

## Snap Planning – Gain Time

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How many times have you heard yourself and others saying: “I’ve been in back to back meetings all day and haven’t achieved a thing”, or “I have worked really hard this week and the work that I have planned is still piling up”? Consistently, one of the top areas that challenge leaders and managers at all levels today is time management. It is likely this will continue and in fact become more critical.

There are any number of time management techniques that people can try such as categorising priorities, delegating work, adding extra resources and so on. However there is one important technique that we can all do better and more often - one that all the others depend on, and that is to **plan**. Most leaders and managers schedule in strategic, operational, project, marketing, sales and other planning sessions. These planning sessions are important and usually documented. Hopefully they are also executed well and monitored regularly.

However, planning does not always need to be so formal to make real time gains, but it does need to be disciplined and practiced daily. A previous Sales Manager once told me that before every client meeting he would sit in the car or at reception, focus and think about why he was there and what outcome he was hoping for. Call it a snap planning session or mini brainstorm. The aim is to plan more often in order to stay on course, take corrective action and be as efficient as possible while executing the larger plan. It only need take seconds but that moment of focus ensures better outcomes. Seems simple enough, however how many of us continue to just ‘wing it’?

So when I coach leaders and managers, the one skill and discipline that continues to be important, is to plan. Just like a 10 minute coaching conversation can save you an hour, planning more often can generate the same returns. That means planning the next meeting, day, or week by asking yourself – “What do I want to get out of this interaction, activity or week that will give me a sense of achievement towards my goals?” or “How is this piece of work contributing to the achievement of the business plan?” or “What do I want to achieve today?”



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**Snap planning may only take seconds or minutes yet save hours**, maximising yours and others time.

Here are some other planning tips:

- Plan your next conversation and ask, “What is my aim?”
- Plan to delegate work more effectively by setting quality expectations and ensure that they are fully understood by the person you are delegating to
- Plan your next meeting and how you will add value to it
- Perform your planning and at the right time of day – when your mental alertness is at its peak

Taking a minute or two extra before each meeting, conversation or piece of work and snapping out a plan will save you time in reworks, misunderstandings, misdirected effort and so on and give you a greater sense of achievement.



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