

# Work Less and Get More Done:

## A Modern Guide to Management Efficiency

Managers work hard to earn their titles and even harder to support the teams they lead. As a manager, it can feel as if your work never ends – even though the day stubbornly persists in containing only 24 hours.

The best managers, however, have the time not only to do great work, but also to rest, recharge and focus on themselves. They're not superheroes: They have efficiency skills that every manager can learn.

### In this eBook, you'll find:

- The inside scoop on what inefficient management costs you, your team and your company.

- The four secrets efficient managers use to improve their results.

- Practical advice and tips on how to make those secrets work for you.



# What Inefficient Management Costs **You**

Inefficiencies in your workday can cost you time, effort, focus, attention and even the goodwill of your team.

For example:

- **Multitasking makes you worse at your job.**

Managers who multitask need 50% longer to complete a task compared to those who take their work one step at a time.

- **Permitting interruptions derails your day.**

After an interruption, it can take 25 minutes or more to return to the state of mind required of a cognitively demanding task.

- **You steal time from yourself to compensate.**

To make up for inefficiencies, you might skip sleep, meals, exercise or “me time.” Doing so, however, digs into your reserves instead of allowing you to work in a sustainable manner.



# What Inefficient Management Costs **Your Team**

When managers are inefficient, the entire team suffers.

For instance:

## Your team doesn't develop independence.

Constantly relying on you to decide what needs to be done next and how, your team doesn't learn how to spot problems and address them independently.

## Your team doesn't develop new skills.

Managers who lack strong delegating abilities deprive their teams of the chance to learn new skills and take ownership of their work.

## Your team lacks vision.

Inefficient managers are often putting out fires as they occur, which leaves little time to help the team understand the importance of its work within the “big picture” context of the company's mission, vision, goals and values.



# What Inefficient Management Costs **Your Business**

Does it really matter if you're efficient at work? Yes!

## Too much work wastes everyone's time.

Human output falls dramatically after 50 hours of work a week. After 55 hours, no gains are made at all – which means you do just as much work in 55 hours as you do in 70.

## Inefficient managers can make or break company culture.

Meetings that go nowhere, confusing work assignments, and managers so overwhelmed they aren't present for their teams all foster disengagement, lack of productivity, and higher turnover.

## Goals flounder.

When a manager is overwhelmed, the team doesn't have a clear view of the company's overall goals – much less how their daily tasks support those goals. Teams focus on the wrong priorities, making it harder for the organization to succeed.



# Secrets of Efficient Managers

How do efficient managers get the best from themselves and their teams without exhausting themselves?

An efficient manager's toolkit contains four key elements:

- **Self-Care:** Efficient managers prioritize physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

- **Deep Work:** Efficient managers find the time to focus deeply on their most demanding, high-value responsibilities.

- **Prioritizing:** Efficient managers understand the difference between urgency and importance, and plan their tasks accordingly.

- **Delegation:** Efficient managers not only pass tasks to their team, they also reach out to qualified experts who can help.



# Self-Care: Maintaining the Physical

Everything we think, plan, hope and believe starts with the body. It's essential to keep yours in good working order.

## Focus on:

**Sleep.** Guard sleep time as sacred. Cut distractions out of your bedroom entirely by making it a no-screen zone.

**Nutrition and hydration.** Regular, balanced meals and plenty of water each day fuel your body, allowing your mind to work more efficiently.

**Movement.** It's not just good for your health – it's also fundamental to being human. Find ways to move your body each day, from walking around the office on a break to hitting the gym or playing backyard sports with the family.

When these three pillars are strong, you're more alert, focused and engaged with your work – which means you can get more done in less time.

Inefficient managers often cut these three areas from their lives when they're under pressure, assuming they don't have time to do these tasks. Efficient managers know the truth: They don't have time not to do them.



# Self-Care: Supporting the Cognitive

Meeting your body's ongoing physical needs builds a sustainable basis from which to work, but it's only part of the picture. Your mental, emotional and spiritual health deserve attention as well.

To improve functioning in these areas:

## Disconnect.

If you check your work email at home, you haven't really left work. Turn off notifications – or simply turn off your phone – on nights and weekends. If this isn't feasible, try scheduling specific times on the weekend to deal with email and voicemail.

## Take your “me time.”

Schedule and guard time each day for your own interests and passions. For instance, you might take time each night to read a book, work on a hobby, spend quality time with your family or simply reflect on your day.

## Embrace boredom.

Constant distractions erode the ability to focus over time. Instead of checking your phone when you're bored, take the opportunity to let your mind wander.



# What Is Deep Work?

Deep work is the work that requires total focus on the task at hand. It pushes the boundaries of your mental abilities and allows you to develop more complex skills.

Perhaps most importantly, deep work allows you to produce high-value work at an efficient pace. Much of the work managers are proudest of occurs in a deep work state.

A strong self-care foundation helps managers do deep work more effectively. It's tough to concentrate when you're hungry, tired or fretful that you'll never get to work on your personal passions.





# Making Time for Deep Work

How can you create a deep work state?

## Know when you're most focused.

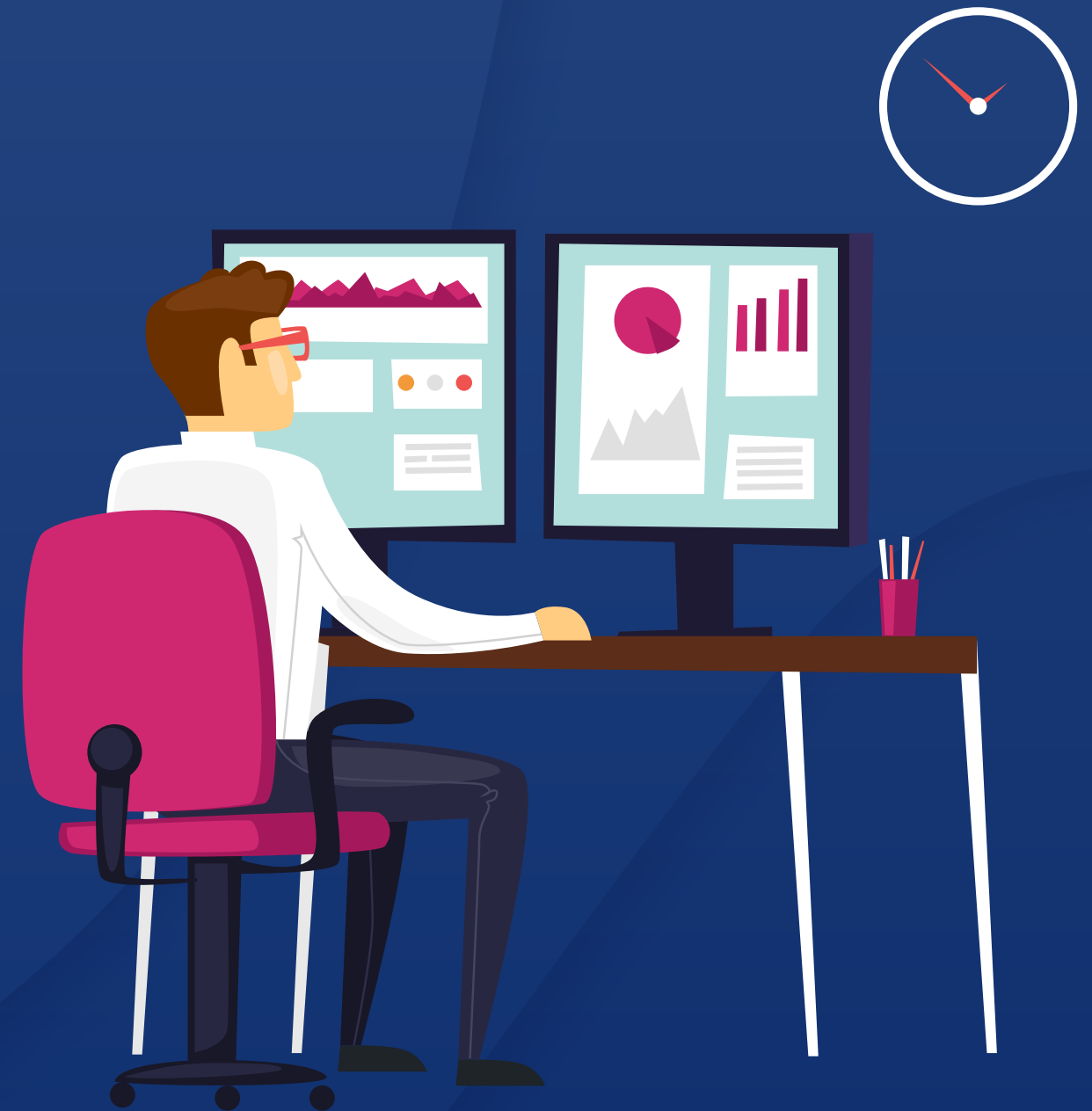
This is the best part of your day for deep work. Pay attention to your peak focus time, and schedule your most cognitively demanding tasks during that time.

## Set boundaries.

Schedule distraction-free time. Use apps that help you eliminate distractions, like those that mute email notifications or prevent you from visiting social media sites.

## Do it regularly.

Your ability to focus on command is a skill. Building this skill requires practice, so make your deep work time a regular habit.



# Get Your MITs on Your Work

When you walk into your office, what do you do first?

If you're like most inefficient managers, chances are good the answer is a relatively unimportant task, like checking your email or voicemail.

Highly efficient managers start their day with their Most Important Task, or MIT. It's the number-one high-value task that must be completed that day.

The last task these managers do each day is to write down one to three MITs for the next day. They typically leave the list where they'll see it first thing in the morning – and the next day, they get right to work.



# Learn What's Important - and What's Merely Urgent

When you're in charge of a team, there's no shortage of fires to put out. And every person who walks into your office seems to have a task they need you to do *right now*.

But of these tasks, how many are important, and how many are merely urgent?

Using an Eisenhower matrix can help you sort your tasks and plan your day. The matrix has four categories:

- **Urgent, but Not Important:** Those email notifications that ding when you're trying to complete a report.
- **Important, but not Urgent:** The audit that is due a month from now and that will take you two days to complete.
- **Both Urgent and Important:** The report that is due by the end of the day and on which your next performance review depends.
- **Neither Urgent nor Important:** That cute puppy photo your best friend just posted to Facebook.

Use the matrix to determine how many of your daily tasks fall under each category. "Both urgent and important" tasks are MIT candidates. "Neither urgent nor important" tasks can be dropped from your to-do list altogether.

Once you know how your to-do tasks rank, plan your day accordingly.



	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Do It Now (MIT)	Do It Later
Not Important	Delegate	Delete

# Why You Need to Delegate *Today*

Most managers struggle with delegation at some point in their careers. Yet you and your team can accomplish far more when others handle certain aspects of your job.

## Effective delegation:

### Improves teamwork.

Group projects require team members to exercise their skills in interdependence, communication and coordination to reach a common goal.

### Improves your team's skills.

Team members who handle new projects learn new skills. They also develop a sense of ownership and empowerment that enhances team culture and advances careers.

### Improves productivity.

When every team member focuses on the tasks they do best, productivity increases.



# How to Delegate for Maximum Efficiency

Delegation frees up time for you to focus on your key priorities.

## To do it well:

### Know which tasks can't be delegated.

A task that requires your specific expertise or that is a direct measure of your performance is one you should do yourself. Tasks that meet neither of these criteria are ideal for delegation.

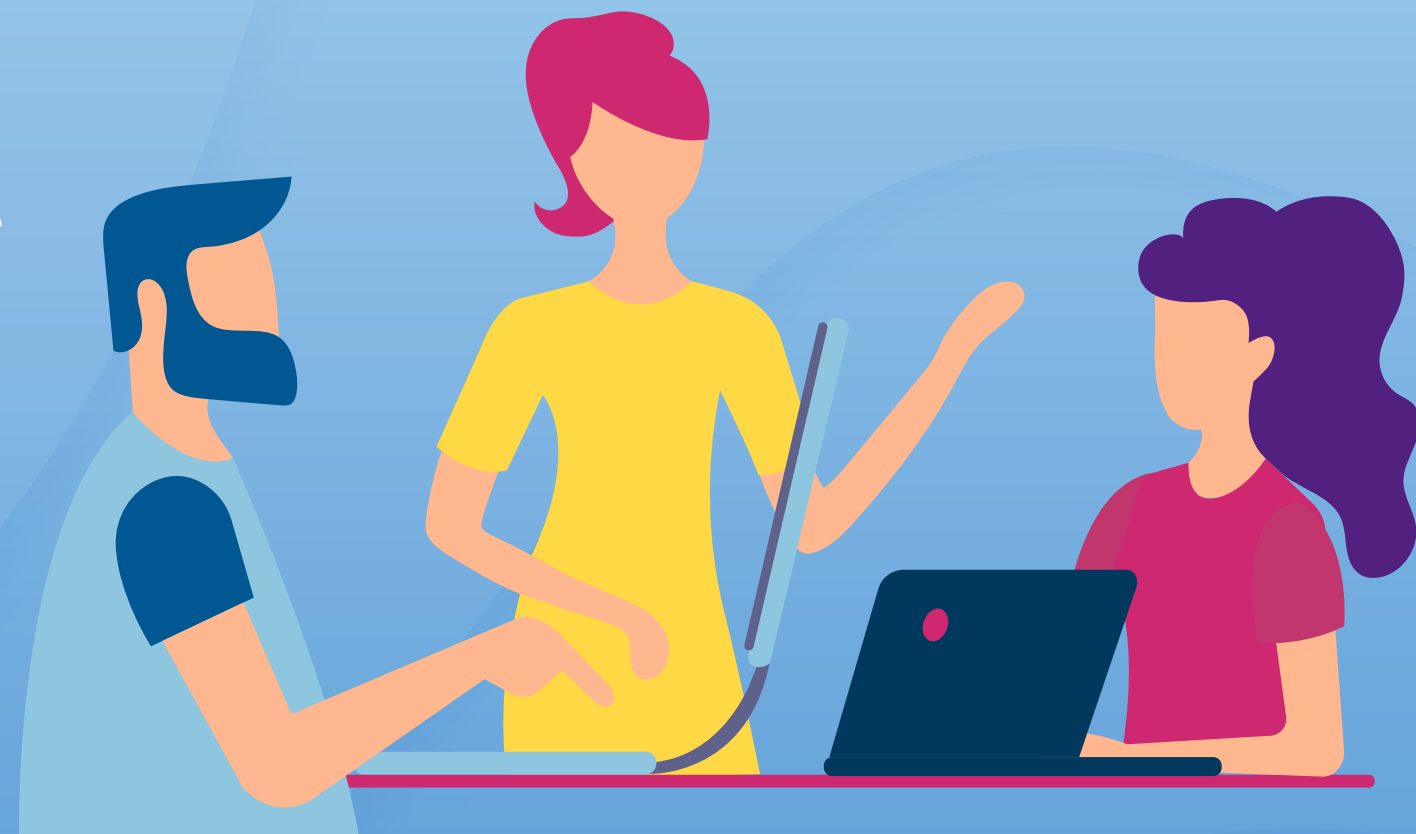
### Know who's best for each task.

Choose delegees with the right skills and experience. If you can't decide between two team members, pick the one with more enthusiasm for the work.

### Step away.

Give clear instructions and set a "check-in" point or time, like the end of the day or when the first draft is complete. Then, focus on your own work until your delegee lets you know they're ready for review.

These steps work both for your own team and for outside professionals you might contact for assistance, like staffing partners.



# Get the Professional Guidance You Need

When your team can't take on tasks like recruiting and hiring, don't hesitate to reach out to a staffing partner.

Your staffing agency can take on many tasks, including:

- tackling time-consuming tasks like reviewing resumes and checking references;
- screen and recommend qualified candidates that offer a great culture fit; and
- keep you focused on the high-value tasks only you can do.

The most efficient managers know how to use the resources available – and your staffing partner thrives on making their clients more efficient and effective.

