



HOW TO TAKE COMPLETE CONTROL



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Introduction

Time is our most valuable commodity virtually everyone, if asked, would accept the offer of a few more hours each day.

So, how can you really control the time available to you? How can you guard against the stress that arrives from not having enough time? Who or what is wasting your time – the time robbers? How can you gain an extra month – every year?

Friends and colleagues often remark that I always appear to have plenty of time to spare; that I am rarely flustered and that I nearly always come in on schedule. But it wasn't always like that... and I have had to teach myself how to be in total control.

Within this ebook, I share some thoughts, some tips and also some experiences.

Jonathan Farrington



ARE YOU WORKING SMART OR DANGEROUSLY HARD?

There has been increasing evidence that sales professionals and sales captains are working longer and longer hours, thereby putting health and family relationships at risk. Pressure to complete and meet the ever-increasing demands of customers (as well as the need to achieve higher sales quotas) is forcing people to spend more of their time working.

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Whilst stress does have its benefits, too much can cause errors of judgement, mistakes, accidents and damage to health. Some people are more vulnerable to stress from overwork than others - American researchers identified two types of managers: Type 'A' who, though thriving on stress, are vulnerable to its effects and Type 'B' who rarely let events disturb them. Not only are there Type 'A' managers, but Type 'A' organisations – is yours one?

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	
<p>TYPE A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Try to do more and faster ● Concerned with speed, performance and productivity ● Tend to be aggressive, impatient, intolerant, hard driving and always hurried ● Preoccupied with time ● Start early ● Strong competitive tendency ● Always want to succeed ● More likely to have heart attacks 	<p>Type B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Easy going ● Take difficulties in their stride ● Spend time on what they're doing ● Rarely harassed ● Less prone to heart attacks ● Take time to ponder alternatives ● Usually feel there's plenty of time ● Not as preoccupied with time



STRESS WHAT IS IT?

Popular definitions include: 'the result of a person being pushed beyond the limit of their natural ability'. When used in physics, stress is defined as 'the external pressure applied to an object' - the resultant change is called 'strain'.

Applied to people, we mix up the two terms, using 'stress' to refer to both the pressures we're under and the effect it has on us.

WHAT CAUSES STRESS?

- **Where you work**

Red tape, changes, demands from customers, uncertain future.

- **Your Job**

Volume of work (too much/too little), deadlines, pressures, being responsible for staff.

- **Your career to date**

Still not found your niche, no clear goals, reached your plateau.

- **Your Relationships**

Colleagues, friends, partner, boss, staff, children, families.

- **Conflicts**

Unable to find a balance between work and home, worried about money.

- **Self-imposed**

Giving yourself a hard time, low self-image, poor self-management.



WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?

- **Physical**

Headaches, indigestion, throbbing heart (palpitations), allergies, infections, twitching, nausea, tiredness, weight loss/gain, vague aches and pains.

- **Mental**

Indecision, making mistakes, forgetfulness, poor communication, easily distracted, worrying more, making hasty decisions.

- **Emotional**

Irritability, anger, alienation, nervousness, apprehension, loss of confidence, tension, cynicism, job/life dissatisfaction.

- **Behavioural**

Unsociable, restless, unable to unwind, appetite loss/gain, diminished interest in sex, increase in drinking/smoking, taking work home, too busy to relax, poor personal management.

IN SUMMARY: STRESS TECHNIQUES FOR HANDLING STRESS

Remember, you have some choices – do

nothing, fight it or learn to manage it

Remember, you have some choices – do nothing, fight it or learn to manage it by:

- Identifying what causes you stress and how it shows itself (this will give you a clue about what you need to tackle)
- Concentrating on what must be done and cutting out all those non-essential Meetings, phone calls and visitors



- Learning to delegate and trust others - none of us is indispensable...
- Pacing yourself - have 10 minute breaks throughout the day
- Being tidy and organised - untidiness creates its own problems
- Learning to relax and switch-off - don't take work home
- Learn to say 'no' - don't take on everything that comes your way
- Get a balance between work and home - your private life is important too!
- Eat properly - avoiding too much fat and sugar, alcohol and caffeine
- Improve your listening skills - many busy and energetic people are bad listeners
- Take breaks – make sure you use all your holiday entitlement
- Get yourself on an anti-stress programme if necessary
- Develop breathing and relaxation techniques - e.g. yoga
- Keep fit – try swimming and/or walking
- Learn to manage your time more effectively



AND FINALLY - PRIME TIME: WHEN ARE YOU AT YOUR BEST?

We all have a 'prime time' during the day when we are at our best and fully alert, the secret is to recognise this and do those activities that require energy, application and thought when you're at your sharpest.

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When energy is low, we are sluggish and tend to make mistakes, so watch what you eat – a heavy meal and wine make a lot of people sleepy, a healthy meal can provide energy for hours.

Work in periods of time - a maximum of an hour before you give yourself a break - this way, you'll concentrate better.

SOME THOUGHTS ON DEALING WITH INTERRUPTIONS AND "FEEDING THE MONKEYS"

Where do interruptions come from?

- **Boss** - Who often has the power when it comes to setting priorities
- **Subordinates** - The more accessible you are, the more they'll use/abuse you
- **Fellow workers** - Interrupt for many reasons from social to work-related
- **Clients and customers** - These you can't ignore
- **Phone** - Sounds familiar?



DEALING WITH INTERRUPTIONS:

When you're interrupted, ask yourself what's more important - the interruption or what you're working on? You can keep a 'To Do' list to re-focus on what you should be doing after the interruption has gone away.

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What you can do is try to keep interruptions short – 'What do you want, why, when, etc?' You can also keep a log of who/what interrupts you - a pattern may emerge.

You should also consider the following – they work for me!:

- Be assertive - learn to deal with 'Have you got a minute?'
- Invent deadlines
- Continue to look busy
- Stand up to interruptions
- Remove the chair in front of your desk
- Reduce eye contact
- Collect your papers, check your watch
- Go to them – this way you can leave any time
- Learn to say 'no'
- Plan a quiet hour

AND FINALLY – BEWARE OF “MONKEYS”

Despite being a busy person, it is easy to get sucked into doing things for others. Often these tasks have nothing to do with your job (perhaps they interest you or you are flattered to be asked!).



'Taking the monkey' often means that you are taking on a problem. Also, you are preventing others from taking the initiative and dealing with it themselves.

Each time we say 'yes' to these requests, we collect another 'monkey' - namely a problem that started with someone else (who is working for whom?).

Furthermore, 'monkeys' eat into our discretionary time - the amount of time left after meeting the demands of boss and job.

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SO, TO HANDLE MONKEYS:

- Deal with them as they happen (say 'yes', you can help or 'no', you cannot)
- Do not allow them to become too many to handle
- Feed them face-to-face only, or by phone (avoid memos or email).
- Feed them by appointment only - 'Come and see me at ...'
- Assign a feeding time - 'Try, and if you get a problem come back and see me'.

TIP: Never say 'Leave it with me'.



HOW TO IDENTIFY AND BANISH YOUR TIME ROBBERS

We all know that procrastination is the thief of time, but it does not have the monopoly.

Complete this analysis of your own 'typical' day and identify what or who are wasting your time - only then can you do something about it.

TO USE THIS ANALYSIS

Either prepare a spreadsheet with three columns or simply draw three columns on a sheet of A4 paper.

Next, list out everything that happens in a typical day - if you want to be really strict with yourself then do not forget those chats over a cup of coffee with your colleagues at the drinks machine!

Then, in the second column, write down how long those activities take - be honest, otherwise you will only cheat yourself.

Identify what or who are wasting your time, only then can you do something about it.

In column three, identify those tasks that someone else is capable of doing (do not worry about the logistics at this stage) and mark with an S. Annotate those activities that do not add value or positively contribute to your working day and mark those with a V (I suggest the coffee chats go under this category!).

All other activities, which do not fall into the S or V categories, should be valuable tasks which cannot be done by someone else - these should be marked as category E.



Next total the three categories up:

S =

V =

E =

Add the three together to give - **W** =

Now, the moment of truth - Using the following formula, work out what percentage of your time is being robbed $(S + V) / W \times 100 = ?$

FINALLY ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS

- Is the percentage acceptable?
- Can I eliminate (through either delegation or self discipline) any of the time robbers?
- Is there anything or anyone consistently abusing my time and if so, can I do something positive about it?

SUMMARY

I suggest that you complete this exercise from scratch, every three months, until you're completely sure your percentage is as low as you are ever going to get it.



HOW TO GAIN A THIRTEENTH MONTH EVERY YEAR

You must commit yourself to trying this system for a minimum of thirty days. Thereafter, I am confident you will never look back!

Time is your most valuable resource and, until you realise this, you will continue to wonder where all your time goes!!! If you consider those times in your life where you've experienced disappointments - e.g. the lost sale, the breakdown of a relationship - and ask yourself "If I'd had more time (i.e. to prepare, to talk etc.), would the outcome have been different?" - the answer almost certainly will be YES!

INTRODUCING THE IVY LEE SYSTEM

There are many time management systems around - they usually involve attendance on training courses and the purchase of a vast amount of specially designed documentation. However, **The Ivy Lee System** - like all good ideas - is very simple and yet effective. It could find you an extra hour a day, which is equivalent to an extra twenty hours a month, resulting in an extra month per year!

THE METHOD

You must commit yourself to trying this system for a minimum of thirty days. Thereafter, I am confident you will never look back!

Week One:

Write down all the tasks you need to complete the next day (rather like a "to do" list) - it is advisable to do the next day's list at the end of each day.



Then prioritise those tasks, but be careful not to give tasks a higher priority because you enjoy doing them (from experience, it is often best to get those tasks you are less keen on completed first, then you have the most pleasant tasks left as an incentive).

At the end of each day, you may be left with tasks that you have not completed and the temptation (as with a “to do” list) is to automatically carry them over to the next day. A lot can happen in a day and tasks that are important today are not necessarily so tomorrow.

During any normal working day, there will be an element of the unexpected - so what you need to do in the first week is make a note of how much of your time was taken up with the unexpected tasks.

Week Two:

Build in times for the unexpected - i.e. continue as for week one, but also allocate time to handle the unexpected. How much time can be calculated from your first week's activities? In addition, during the day, make a note of how long it took you to complete each task.

Week Three:

Make a habit of allocating a time target against each task. You will now have a fair indication of what you can achieve each day - including coping with the unexpected - and how long it should take you. By allocating time targets to each task, you will be more likely to complete all of them.



By following the Ivy Lee System, you now have thirteen months to reach your annual target!

When you have written your task list and set time targets, but before you prioritise them, ask yourself three questions:

- Do I need to do this? If the answer is no, then consider delegating it.
- Do I need to do this today (i.e. what will happen if I don't do it?). If the answer is 'no', why is it on your list?
- Does doing this task add value to the company or me? If the answer is 'no' then why are you even considering it?

Remember - By following the **Ivy Lee System**, you now have 13 months to reach your annual target!

TWENTY ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS TO USE IN ANALYSING YOUR DAILY TIME PLANNER

Here are twenty essential questions you should get used to asking yourself about your daily time planning:

- Did I accomplish all of my high-priority goals?
- Did I reach or surpass all of my other goals?
- Did I invest as much time as I planned in persuading others?
- Did I contact every prospect that was on my list today? If not, why not? What prevented me?
- How much time did I spend prospecting for new clients?
- How much time did I waste procrastinating today?
- What is the most productive thing I did today?
- What is the least productive thing I did today?



- Of the things I consider a waste of time, could I have avoided them or eliminated them?
- How much did I spend doing something that will profit me? Can I devote more time here?
- Was today a productive day for me? For my company?
- Did I take care of all the paperwork I needed to take care of?
- How many of today's activities have helped me achieve my goals?
- How much time did I allocate to my family, friends etc.?
- What can I do to improve the quality time I need to spend with my family/friends etc?
- How much time did I allocate to myself?
- If I could live today again, what would I change?
- What did I do today that I feel really good about?
- Did I send 'thank you' notes to the people who gave me business and to those who helped me secure that business?
- What or who wasted the greatest amount of any time?

FINALLY, IN SUMMARY, HERE ARE TEN COMMON TIME TRAPS TO BE AVOIDED

- Desperately seeking what should not be lost - Become more organised
- Failure to do the job right the first time - Work to 'Right First Time' principles
- Procrastination - Get to the Point
- Unnecessary or unnecessarily long telephone calls - Be Succinct
- Unnecessary or unnecessarily long meeting - Be Rigorous
- Check lunches that last for two or more hours - Be Honest
- Negative thinking - Be Positive
- Driving time - Plan
- Unconfirmed appointments - Be realistic
- Laziness - Be diligent, Productivity = Results

Remember: The most important word in time and self-management is.....**NO!**



JONATHAN FARRINGTON

Jonathan Farrington is a globally recognized keynote speaker, business coach, mentor, author, consultant, and thought leader, who has guided hundreds of companies and more than one hundred thousand frontline salespeople and sales leaders towards optimum performance levels.

He is the Senior Partner at **Jonathan Farrington & Associates**, and CEO of **Top Sales World**, based in London & Paris.

Formerly, Jonathan was the CEO of The jfa Group, which he established in 1994 and sold in 2005.

Prior to that, he earned his spurs in some of the most demanding and competitive market sectors – i.e. IT, Telecommunications and Finance. Outstanding achievement at an early stage in his career provided a ‘fast-track’ passage to several board level appointments, working with a number of the largest and most successful international corporations including: IBM, Wang, Legal and General, Andersen Consulting, Litton Industries and The Bank of Tokyo.

Jonathan's written work has been republished by a host of journals, including The New York Times, The Washington Post and The London Times. He is consistently named amongst the top most influential sales and marketing experts in the world, and his award winning daily blog, which he first published in 2006, for dedicated business professionals, can be found at www.thejfblogit.co.uk

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