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Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge

Using this Whitepaper You Can Become
Less Overwhelmed, Be More Proactive, and
Finish What You Start

www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk



Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge



Introduction

Hi, my name is Darren A. Smith, Founder of Making Business Matter – A Training Provider.

If you're reading this whitepaper then two things are true; You'll have browsed the web for ideas, read books, posts, & articles, or watched videos on time management. All with a desire to get more organised, be less stressed, and get more done. In short, be a better Time Manager. And yet you'll still be searching for that special something that will make a significant positive difference to your time management.

If you complete all 7 exercises towards the second half of this whitepaper, over the next 7 weeks, you will become less overwhelmed, be more proactive, and be able to finish what you start.

This whitepaper is not about time management tips, or time saving ideas. It is about your time management system (Cue laughter). Yes, I know you think that you don't have one, but you do. Really, you do. You may not like it, and even hate it, for making you late for a meeting, making you forget stuff like a birthday, and cluttering-up your brain. But you got to work, you hold down a decent job, and you may even be doing very well at it. So, you have a time management system. Now that's sorted let's move on...

This whitepaper will take you about 20 minutes to read (This is at an average reading speed of 200 words per minute with 60% comprehension). The length of this whitepaper has been purposefully chosen to be read in 20 minutes because this is about the time we can concentrate. Is reading this document going to give you a positive return on your time invested? You decide. Just know that if you can improve your time management system by 0.1% each day, after 10 years it will be 1,004% improved!

I hope you find this Whitepaper useful and I wish you every success.

Darren A. Smith

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren A. Smith', written over a horizontal line.

Founder
Making Business Matter





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Don't Be Jealous of Dave Allen, Brian Tracy, Tim Ferriss, or the Other Time Management Gurus

Their personal time management systems wouldn't work for you. You have to create your own system. Of course there are tips, parts that you could use, and bits you could add-on. For right now your system is YOUR system and like your cooking skill, your ability to play cards, or how well you network, you cannot just grab someone else's way. You need to build your system, your way.

If you succeed in completing the Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge you will be in the top 10% of effective time managers.

From the Home of
Sticky Learning



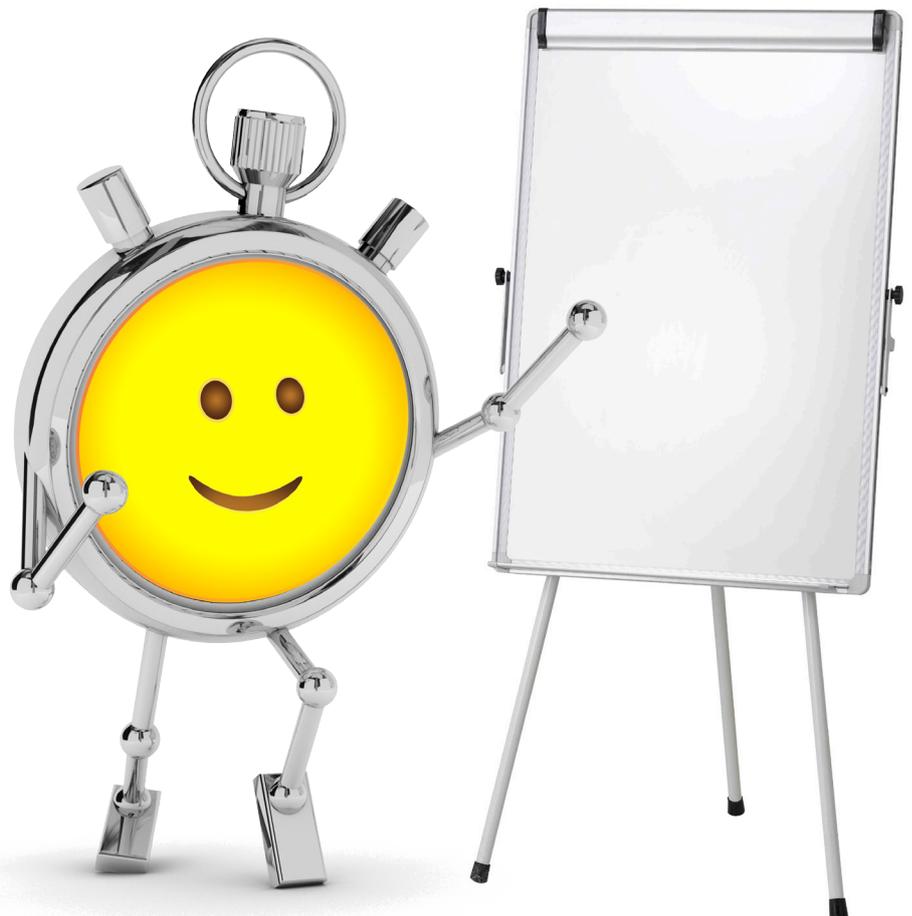
What 14 Years of Teaching Time Management Has Taught Me About People Learning Time Management

People want to learn how to be more efficient and more effective with their time but they don't have the time to!

Of course, this is ironic. A little like wanting to be better cooks. We buy the cooking books, download the recipes, watch the chefs on TV, but when it comes to it, after a long day, we choose to heat something up, rather than cook from scratch. The only difference is that whilst home cooked food is lovely, effective time management opens so many more doors.

The key to improving your time management is about making that critical choice early. This is the key decision. Not what do we want to change in our time management system, but how much we are prepared to go out of our own way, change, unlearn some stuff, and learn some new stuff. Each one of these 4 people made their decision.

In my experience people become one of 4 learners when they learn time management. Their choice is based on a subconscious decision they made a long time before they started the training course.

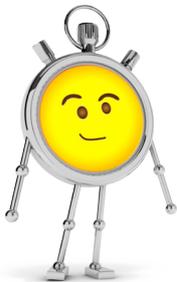


4 Types of Time Management Learner



Learner A: 'I'm just too busy for all of this' - Those that Believe that They Don't Have the Time

Many people fall into this category. In essence, they want empathy for how busy they are. They want us to know how busy they are. How important they are. The shame is that trainers can empathise and understand, but then all the trainer's time has been spent doing that and not helping the learner with their time management.



Learner B: 'I'm doing most of this anyway' - Those That are Already Doing All of That

Some people attend training just to want affirmation that they are doing it already. And some are, most aren't. They hear what they want to hear because to hear anything else means that they need to change. And change hurts, takes time and is distracting from what they really want to do, which is to get back to their desk and just work – Get their nose back to the grindstone.



Learner C: 'I can do all of this, I know I can' - Those That Want to Grab it All Now

There are those people that despite the friendly words of caution about not trying to grab all of the time management tips, tricks, fundamental changes, and learnings, they do exactly that. In their minds they are saying to themselves, 'Mere mortals can't do all of this, but I can'. Sadly, they revert back to their old time management system some weeks later because the new one was too unwieldy to keep it up.



Learner D: 'I can do this; Slowly and Steady' - Those That Build Their Own System

This group has got it licked. They understand that their time management system is the right system. The foundation to build on. These people add/delete/improve one piece at a time. Like the hare and the tortoise. They have recognised that time management is the one skill that unlocks everything else and they are going to take their time to get it right. 'Slow and Steady Wins the Day'. Like the tortoise.



Become a Student of Time Management Because it's a Life Skill

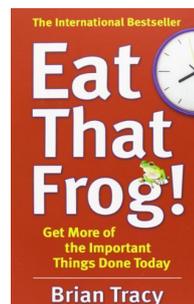
The one soft skill that unlocks everything else is time management. If you want better life balance - Better time management will get you home on time. If you want more money at work - Better time management will get you promoted. If you want to go to the gym - Better time management will help you get fit.

I am a huge fan of any time management & time saving tips, like '67 Time Management Tips to Quickly Increase Your Productivity', or books like 'Eat That Frog', or blogs, such as 'Perfect Time Based Productivity', or these 1 minute Time Management tips videos.

The return on investment of spending time learning time management tips, versus the reward, is always positive because you'll always take something away. Sure, you can learn to get more from your learning, but at least you are learning something. Moving forward. And with time management learning something is better than learning nothing because some of it will stick. Plus, remember, that we learn more from what we get wrong than what we get right.

The 'rub' is that tips and tricks will help, but they will not tackle the core of your time management system that makes it healthy. A 'healthy' time management system is one that you can trust, enables you to get the most important things done, and reduces your stress. Not increases it.

My advice is to keep learning tips and tricks. Just know that of Pareto's 80:20 law you are improving the 20% and not the 80%. If you want to continue fixing the 20% don't read on. If you do want to improve the 80% take the 'Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge' and keep reading.



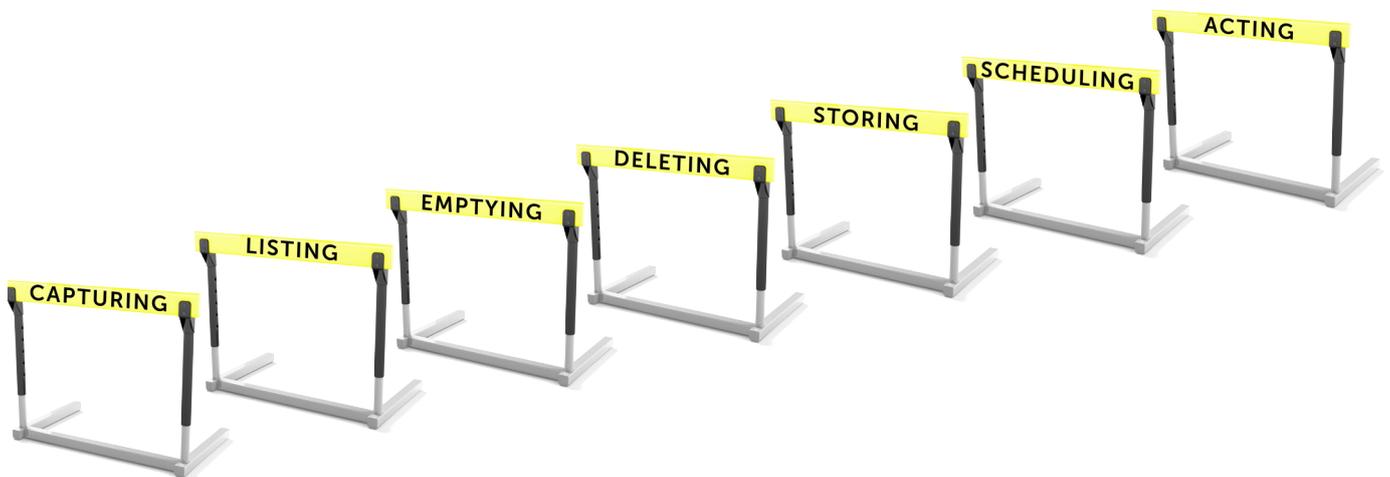
What are the 7 Hurdles to Having a Healthy Time Management System?

You'll have read, heard, or learnt about the principles of time management being focus, discipline, prioritisation, mindset, avoiding distractions and so on. These are good, but they are intangible. Hard to grasp, difficult to learn, and leave you thinking, 'Yeah, I get it, but they are hard to do'.

The 7 week time management challenge is about addressing the very heart of your time management system. Making it healthy. Living, breathing, fit for its job, by improving your time management system. To have a healthy time management system it needs to jump these 7 hurdles. By doing so you'll have addressed the core of your time management system.

The 7 hurdles to jump to have a healthy core are:

- Hurdle #1 - Capturing
- Hurdle #2 - Listing
- Hurdle #3 - Emptying
- Hurdle #4 - Deleting
- Hurdle #5 - Storing
- Hurdle #6 - Scheduling
- Hurdle #7 - Acting



Top Tip
Decide on electronic Vs paper by reading this article

[Click Here](#)



Hurdle #1: Capturing is about the points of entry into your time management system. Where demands on your time arrive. For example, your email inbox is a capture point. Your mind is another - Particularly, when you are at your desk remembering that you need to buy cornflakes after work, and then when you are in the supermarket you remember that you forgot to email that report earlier. Capture points can be mind, electronic or paper.

'Healthy Capturing' is not using your memory, having as few capture points as possible. Making sure that wherever and whenever you are, you have a place to enter, write stuff down, capture it. A little like the 6 pockets of a Pool table. Each pocket captures balls at different times and different amounts. Then they need 'Emptying', which we'll come to in Hurdle #3.



Hurdle #2: Listing is writing stuff down, be it old school with a pen & paper, or electronically with lists like '**Remember the Milk**'. Having the right amount of lists is key and you may have lists keeping track of lists, but if you trust them all then keep them all. Getting stuff out of your head is essential. It also gives you peace of mind that it is in a system that you can trust and that will remind you at the right time.

'Healthy Listing' is having lists that you trust and keeping them 'living & breathing' by emptying the lists frequently so that your brain is relaxed when it places something on the list that it will be looked at again. As soon as your brain believes that a listed task will not be looked at again it will instead choose to try to remember it. A little like people on your team. Some you trust to do what you ask and others, nah.



Hurdle #3: Emptying is about assessing and emptying the capture points frequently. For example, your email inbox is a capture point and most people are assessing and trying to empty it all day long. The key to emptying is doing it at an appropriate frequency and making immediate decisions about what to do with each time demand. Then having the other parts of the time management system in place that enables you to place it somewhere else.

'Healthy Emptying' is not emptying continually, but assessing with quick decisions and then doing this process again the right number of times through the week. A little like emptying the dishwasher. If you don't empty it the dishes will just keep stacking up until you then make more work for yourself having to empty the dishwasher, load it, and wash up.



Hurdle #4: Deleting sounds easy, but is harder than it seems. We've all heard the urban myths of people getting back from holiday and deleting all their emails, declaring in an arrogant voice, 'Well, if it's urgent, they'll write back'. Knowing full well that no one has ever done that, or at least no-one still employed at the same company! Considering the right question is key to effective deleting and that is 'What is the impact if I don't action this?'. According to research we should be deleting 50% more of our emails than we do, which will still have little impact on our performance.

'[Healthy Deleting](#)' is getting rid of those time demands, or tasks, that don't need to be done by you. Just because the task came into your system does not mean that you have to do it. Saying 'Yes Wisely' is a great way to say no to some tasks and offer options instead. Deleting emails that you are copied-in on is another. As well as having regular 121's with people that tend to brief tasks on email, maybe you could solve some tasks in the meeting, defer them, or suggest someone else.



Hurdle #5: Storing is not about using your head because of the old adage, 'The most successful people are those with the emptiest heads'. Storing is about keeping the right stuff in the right places and making it available at the right time. For example, **a tool for placing websites to read later, like 'Laterthis'**. The stored information must be kept to a minimum and, where possible, backed-up so you never have to go find all of that information again.

'[Healthy Storing](#)' is having a trusted number of useful storage points that you can get to, are easily available and easy to use when you need to. A little like home. How many 'messy drawers' are there? Can you get what you need from the shed/garage when you need it or is it a bombsite? Are all your key documents (House insurance, Guarantees, Warranties, etc.) in an easily accessible & useable place?



Hurdle #6: Scheduling is blocking out time for your time demands. At the moment you are likely to only use your calendar to book meetings. You could also use your calendar to block out project work, family time, weekly reviews, or preparing for meetings/presentations. A single calendar works best. An electronic diary is best because it allows you to book recurring events and co-ordinate with others. To organise multiple people meetings with external people I recommend

'**Doodle**' because it is just so easy to use.

'[Healthy Scheduling](#)' is a trusted diary that reminds you when you need to be reminded and at the right time. It enables you to schedule quickly and easily. A little like an experienced PA that schedules enough to keep you on track, but not too much to be hampered by it.

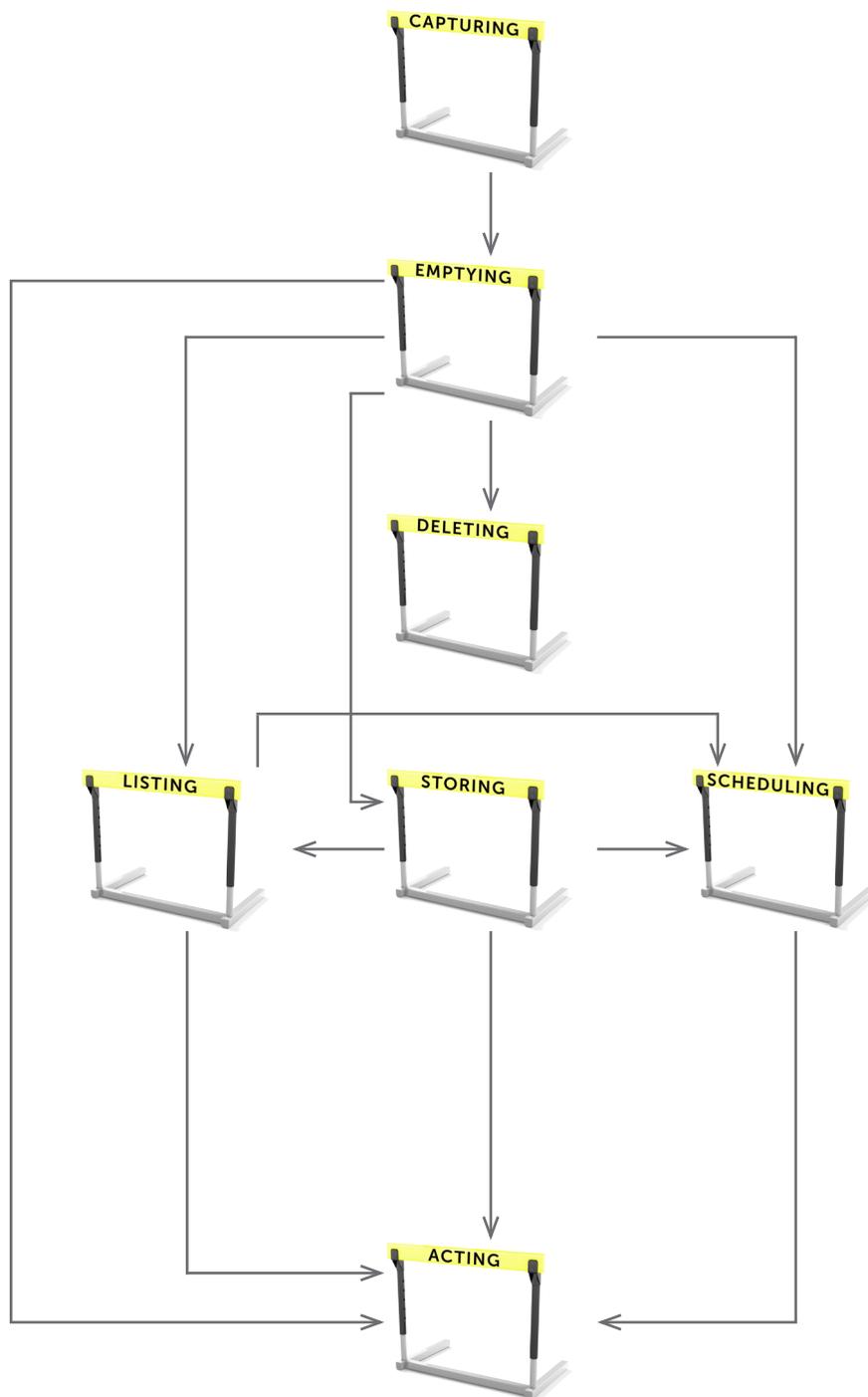


Hurdle #7: Acting is getting the right stuff done. The actual doing of the work. The choice here is; can it be done in a short amount of time? Say, less than 3 minutes. Or does it require longer, like 30 minutes? The time management gurus recommend that if we can do it in a short amount of time then just do it. This is because there is no point in putting the time demand/task into your system for it to pop out 1 week later, if it only takes a few minutes to do.

'Healthy Acting' is the key hurdle because this is where you do stuff. Make things happen. All the other hurdles lead to this one. Making decisions about what you do next is what you are paid to do and the better decisions you make the more you will be paid. A little like an athlete training all year round, it's about the decisions on race day that really matter. Take your salary and divide it by 2,000. These are the number of hours we work per week-ish x52 weeks. This is then your value per hour. Avoid tasks that are valued at less than your hourly rate. Delegate, delete, or automate them.

The Core of a Healthy Time Management System

The 7 pieces at the core of a healthy time management system fit together in the following way:



Those that trialed this whitepaper found that one or two essential pieces of the time management system were of particular benefit to them because this was where they were weak. You will probably find a similar experience.

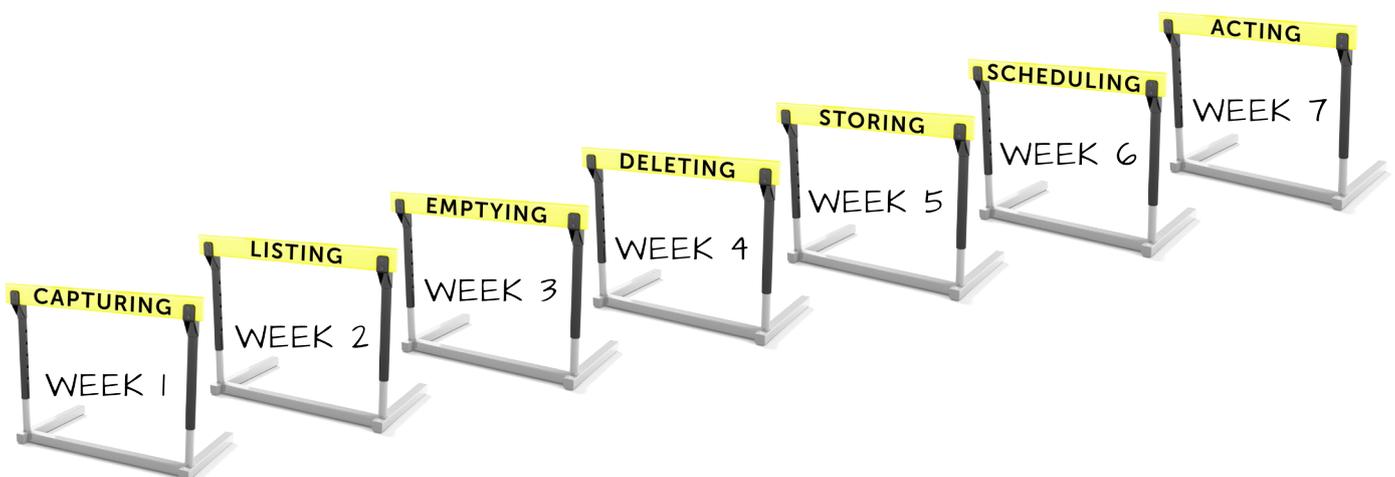
The Story So Far (Cue Star Wars Music)

This is what we have discussed in this whitepaper so far:

- You are someone that wants to be less overwhelmed, more proactive, and finish what you start.
- You know that you need to build your time management system and not just copy someone else's. This is because you are an individual and so your time management system needs to be as individual as you are.
- There are 4 types of time management Learners and those that build their system 'slow and steady' make the most progress.
- Time management tips & tricks will only get you so far. The 20%.
- You need to make a conscious decision about how much effort you are prepared to put in because change is hard.
- Before you decide whether to take this challenge you need an excellent understanding of the 7 pieces at the core of a time management system. They are Hurdle #1 – Capturing, Hurdle #2 – Listing, Hurdle #3 – Emptying, Hurdle #4 – Deleting, Hurdle #5- Storing, Hurdle #6 – Scheduling, and Hurdle #7 – Acting.
- You know how the 7 pieces fit together.

Ready to Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge?

Let's Go.....



Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge

Let's begin.....

Week 1 of 7 - Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge - Hurdle #1: Capturing



- 1. Take 20 to 30 minutes to do the following on Monday morning. Ideally before you start work. Maybe starting work a little earlier.
- 2. Using the table on the next page, or a clean sheet of paper, write ALL the capture points (entry points) of your time management system that you currently have. For example email inbox, phone calls, and meetings. Write these into column 1.
- 3. If you have too many capture points remove one. Ideally one that you do not trust, e.g. You have multiple notepads that you use. Mark it on the table using a cross in column 2.
- 4. Decide how you will manage now that this capture point has been removed (Combine it with another capture point?). Mark it on the table with a comment.
- 5. If you don't have all of the following capture points, add one; on the train, instant messages, corridor conversations, using Siri/Cortana in the car, etc. Mark it on the table using a tick in column 3.
- 6. Identify where you most rely on your memory and decide what you will put in place instead. For example, if it is the car, you will use a dictaphone. Add this to column 1 (Leave columns 4, 5, and 6 blank for now. We'll come back to them later).
- 7. Answer these questions for yourself: What will stop you writing a complete list of your capture points? And what will stop you from taking 'time' to reflect so that you can ensure that you have captured them all? Now answer these questions and identify how you will overcome them if you don't want to start on a poor footing.



**Click
Here**

Top Tip:

This article will explain why a pad by your bed is an excellent idea

Week 2 of 7 - Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge - Hurdle #2: Listing



1. Take 20 to 30 minutes to do the following on Monday morning. Ideally before you start work. Maybe starting work a little earlier.
 2. Review your completed table from Week 1 'Capturing' and challenge yourself to add another 3 capture points/entry points that you have missed, e.g. The pad by the side of your bed, or the post-it notes on your desk, onto the table.
 3. Using the table on the next page, or a clean sheet of paper, write down ALL the lists that you currently have. For example a daily to do list. Add these to column 1.
 4. If you have too many lists remove one. Particularly the list that you do not trust. For example, the Outlook reminders list. Mark this using column 2 on the table below with a cross.
 5. Decide how you will manage now that once list has been removed (Combine it with another list?). Mark with a comment on the table.
6. If you don't have all of the following lists, add one to column 1: Particularly the daily to do list (Not a stream of actions), or the call list, project list, waiting for list, weekly list, monthly list, or a **some day maybe list**. Mark this using column 3 on the table with a tick.
 7. Answer these questions for yourself: What will stop you writing a complete list of your Lists? And taking 'time' to ensure that you have reflected and challenged your brain to identify them all? Now answer these questions and identify how you will overcome them so that you don't fall at the second hurdle.



**Click
Here**

Top Tip:

Use the 'OurGroceries' app to keep a list of groceries for the house. Everyone in the home can download and add to the lists

Week 3 of 7 - Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge - Hurdle #3: Emptying



1. Take 20 to 30 minutes to do the following on Monday morning. Ideally before you start work. Maybe starting work a little earlier.
2. Review your completed table from Week 2 'Listing' and challenge yourself to add another 1 List that you have missed onto the table below, e.g. The shopping list.
3. Using your list of 'Capture Points' that you created in Week 1 identify your top 3 capture points. Those with the most traffic and that you struggle to manage, e.g. Your email inbox. Update column 4 of the table.
4. Decide when you will empty your top 3 capture points. For example your email inbox will be assessed once an hour for 15 minutes, or after each major piece of work. Not continuously. Update column 5 of the table.
5. Identify a trigger for each of your top 3 capture points that will help you to create the habit. The best way to form a habit is to

'piggy back' another habit. For example, when I broke my foot I had to do exercises everyday for 5 minutes. I piggybacked brushing my teeth. For example, emptying your in-tray once a day as you log off from work or with each cup of coffee. Update column 6 of the table.

6. Read this short post to help you, '[Say Yes Wisely](#)' because most people struggle to say 'No', which drains their time hugely. Use this learning to say, 'No' to at least 1 task this week and each week from here on in. Mark on the table the number of times you say, 'Yes Wisely (No)' each week.
7. Answer these questions for yourself: What will stop you sticking to the emptying frequency that you have written prompted by your triggers for this week and the coming weeks? What will stop you saying no to 1 task each week? Now answer these questions and identify how you will overcome them so that you don't fall back into your old habits.



Week 3 of 7 - Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge -
Hurdle #3: Emptying

Number Of Times Said Yes Wisely

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7

Week 4 of 7 - Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge - Hurdle #4: Deleting



- 1. Take 20 to 30 minutes to do the following on Monday morning. Ideally before you start work. Maybe starting work a little earlier.
- 2. If emptying the first 3 capture points is not working, stop, go back to Week 3 and do it again before continuing. This is because you need to be able to form habits that work before you continue building. If it is working, use your Week 3 'Emptying' table to decide when you will empty a further 4 capture points and remember to add the triggers. Add these to the table.
- 3. Understanding how to use advanced search is the key to finding emails quickly. [Learn how to use advanced search](#).
- 4. Complete column 1 of the table on the next page with distribution lists and emails that you are on that you don't need to be on. Unsubscribe from a minimum of 4 external email lists that you are on and that you do not use. And unsubscribe from a minimum of 3 internal distribution lists that you are on. Tick column 2 when you confirmation that you have been unsubscribed.
- 5. Commit from this week to dealing with copied-in emails more quickly. Do this with the ABC tool: A. A CC email?, B. Briefly read it, and C. Crap? Delete, unless you reply, but this must be by exception.
- 6. To make this a habit create a trigger, known as a 'spark', that reminds you. Maybe a post-it note with the words, 'CC: ABC'. Write your 'spark' on the next page.
- 7. Answer this question for yourself: What will stop you doing the ABC tool on CC emails? Now answer it and overcome it so you can release yourself a little from the [Email Monster](#).

Remember to say, 'Yes Wisely' this week and update your table.

Week 5 of 7 - Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge - Hurdle #5: Storing



- 1. Take 20 to 30 minutes to do the following on Monday morning. Ideally before you start work. Maybe starting work a little earlier.
- 2. Assess how Week 4 'Deleting' is working. Are you adopting the ABC tool on CC emails? Is your 'Spark' working? If not please go back to Week 4 'Deleting' and complete the week again. If you are, well done and continue.
- 3. Using the table on the next page, or a clean sheet of paper, write down ALL the storage points that you currently have. For example, the wall by your desk is a storage point and your 'day notebook' and your desk. Complete column 1.
- 4. If you have too many storage points remove one. Maybe you don't use or rely on the reading pile storage point. Decide how you will manage now that this storage point has been removed (Combine with another storage point?). Mark this with a cross on column 2.
- 5. If you don't have all of the following storage points, add one; especially for physical documents (e.g tickets), and then consider books to read, websites to refer back to, or papers to read, book shelf, reference folder, tickets, or tickler file. Update column 3 by using a tick
- 6. Identify for each storage point the frequency and the trigger and complete columns 4 and 5. For example, if it is your reading pile, you'll commit to read one piece using lunch as a trigger, or take one piece to every meeting that you will read whilst you are waiting. Add this to your table on the next page.
- 7. Answer this question for yourself: What will stop you from emptying your storage points for this week and the coming weeks? Now answer it and overcome it because you are only 3 hurdles from having a healthy time management system.

Remember to say, 'Yes Wisely' this week and update your table.



Top Tip:
A 'tickler file' or '43 folder' system can help. Watch this 1 minute video to find out more

Click Here

Week 6 of 7 - Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge - Hurdle #6: Scheduling



This is the toughest hurdle because getting your head around a 'KRA' (Key Result Area) is not easy and a little like 'hitting the wall' in a marathon – Do you have the willpower to keep going? I cannot stress how imperative it is to complete this week. Without a SMART KRA your time management system is like an egg without the yolk, missing all the goodness that makes it whole.

- 1. Take 20 to 30 minutes to do the following on Monday morning. Ideally before you start work. Maybe starting work a little earlier.
- 2. Assess how well you are managing Week 5 'Storing'. Have you identified your Storage Points or found some more? And are you Emptying according to the table that you completed? If you are not please go back to Week 5 Storing and complete the week again. If you are, well done and continue.
- 3. If you have two diaries delete/remove one by transferring diary 1 to diary 2. Don't keep diary 2 'just in case' because you'll always rely on it a little until it is completely gone. Complete box 1 on the next page.
- 4. Identify why you are on the payroll. Here's some help - It is not the long list of stuff, from managing clients, to meetings, to presenting, dealing with queries, managing your team, etc. It is 1 to 3 things. In a commercial company your reason for being on the payroll will be to increase sales & profit. For sales people it is easier, they have a budget. This is their KRA. For others it will take a little thought to identify a few measurable things that you do that proves that you are worth your salary. For example, for a waiter it might be the [tripadvisor](#) scores. If you are still struggling, this '[KPI/KRA](#)' post will help and also page 25 of this whitepaper. Complete box 2 on the next page.
- 5. Identify the 3 projects/large chunks of work that will have the biggest impact on the reason you are on the payroll/KRA's. Complete box 3 on the next page.
- 6. Get 'stealth mode'. Find a way to get away. Book a meeting room, work from home, or close the door. Whatever you can do to be in stealth. Schedule into your diary 90 minutes next week, and a recurring appointment where you will do only those projects in that time. Complete box 4 on the next page.
- 7. Answer this question for yourself: What will stop you scheduling 90 minutes each week in stealth mode to work on your top 3 projects? Some Learners say that their boss hasn't told them why they are on the payroll. This is no excuse. We need to be proactive and present to our boss 3 [S.M.A.R.T.](#) KRA's for them to approve. This is your penultimate hurdle and the final hurdle is in sight.

Remember to say, 'Yes Wisely' this week and update your table.



Top Tip:

Don't accept Outlook's default of 30 minutes or 60 minutes for a meeting, change it to 20 minutes or 45 minutes.



Week 6 of 7 - Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge - Hurdle #6: Scheduling

1. Which Diary Have You Removed?

2. Why Are You On The Payroll? (Can these tick each letter of S.M.A.R.T.?)

3. What Are Your Top 3 Projects?

4. What Is Your Stealth Mode?

Why Are You On the Payroll? (KRA's)

KPI's

'KPI' stands for 'Key Performance Indicator'.

A target for a team. A football team's KPI would be to win the Premier League. It is a team target which is the responsibility of each member of the team.

KRA's

'KRA' stands for 'Key Result Area'.

A target for an individual. A goalie's KRA would be a 'clean sheet', or a striker's KRA would be to score one goal per match. It is the responsibility of that individual to achieve that target.

Top Tip:

If you cannot identify a SMART KRA/s you can only achieve 60% time management effectiveness.



Why have both?

If you just have a KPI target the team might achieve it. The challenge is that each member of the team will not know whether they achieved their part because their target was unclear. This leads to poor job satisfaction and subjective performance reviews.

As tough as the challenge is, identifying why each person is on the payroll/knows their KRA is imperative to get everyone pulling in the same direction.

Week 7 of 7 - Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge - Hurdle #7: Acting



- 1. Take 20 to 30 minutes to do the following on Monday morning. Ideally before you start work. Maybe starting work a little earlier.
- 2. Assess how Week 6 'Scheduling' is working. If you have not identified a SMART KRA do not move forward. Go back to Week 6 'Scheduling' and do it again. If you do have 1 to 3 SMART KRA's move forward. Please do not kid yourself that you 'sort of have them'. A SMART KRA can tick each one of the S.M.A.R.T. letters. Imagine you are in an appraisal/performance meeting with your boss – If you have SMART KRA's then you will know before you walk into that meeting whether they have been achieved or not. The discussion is no longer subjective. No it is objective ("I deserve a pay rise because I have achieved...").
- 3. Decide on the length of your 'short amount of time'. The 'Do It Now!' piece of time. It might be 5 minutes, 4 minutes, or 3 minutes. The difference might not be much, but you decide what it is. Complete box 1 on the next page.
- 4. For every time demand/task that comes into your system do it now if it can be done in less than your short amount of time. Commit to this. Do not kid yourself that you can do a task in the short amount of time and still be doing it 20 minutes later. This is because your brain will soon know what you are doing and stop you doing it. Complete box 2 on the next page showing how you will remind yourself to do this with a 'spark'.
- 5. For longer amounts of 'doing' time learn the **Pomodoro technique** (2.2 minute video) to help you focus and use it once per week. Maybe during your scheduled project work.
- 6. Place the reason you decided that you are on the payroll (KRA's) in Week 6 in a place that will disrupt your behaviour. For example, a post-it note on your laptop/screensaver/desktop image. Not on the wall because we go blind to what is on the wall - 'Corporate wallpaper'. Complete box 3 on the next page.
- 7. Answer this question for yourself: What will stop you from completing tasks that are doable within your agreed short piece of time? Now answer it and overcome it because you are at the final hurdle and the finish line is in sight.

Remember to say, 'Yes Wisely' this week and update your table.



Week 7 of 7 - Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge - Hurdle #7: Acting

1. What Is Your Short Amount Of Time?

2. Write Here Your Spark to remind you of your agreed short amount of time - How It Will Be Displayed? And Where It Will Be Displayed?

3. Write Here Your Spark to remind you of your KRA's - How It Will Be Displayed? And Where It Will Be Displayed?

You Have Finished, Well done!

You have now completed the 'Take the 7 Week Time Management Challenge', jumped the 7 hurdles and have a healthy time management system. Excellent work. You are now in the top 10% of time managers. This is what you have achieved:



Hurdle #1 – Capturing

- All of your capture points are identified and written on your table.
- Where you once relied on your memory you have replaced this by a better method.
- Now complete the empty and trigger columns for the remaining capture points.



Hurdle #2 – Listing

- All of your lists have been identified and written on your table.
- You have removed any lists that you do not trust.
- You are working from a daily to do list each day. Not a stream of continuous actions but a daily plan.



Hurdle #3 – Emptying

- The top 7 of your capture points have an empty frequency identified and an accompanying trigger.
- You understand how to say, 'Yes Wisely'.
- You have said no at least once per week by using the 'Say Yes Wisely' learning and completed a tally of the number of times per week.



Hurdle #4 – Deleting

- You now know how to use advanced email search.
- Removed yourself from 4 external lists and 3 internal lists and had confirmation.
- Using the ABC tool on CC emails and created a spark to remind you.



Hurdle #5 – Storing

- All of your storage points are identified and written in your table.
- Each of your storage points has a empty frequency identified and an accompanying trigger.
- A storage place with an empty frequency and accompanying trigger for physical documents.



Hurdle #6 – Scheduling

- You have only one diary.
- Your reasons for being on the payroll are clear with 1 to 3 SMART KRA's and you have created a spark to remind you.
- You have definitely identified the top 3 projects that impact on your reason for being on the payroll, your SMART KRA's, and have this in a place that reminds you.
- You have found your stealth mode and are using this to do 90 minutes per week scheduled work on your top 3 projects.
- You know your hourly value and are actively avoiding tasks that are not worthy of your time.

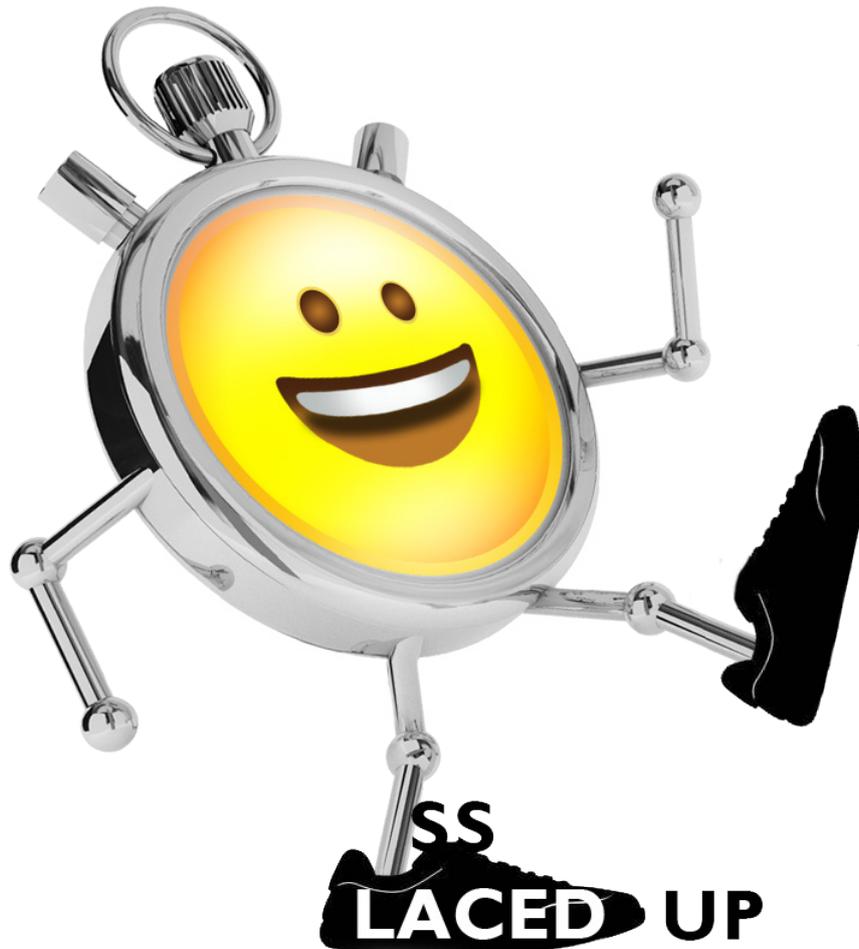


Hurdle #7 – Acting

- You have decided on your short amount of time, e.g. 3 minutes and created a spark to remind you.
- You have a 'Do it now!' approach to any task that can be genuinely done in under your short amount of time.
- You know how to use the Pomodoro technique and have used it at least once.

Remember to Keep Your Laces Tied Up!

A useful mnemonic to remember the 7 hurdles is 'Laced Up', where the two 'S' are the shoelaces.



S = Storing
S = Scheduling

L = Listing
A = Acting
C = Capturing
E = Emptying
D = Deleting



What Next?

The only challenge that remains is to keep it going! This is not easy and only those that truly commit will survive. The toughest time is when you are busiest. Don't wait for the slow day to come because it never will. Make your system work when you are busiest because this is when you really need it to work.

The research on creating habits shows us that to make a piece of behaviour habitual we need to do it 21 times. So, you need to do each one of these for a good amount of time before it sticks. If you do 'fall off the wagon' this is ok, it's a little like tuning in an old radio. Sometimes you'll get the station, other times you'll just hear a crackling sound, but if you keep at it you'll eventually hear the music. One of the most effective ways to stick with it is to share what you are doing with someone else so that they can be your conscience. Find a 'learning buddy'.

On our [time management training course](#) we train our Learners in these hurdles, of course, and then 5 advanced pieces of a healthy time management system, like 'switching'.

Darren A. Smith
Founder
Making Business Matter



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About Darren A. Smith

Darren spent his first 12 years as a Category Manager at one of the big four UK supermarkets. During this time he managed a number of areas comprising chilled ready meals, cheese, frozen foods, pizza and fresh fruit, along with an area worth £1bn.

Darren then went on to establish Making Business Matter, a training provider that works with suppliers to the big four UK supermarkets. Over the past 12 years, he and his team have supported supermarket suppliers in improving their **negotiation skills, category management** and **time management**.

He has written articles for The Grocer, Grocery Trader, Food Manufacture, Harpers, Fresh Produce Journal, British Frozen Foods Federation, Supply Management, People Development Magazine, published a book '**A Complete Understanding of the Groceries Code of Practice**', and **appeared on the BBC**.

About Making Business Matter

We are the **training provider** to the UK grocery industry. We help suppliers to the big four supermarkets to develop the soft skills that will secure them more profitable wins.

Our trainers have worked on both sides of the fence and know the challenges of working with the big four supermarkets, plus we also know how they think and what their hot buttons are.

The problem suppliers to the big 4 face is that they are investing money in training but are not seeing a measurable return on investment. This is because most training companies do not understand the mindset of buyers from the big 4 supermarkets and the skills being learnt are not getting put into practice.

Our unique training method, **Sticky Learning®**, ensures that your Learners are still using their new skills 5 months later, which enables us to guarantee a measurable return on your training investment.

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