



Performance Advantage Systems

Actionable Intelligence for Leaders

Get Over Being Overwhelmed ...by using 8 Life Preservers...

By

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Do you often wonder where the day went?

Are you frequently upset that you didn't accomplish what you had wanted to finish – or maybe not even started?

How effective and impactful have you really been this year?

If any of these questions resonate with you, you are probably swimming *against* the tide. As a former life guard I've seen the exhaustion caused by swimming against the tide - and I've learned the value of safety-planning to understand the tide and how to make it work for you.

Planning how to utilize your time (which is a limited resource) will enable you to *swim with the currents and reach the shore at the end of each day.*

Any one of the 8 Life Preservers below, individually, will enable you to maximize your time. When all eight are used, you will feel like a new person...while also building a solid reputation as an effective leader who consistently provides value to the organization!

Life Preserver #1:

Before leaving for or starting work implement a *brief morning routine for yourself* – which makes you feel good and also puts you in control of

starting and finishing the activity. The routine can be anything that appeals to you such as 10 minutes of stretching, 15 minutes of yoga, 20 minutes of walking/running – or even a 30 minute vigorous work-out. Whatever it is, *do it every morning for yourself!*

Life Preserver #2:

Say “yes” and “no” strategically so that you are only involved in essential projects/work in which you need to be. Do you believe you do that now? To check, ask yourself:

Do I say “yes” too often and “no” too infrequently?

Am I afraid to say “no” because I am fearful of what others might think of me?

Life Preserver #3:

Coach and delegate so that others will grow and take ownership and remove a load off your back. Do you believe you do that now? To check, ask yourself:

Do I really coach and delegate as much as I could?

Do I retain my ‘elite position of expertise’ by continually answering questions and directing all the work?

Do I use ‘I have no time to coach’ as an excuse for not coaching?

Do I take the position that it’s just easier to do the work myself?

Life Preserver #4

Create a Priority Scheme and continually update your Priority List so that you can see, and remember, what needs to be accomplished. Using this list decide which priorities can *realistically* be completed in the upcoming week – either by delegating or completing them yourself. Incorporate those priorities into your Block Calendar (see Life Preserver # 5).

Life Preserver #5:

Create and follow your Block Calendar which will enable you to be efficient and impactful. A Block Calendar means that you allocate and block out specific times on your calendar for specific activities – just as when you block out times for meetings. Your Block Calendar should include, at least, the following categories:

- Email/Voice mail (Consider blocking out 15 – 30 minutes six times/day, depending upon your need. ONLY do email/voice mail during these times).
- Regularly scheduled meetings.

- Administrative work.
- Priority work – selected from your Priority List – perhaps one hour in the AM and one hour in the PM. Ideally, complete this work away from your office (such as in a conference room) where you will not be distracted.
- Team Members – work with your team members, weekly or daily depending upon need.
- Open Time – is where you have nothing blocked out on your calendar which will give you flexibility – *to swim with the currents* – should an issue or a meeting arise when you have something else scheduled. You can then move that scheduled item into the Open Time. Recommend one hour in the AM and one hour in the PM.

Your Block Calendar puts you in control of how you utilize your time – including how you respond (not react) to issues which pull you from your scheduled activity.

Block Calendars only work when you follow them! Since they keep you focused on the important work that needs to be done, they eliminate the need for multi-tasking (which actually slows you down).

Life Preserver #6:

Maximize how you use (and develop) your Administrative Assistant.

Life Preserver #7:

At the end of the day, do an After Action Review! Acknowledge yourself for what you accomplished!

Life Preserver #8:

At the end of the day, prepare and print out tomorrow's calendar so that you *can get back into the swim of things* as soon as you arrive at your place of business.

ALL of these Life Preservers will enable you to reach the shore at the end of each day!

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