SereneScene

August 2014

Day Plan

For this step you must have completed the energy curve. If you do not have the energy curve, please complete it before proceeding.

With the data reported in your energy curve, you will be able to develop an optimized day plan that will assist in guiding your activities in the most efficient manner on a daily basis.

Because some tasks require a great deal of energy to complete efficiently and with quality, those tasks should only be performed during the time of day that your energy is high. Trying to complete an energy intensive task when your energy level is low will only create frustration, repeated review of your work, and procrastination. Conversely, many of the tasks that we perform are routine or procedural, and do not require a great deal of energy to complete with the expected performance or quality. These tasks can be completed during low energy periods because they do not demand intensified thought and may provide a much needed rest period in brain activity.

It is now possible to look at your energy curve and assign certain times of the day to generalized task categories. By assigning certain times of the day to specific task categories, you will expend your energy in a far more efficient fashion. You will also be able to group certain tasks together which will create further time efficiency. In addition, you can use your earlier determined time management habits to your advantage if they correspond with your energy curve. Once you have your day scheduled in a generalized format in accordance with your energy curve, you will have your day plan. The planning process is as follows:

Supplies Needed
- Paper
- Pen or pencil

- Spreadsheet or scheduling software (optional) (Examples: Microsoft® Excel®)

Summary assessment of time management habits
- Energy curve

Process

Set aside an uninterrupted 30-minute period for yourself to diligently design your day plan.

1. Label each task of your summary assessment of time management habits with one of the following labels; high-energy, mid-energy, or low-energy. Make the determination based on how difficult the tasks are, how much attention you must give to each task, and the expected quality performance for each task.

2. Place your energy curve next to your summary time management habits assessment. Judge if there are any tasks that you have a natural tendency to complete at a specific time that may correspond with the energy curve. Make notes as you progress.

3. Begin to label each hour of the day with the most appropriate tasks to handle based on your energy curve and your time management habits. Don't be afraid to juggle various tasks around in order to find the best combination for the average day.

4. After the best combination has been achieved, generate an official day plan that you will be proud to display on your bulletin board or on your desktop.
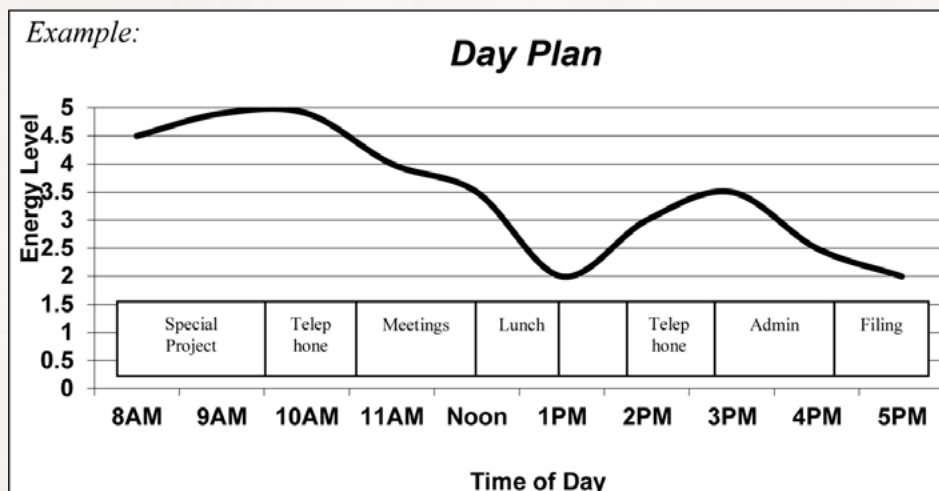
5. Post the day plan in a place that you will see every minute of every day. It is vital that this day plan be in plain view to remind you of the necessity of proper time management scheduling while your new habits are being built and reinforced.

6. Begin using your day plan to organize general tasks within the structure of the day plan for a minimum of five days. This will be difficult at first, but it will become easier with practice. This step is an excellent step to use the action plan format with!

Do not continue to the next section without first successfully scheduling general tasks in accordance with your day plan for a minimum of five days.

Scheduling

For this step you must have successfully scheduled general tasks in accordance with your day plan for a minimum of five days.

With the implementation of the day plan most individuals will begin to realize the amount of time that can be saved by effectively managing tasks by grouping them into categories and carrying out the tasks with the appropriate energy as dictated by the day plan. A typical participant in this process will already be realizing gains of two to five hours per week with very little effort. However, this is only the beginning!

The next stage in the self-improvement process will be to schedule all tasks no matter the difficulty or duration of the task. Sometimes this is confusing because most people are not accustomed to scheduling at a fine level of detail. In practical application, the finer the level of detail, the better scheduled you will be. Although this will most likely be very foreign at first, the benefits will quickly become apparent as you will find this method of scheduling will generate amazing levels of efficiency for you. The scheduling process is as follows:

Example:

Day Plan

Time	8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	Noon	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM
Task	Special Project	Telephone	Meetings		Lunch		Telephone	Admin		Filing

Energy Level / Time of Day

Supplies Needed

- Scheduling software program (Examples: Microsoft® Outlook®, iCloud® Calendar, Google® Calendar Etc.)
- Smart Phone or Tablet computer that will download and upload to the software scheduling program above (not required but highly recommended)
- Day plan
- Brightly colored sticky notes
- Felt pen

Process

1. Set aside an uninterrupted four-hour to six-hour period for yourself to diligently schedule all of your tasks in accordance with your day plan. Close the door and let people know you are not to be interrupted. An off-hour time with nobody else around is an excellent approach to this exercise.

2. Accumulate all task folders, paperwork, notes, requests, reports, messages, and any other reminders that there is a task to be done. Put all of this information in a large pile in the middle of your desk. Make absolutely certain there is nothing left in an in-box, on the voice mail, or in a 'to do' file. All tasks must be in the pile of information before you can proceed. Resist the temptation to get discouraged. The pile may look ominous, however you are going to totally eliminate it in the next step. Furthermore, all of the tasks in the pile will be completely organized and scheduled so nothing will go unattended by accident and that should provide the confidence necessary to carry through with this process.

3. Using the brightly colored sticky notes and felt pen, make four category labels;

    a)   urgent AND important
    b)   urgent
    c)   important
    d)   neither urgent NOR important

Place the sticky notes on a desk or table with enough space between each to put a new stack of paperwork.

4. Take the top item in the pile of tasks and make a determination using the prioritization tool below. After a determination is made for the item, place it in the stack labeled with the appropriate sticky note. Continue in the same fashion for all the items in the pile of tasks. Resist the temptation to dig through the stack looking for other paperwork: take the top item and deal with it before you move to the next item. It is very important that you handle only one item at a time. Proceed steadily and methodically through the pile until there is nothing left in the pile and there are four stacks of information with each stack labeled with a sticky note.

HINT: To determine which pile to place the task into, use your vision and mission statement in conjunction with your core job duties to help make your decision easier. If it is a personal task, use your personal vision statement or visualize your preferred future to help make your decision easier.

Urgent AND Important	Important	Urgent	NEITHER Urgent NOR Important

5. Take all the information in the stack that is labeled neither urgent nor important and do one of two things with it: throw it away or delegate it away. You have no business handling anything that is neither urgent nor important. Get rid of it! If the tasks in this pile become urgent or important in the future they will come back to you, but for now, since they are neither urgent nor important, they do not deserve any more of your attention. Once you have thrown them away or have delegated them away, there are only three stacks of tasks left to schedule.

6. Because this time management process is new for you, you will not yet be scheduling routine meetings, updates, telephone calls, administrative work, or other repetitive tasks. First, you will be scheduling all of the items that need attention in order to clear up the time needed for the more repetitive tasks. Of course, you will still need to schedule time to handle your core job functions and personal responsibilities. If you must conduct a certain task at a certain time during a specific day of the week, put these tasks into your schedule at this time. Now use your scheduling software program to enter these tasks into your calendar and be sure to schedule enough time to complete the task so it will not have to be rescheduled later.

> *Example:*
> Payroll entry, every Thursday at 3:00PM to 4:30PM

7. Now that all the repetitive tasks that are required of your core job duties have been scheduled, you will begin to eliminate what remains in the three stacks of tasks. The first stack to eliminate will be the stack labeled 'urgent AND important' since these are most likely going to affect your performance, your organization's performance, or your personal relationships in a meaningful way. Take the first item off the top of the 'urgent AND important' stack, taking care to handle the item only once. Make a determination as to how important the task is, and how long the task will take to complete. Using your day plan and your scheduling software program, find a time slot that is large enough to complete the task during the appropriate day plan category. If the task will take longer than the time allowed in your day plan, simply break the task up into multiple pieces and schedule more time on another day during the appropriate day plan category. After the task is scheduled, label a sticky note with the first date the task will be handled next (the date that you placed the task into your scheduling software program) and place it on the paperwork. Place the paperwork in a new stack labeled 'to be filed' that will be filed away in the next step. Remember to handle each item only once. Do not set it aside for later, or procrastinate about where to schedule the item. If necessary, there will be an opportunity to move the date and time of the scheduled task later in the process.

> *Example:*
> I have a financial statement that will be used in a comparative report I need to generate. It will take 20 minutes to complete the report and another 10 minutes to distribute it to the management team. This task must be done before the next management team meeting on the 10th, however it must include the financial information on the statement that I have as well as financial information through the 9th of the month.
>
> I will schedule the task into my scheduling software program on the 9th between 3:00PM and 3:30PM because this is the time I have reserved for administrative tasks. However, I know that the more specific I am, the better my time management system will perform, so I will schedule two items into my scheduler. 3:00PM to 3:20PM will be used to generate the report, and 3:20PM to 3:30PM will be used to distribute the report to the management team.
>
> I label a sticky note with "9th" and applied it to the paperwork I have, then I put the paperwork in the 'to be filed' stack.
>
> To Be Filed

8. Move on to the next item in the 'urgent AND important' stack and schedule them similarly. Contin-

ue until all the items are scheduled in your calendar in accordance with your day plan. Resist the urge to overlap items into your scheduling software program. Initially, you may encounter too many things to do all at once, however this situation will quickly disappear as a result of efficient time management. Remember that the tasks being scheduled are deliberately being scheduled with a specified time required for completion. Attempting to shorten the required time period or overlap tasks will do nothing but reduce the quality of your work. If there is not enough time to finish the tasks, do not blame the schedule as it is simply matter of having too many tasks to perform and something has to give.

9. After the 'urgent AND important' stack is eliminated, move on to the 'important' tasks since these are the next most likely to affect your performance, your organization's performance, or your personal relationships. As before, simply go through the stack one item at a time and schedule the tasks into your calendar using your day plan as a guide, taking care to handle each item only once. Remember to label each task with a sticky note with the first date the task will be handled next (the date that you placed the task into your scheduling software program) and place it on the paperwork before placing it in the 'to be filed' stack.

10. Next, schedule the 'urgent' stack. Chances are that your mindset will have changed a little by this time and many of the 'urgent' items may be declassified to 'neither urgent NOR important' status: if so, delegate the task or throw it out. In any case, handle the item only once just as you handled the previous stacks.

You should now have nothing left in the 'neither urgent NOR important,' 'urgent,' 'important,' and 'urgent AND important' stacks. All of the tasks should be labeled with the date of the next action to be taken, and all of the items should be in one big stack at labeled 'to be filed' this point. Do not continue to the next section without first successfully scheduling all of the tasks into your scheduling software program in accordance with your day plan guide.   *SS*

Andrew Martin began his entrepreneurial approach to business in 1982 at the age of fifteen. Throughout his career, Andrew has fulfilled his duties as a senior executive in viable business ventures in various industries including; health care, sound reinforcement and lighting, electrical safety equipment, commercial catering, specialty metal shapes manufacturing, and the entertainment overhead suspension industry.

Andrew Martin
M.B.A., CADC II, SAP, CA-CCS

Andrew's current business efforts are encompassed by Serene Recovery Network, a group of branded organizations with a common vision of helping people in early recovery to help themselves to a long-term rewarding quality of life without addiction. The individual businesses include Serene Connections, a publishing and professional educational conference production company catering to the field of addiction treatment: The Evolution of Addiction Treatment is the flagship conference. Serene Directory, an online directory of professionals and organizations affiliated with the treatment of addiction. Serene Foundation, a micro loan lender providing funding for the continuum of addiction care. Serene Scene Magazine, a publication promoting long-term healthy lifestyles of recovery. Andrew Serene Institute providing educational opportunities to professionals.

Andrew has authored many articles related to addiction treatment, health care agency productivity, industry specialties, as well as business approach and leadership and has been published in Serene Scene Magazine, Behavioral Health, Freedom Newspaper, Sound & Video Contractor, Western Wall and Ceiling Contractors Association Bulletin, Connections Magazine (Australia), dB Magazine, EQ, Lighting & Sound International (Canada), Sound & Communications, Live Sound International (UK), Recording-Engineering-Production. Additionally, many patents and trademarks have been awarded to Andrew Martin for various business related products, brand names, and service marks.

Andrew is also very active on boards related to the treatment of addiction. Andrew also keynotes for many organizations and speaks internationally on many topics relating to the treatment of addiction.