



**PROFESSIONAL
SOLUTIONS**

HELPING YOU WITH YOUR TIME & PRODUCTIVITY AS A BUSINESS LEADER



Hello!

I'm Danielle. I'm the owner of DH Professional Solutions, which helps organisations contribute more effectively to society and the environment by implementing tailored business infrastructure and improvement solutions.

The solutions provided by my company will not only improve the businesses we work with, but in turn will also give assurance, confidence and time back to the leaders of those businesses, to focus on what's happening next.

As well as being lucky enough to be naturally very organised, my career has also consisted of a series of jobs which have required effective time management and productivity, both for myself and for other people.

So, as a business owner with over 10 years' experience in consultancy, business support and operations, business transformation and project management I know how it feels to consistently have hundreds of things on your To-Do list, no matter how hard you work. I also know how important it is to make sure you're concentrating on the right things, at the right time.

I have therefore created this workbook, to help you on a personal level to manage your workload in a smarter way, bringing some order to the chaos and giving you some assurance that your energy is being focused in the right places.

Work through each of the helpful tasks at your own pace – by the time you've completed all of the activities, I promise you'll feel better about your workload and you will save yourself time!

If you come back to the workbook and repeat the activities again and again – even better!

If you want to know more about how I can help you and your business, please get in touch today.



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HELPFUL TASK 1 - Your to-do list

We'll start really easy - make a full list of all the things you spend your time on and get involved in. Make a list from memory, look at your calendar and add new things to the list as they come up over the next couple of days.

For each item, think about:

- How often do you do it?
- What are the outcomes and benefits of it?
- Are you good at it / does it take you long to complete?
- Does it even need doing?



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HELPFUL TASK 2 - Streamlining your to-do list

Consider ways to cut back on the items on your to-do list - not everything needs to be there.

Look at the Eisenhower decision matrix – also featured in Stephen R Covey’s landmark book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. This helps you think about your priorities and determine which activities might simply be distractions.

Thinking about the activities you identified in Helpful Task 1, try to categorise them using the guidelines below.

The Eisenhower Decision Matrix



1. Important & Urgent – do these tasks immediately – they cannot be delayed or ignored. *Note - it can be a good idea to have time set aside in your schedule to handle unexpected issues, to avoid impacting other activities*

2. Important but not urgent – you should ensure you have some time set aside, in plenty of time before they become urgent, to manage these activities properly.



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3. Urgent but not important – these are activities that you should delegate to someone else. See the bonus info below for more on this.

4. Not urgent and not important – these are distracting you from your objectives and goals and should be avoided or eliminated.

Bonus info:

When thinking about **delegating** - you might be able to delegate some things straight away whereas some other tasks might take some coaching or training – consider this for a longer-term relief.

Also consider whether you are spending time on tasks that could be done more efficiently and effectively by **outsourcing** them altogether, if you don't have anyone in your team that can help. There is a cashflow consideration to this decision, but if it is taking you a long time to do it yourself, taking your time away from the things that you are good at and other revenue-generating activities, you may actually be wasting money in the long run.

One of the biggest time-wasters in the business world is **meetings**.

So many businesses just have too many of them. So I challenge you to think really hard about yours:

- What is the real purpose of each meeting?
- Does the meeting fulfil the purpose or are there other ways to do it?
- Do you need to be involved or can you delegate / be called in by exception / attend half of it?

Then think about **what else** takes up the most time - can you apply the same rules?



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HELPFUL TASK 3 - Tackling your to-do list

Try out some of these approaches and see what works for you – tick them off when you've tried them:

- Carve up your time into 30-minute chunks. Allocate 25 minutes for working and 5 minutes for a break. This is called the 'Pomodoro technique'.
- Focus on just one task or set of tasks at a time. Eliminate multi-tasking and task switching. You actually get less done in the long run by trying to multi-task!
- Set goals / tasks you want to complete each day rather than working from one long to-do list.
- Tackle difficult tasks first thing in the morning before anything else. Break them down further into really manageable bite-sized actions if it still feels too difficult.
- Categorise the items that are still on your to-do list and try to balance your time evenly between the categories for each day. These are likely to be things such as e-mails and calls, staff engagement, business operations, business development etc. This helps keep your interest and energy levels up, rather than getting bogged down on the same thing for too long.
- The 80/20 rule - Look through your tasks – it's likely that approximately 20% of them are what produce the real benefits. You should focus 80% of your time on these. *ie if you have a 10-item to-do list with each task being equally time-consuming, identify and complete two top-priority tasks. As a result, even if you don't manage to do all the remaining tasks, the 20% you completed could amount to up to 80% of the impact.*
- As well as planning time in for important, non-urgent tasks, try and spend just 10 minutes each day to have a look at them as well. That way, you're already making some headway with them before the time that you've planned in arrives, just in case something more urgent and important arises!
- Turn off distractions for certain time blocks. Eg turn your phone off and shut yourself away to work on social media. Step away from your computer while making calls. Eg e-mails, social media, calls

Bonus info:

Create a filing system for your **e-mails** that you can use to move them into folders once you have dealt with them - keep this as simple as possible - your aim is to move all e-mails into one of the folders so that you are left only with the ones that still require an action.

1. Save useful attachments where you can easily find them
2. Add tasks from within your e-mails to your to-do list
3. Copy useful information into your digital notebook (I use OneNote – see next page)



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HELPFUL TASK 4 – Trying out technology

I've compiled a list of useful apps and websites that can help you out – lots can be used across multiple devices as well. Have a go with them and see which ones work for you – tick them off when you've decided.

- [Todoist](#) – task management software. Todoist can be a simple task manager or solid collaborative tool for teams alike.
- [Trello](#) – a web-based 'Kanban-style' list-making application – good for managing single to-do lists or full projects. Kanban is a framework which has evolved from manufacturing and is now utilised in some project management approaches.
- [Evernote](#) – A single place for your notes, ideas, lists and reminders.
- [Microsoft OneNote](#) – a digital note taking app for gathering notes, drawings, screen clippings, and audio commentaries.
- [Google Drive](#) – File collaboration across multiple devices.
- [Pocket](#) – Save content from anywhere on the web with the click of a button. Useful for researching, clipping articles, websites etc and tagging them with labels to return to later.
- [Toggl](#) – a tool to help you utilize the 'Pomodoro technique' in your approach to time management.
- [Asana](#) – brings a team's activities together in one place and provides multiple views of the workload.
- [Basecamp](#) – groups your work into projects which contain everything related to the piece of work (people involved, discussions, files, tasks etc).
- [Microsoft Teams](#) – already well-known but needed a mention! A communication and collaboration tool.

THAT'S EVERYTHING!

I hope you've found some useful tips and techniques in here to help you with your time and productivity.

[Get in touch](#) to find out about the business infrastructure and improvement solutions we offer at DH Professional Solutions, to help you even more.