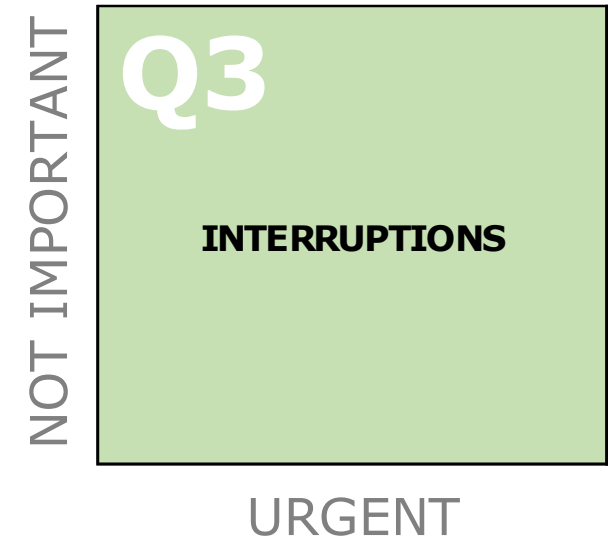
Time Management Matrix – Quadrant 2

- Important but not Urgent
 - This should be the quadrant where you spend most of your time
 - Spending time on important things leads to clear vision and discipline
 - The more time spent in this quadrant the fewer crisis situations you will experience



Time Management Matrix – Quadrant 3

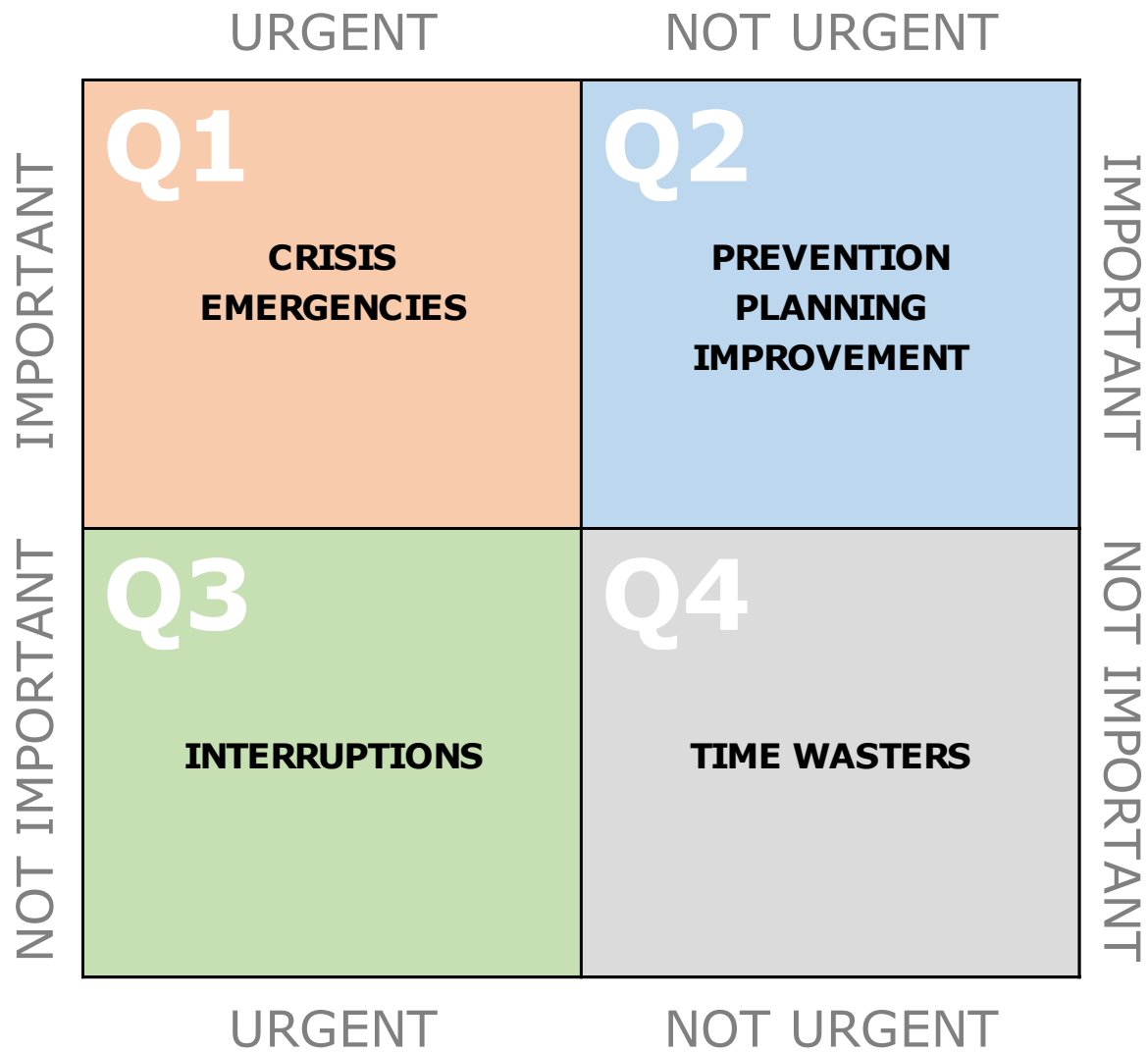
- Not Important but Urgent
 - Avoid distractions and interruptions
 - Many of us spend a big portion of our time here, confusing the Urgent things for the Important things
 - Interruptions, phone calls, most emails
 - Too much time here leads to very short-term focus then changing to continual crisis management



Time Management Matrix – Quadrant 4

- Not Important and not Urgent
 - Limit time-wasting activities
 - Busywork
 - Web surfing/social media without a purpose
 - Reduce time in this quadrant as much as possible





Source: Stephen Covey, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

Time Management Matrix

- Identify Quadrant 2 activities
 - Create an activity log: identify all of the Quadrant 1 and 3 activities you routinely do
 - Write down how you can prevent these things from reoccurring or from becoming emergencies in the first place: These are your new Quadrant 2 activities

Time Management Matrix

- Free up time for Quadrant 2 activities
 - Stop doing Quadrant 4 activities!
 - Make a list of Quadrant 3 activities and stop doing as many of these items as possible.
 - Spending more time in Quadrant 2 will slowly chip away at the crisis/emergencies in Quadrant 1.

Time Management Matrix

- Schedule time for Quadrant 2
 - Create a plan for how to accomplish these activities
 - Stick to the schedule
 - Big Rock planning

Topics We Will Cover:

- Time Management Basics
- Time Management Matrix
- **Big Rock Planning**
- Managing Interruptions

Big Rock Planning

- Big Rocks are your most important priorities
 - Ask yourself: “What can I do right now to make tomorrow better?”
 - Big Rocks are the tasks that will move you forward

Big Rock Planning



- Create a priority list
 - Detail out the Quadrant 2 tasks
 - Determine the significance of each task – “How much does it matter?”
 - This changes the matrix from 2-dimensional to 3-dimensional thinking
 - The most significant tasks become your Big Rocks

Big Rock Planning

- Put the Big Rocks first
 - Carve out time for weekly Big Rock planning
 - Schedule the Big Rocks and commit to completing those tasks in the allotted timeframe
 - Put Big Rocks in a spot where you know you'll get them done

Big Rock Planning

- Leave space for the incoming pebbles
 - Don't completely fill your schedule
 - First thing in the morning, look at your schedule and commit to the Big Rocks that were planned

Big Rock Planning

- Advantages of Big Rock Planning
 - Identifying the Big Rocks allow you to focus on one thing at a time.
 - Big Rocks allow you to ask better questions.
 - Big Rocks are easy to understand.



Topics We Will Cover:

- Time Management Basics
- Time Management Matrix
- Big Rock Planning
- **Managing Interruptions**

Managing Interruptions

- Many individuals experience frequent interruptions throughout the day.
- Researchers at the University of California, Irvine, found after careful observation that the typical office worker is interrupted or switches tasks, on average, every three minutes and five seconds.



Managing Interruptions

Interruptions

- Break our focus
- Contribute to errors and re-work
- Hinder productivity
- Create stress and can lead to exhaustion from work overload
- Can become a way of life

Managing Interruptions

- Determine who or what is the source of your most significant interruptions
 - Email
 - Internet
 - Colleagues
 - Supervisors

Managing Interruptions

- Establish time blocks for an interruption-free period
 - Carve out a specific period of time to devote to your “Big Rocks”
 - Create mutual agreements with others
 - Do not allow for interruptions other than real emergencies

Managing Interruptions

- Commit to the time block period yourself
 - Close the web browser
 - Put your cell phone on vibrate
 - Close or minimize your email

Managing Interruptions

- Be mindful of your time
 - Designate time for short breaks as a reward for completing the “Big Rock” tasks
 - Short breaks are actually needed and can increase productivity but being mindful is key

Managing Interruptions - Email

- This primary source of communication can also be the primary source of interruption and ineffectiveness.



Managing Interruptions - Email

- Set certain times you will be checking email
 - This is specific to the individual and how much communication is done through email. Some may be able to only check and respond to email once a day. Others may need 2 or 3 half hour blocks a day.

Managing Interruptions - Email

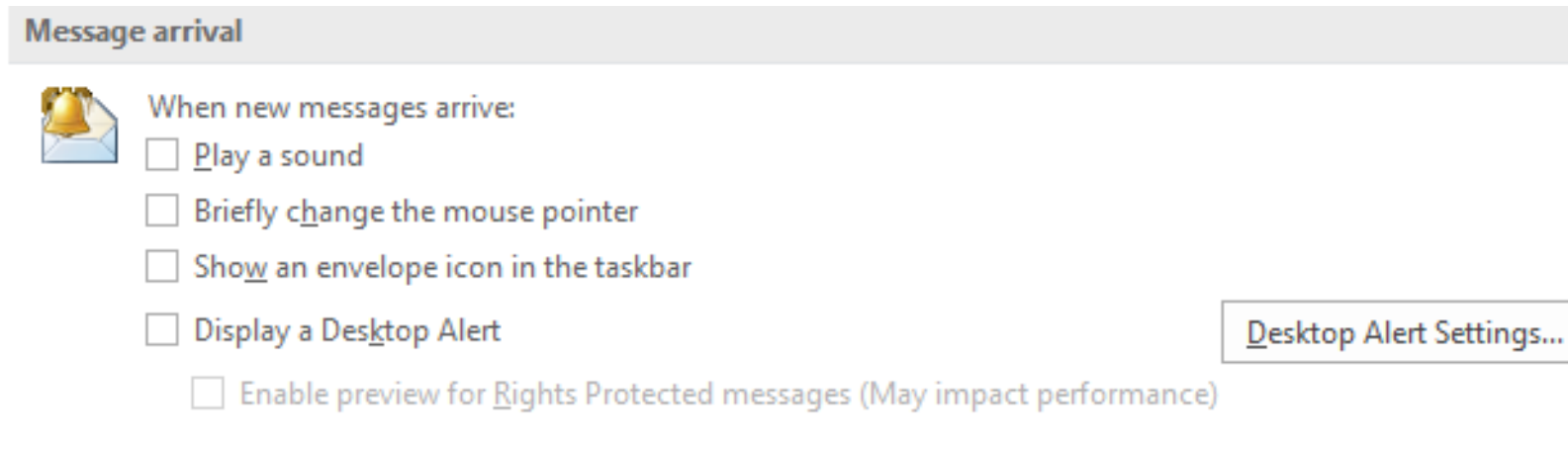
- Keep email completely closed when not in use
 - Easier to sort through and organize
 - Delete time wasters first
 - Develop a plan for how and when to respond to the important emails

Managing Interruptions - Email

- Tips when leaving email open
 - Switch to calendar view before minimizing
 - When you click on the icon, it will bring up the calendar view

Managing Interruptions - Email

- Tips when leaving email open
 - Turn off email notifications, this includes sounds and the envelope in the taskbar



We place value on the things that we strive for, and that is our mistake. Our time is where the true value is. You can't borrow more of it, you can't steal it and you can't buy it. What you've got is all you've got. An once you understand that, you begin to recognize what is worth your time.

J.M. Storm

Additional Resources

- Book: “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen Covey
- Book: “Getting Things Done” by David Allen

Thank you!

Email Sherrie: sblankenship@manercpa.com

Email Steve: spiesko@manercpa.com