Mind Game Question

There are four people in a line. Sarah is between Barry and Mary. Mary is in front of two other people, and John is directly in front of Mary.

Who is first in line, second, third, fourth?

Pandalechef.blogspot.com
About Atkins Consulting Professionals LLC

- Atkins Consulting Professionals LLC was created in 2009, owned and managed by Amanda K. Atkins.
- Areas of specialties include resident file audits for tax credit and HUD subsidized properties, leasing & occupancy compliance work, policy compliance, procedural support, and environmental consulting.
- We also provide keynote speaking, HUD trainings, and presentation in many areas: compliance-based trainings, fair housing, environmental initiatives, senior sensitivity and other housing related topics.

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What is Time Management?

- It is the act or process of exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase efficiency or productivity.
- Time management is thought of as a set of skills for better using your time.
- Having the ability to accomplish everything you desire.
Myths of Time Management

• There is too much to do & not enough time.
• We have all the time in the world.
• Rescheduling a task is procrastinating.
• Time is money!

Myths of Time Management  Cont.

• Keeping separate planners & to-do lists.
• There's only one ‘best way’ to do things!
• The best way to get a job done is to do it yourself.
• Efficiency means effectiveness.
• Hard work always leads to success.

How Valuable is Your Time?

• Professor Stephen Smith, of BYUI, is among recent sociologists that have shown that the way workers view time is connected to social issues such as the institution of family, gender roles, and the amount of labor by the individual.
**Why Time Management Matters**

Time management is important for personal life and career success. It teaches us how to manage our time effectively and make the most of it.

- Leadership
- Organization
- Prioritize
- Quality Work
- Keep Things In Perspective
- Outside Comfort Zone
- Discipline
- Conscious Decisions

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**Why Are Leadership Skills Important?**

"We were just talking about your leadership skills."


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**Efficiency Allows For Productivity**

- Track your time to see how you are actually spending it.
  - One week every 6 months or so
- Make small environmental changes (keyboard placement, bigger/extra monitors, good posture, etc.)
- Figure out your Efficiency Ratio
  - \((\text{Time Doing "Real Work"}) / (\text{Time Spent "At Work"})\)
Time Management Activity Log

- Locate the Time Management Activity Log.
- Spend the next few days completing it, remembering to include details such as how you feel during the activity.
- Look for patterns of energy, wasted time, highs and lows in performance.
- Ask yourself how you can improve the management of your time.
Time Management Strategies

- ABC Analysis
- Do It Now!
- 3D (or 4DF) Rule
- Eisenhower Box
- Day-by-Day Assessment
- Forecasting/timeline for projects
- Use a timer (The Pomodoro Technique)
- Countless others

ABC Analysis

A technique that has been used in business management for a long time is the categorization of large data into groups. These groups are often marked A, B, and C—hence the name. Activities are ranked upon these general criteria:

- **A** – Tasks that are perceived as being urgent and important,
- **B** – Tasks that are important but not urgent,
- **C** – Tasks that are neither urgent nor important.

Each group is then rank-ordered in priority.
DO IT NOW!

D-O-I-T N-O-W! Once you decide on a plan and are focused, just do it now. Here is an easy way to help you remember this principle:

- D = Divide and conquer what you have to do. Break big tasks into little tasks and give each part of that task a realistic deadline.
- O = Organize your materials, how you will do it.
- I = Ignore interruptions that are annoying distractions
- T = Take the time to learn how to do things yourself.
- N = Now, not tomorrow. Don’t procrastinate.
- O = Opportunity is knocking. Take advantage of opportunities.
- W = Watch out for time gobblers. Keep track of, and in control of, how much time you spend on the Internet, reading and sending e-mails, watching TV, or talking on the phone.

3D (or 4D) Paper Rule

With paper use the ‘3 D’ rule:

- Do it,
- Dump it or
- Delegate it
- (Defer it)

Eisenhower Box

![Eisenhower Box Diagram]
The Pomodoro Technique

- Uses a timer to break down periods of work into 25-minute intervals called ‘pomodori’ separated by breaks to improve mental agility.
- 1. Decide on the task to be done
- 2. Set the pomodoro (timer) to 25 minutes
- 3. Work on the task until the timer rings; record with an x
- 4. Take a short break (5 minutes)
- 5. Every four “pomodori” take a longer break (15–20 minutes)

The Pitfalls of Multitasking

- Can cause productivity to decrease in workers.
- Changes our brain patterns, thought processing.
- Attention span decreases.
- Technology dominates life.
- Can significantly increase worker stress levels.
Tips For Time Management

- Managing the decision making process, not the decisions.
- Concentrating on doing only one task at a time.
- Establishing daily, short-term, mid-term, and long-term priorities.
- Handling correspondence expeditiously with quick, short letters and memos.
- Throwing unneeded things away.

Tips For Time Management Cont.

- Ensuring all meetings have a purpose, time limit, and include only essential people.
- Getting rid of busywork.
  - Maintaining accurate calendars; abide by them.
  - Knowing when to stop a task, policy, or procedure.
  - Delegating everything possible and empowering staff.
  - Keeping things simple.

Tips For Time Management Cont.

- Ensuring time is set aside to accomplish high priority tasks.
- Setting aside time for reflection.
- Using checklists and To-Do lists.
- Adjusting priorities as a result of new tasks.
- Establishing personal deadlines and ones for the organization.
- Not wasting other people’s time.
- Clear job descriptions and roles.
Other Good Tips

- Carry a notebook, tablet, index cards to maintain ideas, lists, thoughts.
- Breathing exercises
- Time management technology & iPhone apps
  - WunderLust
  - Evernote
  - Agenda
  - YouNote (iPhone)
  - Things (iPhone)
  - reQall (iPhone)
  - TimeLogger (iPhone)

Crisis Management

- Time Management worst practice: management by crisis, don’t let it become routine.
- Distinguish between a real crisis & lesser one.
  - Assess the situation
  - Act promptly
  - Create a timeline
  - Adapt
  - Identify any possible opportunities

Types of Crisis

- Natural disaster
- Technological crises
- Confrontation
- Malevolence
- Organizational misdeeds
- Workplace violence
- Rumors & slander
OODA

The OODA Loop model was developed by Col. John Boyd, USAF (Ret) during the Korean War. It is a concept consisting of the following four actions:

- **Observe**: Scan the environment and gather information from it.
- **Orient**: Use the information to form a mental image of the circumstances.
- **Decide**: Consider options and select a subsequent course of action.
- **Act**: Carry out the conceived decision.

Source: http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leadership/ooda.html

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**Tackling Your Email Box**

- Checking your email regularly during the day to keep your inbox at manageable levels.
- Adhere to checking emails at specific times.
- Two-Minute Rule: if the email will take less than two minutes (a quick read, and a short answer) then take care of it right now, even if it’s not a high priority (David Allen).
- Organize emails by priority, using filing systems, labels, or ‘rules’.
- Accounts for specific purposes.
A Few Quotes

“Don’t tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results.” – George S. Patton

“Be mindful of how you approach time. Watching the clock is not the same as watching the sun rise.” – Sophia Bedford-Pierce

“Don’t let the fear of the time it will take to accomplish something stand in the way of your doing it. The time will pass anyway; we might just as well put that passing time to the best possible use.” – Earl Nightingale

“This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Tips & Resources


• The Top 10 Leadership Qualities, by David Hakala. http://www.focus.com/briefs/human-resources/top-10-leadership-qualities/

• 20 Handy Tips for Organizing Your Gmail Box, by Abhishek Mandloi. http://www.gtricks.com/gmail-tricks/gmail-tips-to-organize-inbox/


Tips & Resources Cont.

Atkins Consulting Professionals

Training materials will be posted for one (1) week after this presentation at www.atkinsconsultingprofessionals.com

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Common Time Management Myths

1. There is too much to do and not enough time.

2. We have all the time in the world.

3. Rescheduling a task is procrastinating.

4. Time is money!

5. Keeping separate planners and To-Do lists.

6. There is only one ‘best’ way to accomplish a task.

7. The best way to get a job done is to do it yourself.

8. Efficiency means effectiveness.

9. Hard work always leads to success.
Time Management Multitasking Experiment

For one week and as life allows, quit multitasking in as many ways as possible and see what happens. For instance, if you are on the phone then ensure your sole focus is to speak or listen to the phone conversation. If you are in a meeting, focus all of your attention solely on the meeting and its purposes instead of any outside distractions. For any interruptions, such as email, an unexpected office visit, or a knock on the door, hold off addressing it until you are finished with what you are working on. Shut your phone off whenever possible (at a meal, in a meeting) to allow you to focus on the task at hand.

After a week, assess the results of not multitasking. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What techniques would help?

2. Could I sustain a focus on one thing at a time for that long?

3. How was your overall stress level during this period?

4. Were you able to make any significant progress with projects or your To-Do list?

5. How was your patience level during this experience?

6. Did you discover any pitfalls?

7. After a week of not multitasking, has your view of the value of your time changed at all?

8. Were you able to better prioritize tasks at hand?
# Time Management Activity Log

Use this form to track activities throughout your day. Assign a value (low, medium, or high) based upon the importance of the activity in your life. After tracking your activities for a few days, review and analyse the Activity Log for patterns of energy, time wasting activities, and areas of improvement.

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Think You're Multitasking? Think Again
by JON HAMILTON

October 2, 2008

Don't believe the multitasking hype, scientists say. New research shows that we humans aren't as good as we think we are at doing several things at once. But it also highlights a human skill that gave us an evolutionary edge.

As technology allows people to do more tasks at the same time, the myth that we can multitask has never been stronger. But researchers say it's still a myth — and they have the data to prove it.

Humans, they say, don't do lots of things simultaneously. Instead, we switch our attention from task to task extremely quickly.

A case example, researchers say, is a group of people who focus not on a BlackBerry but on a blueberry — as in pancakes.

Diner Cook: A Task Master

To make it as a short-order cook, you must be able to keep a half-dozen orders in your head while cracking eggs, flipping pancakes, working the counter, and refilling coffee cups.

And at a restaurant like the Tastee Diner, in Bethesda, Md., the orders come in verbally, not on a ticket.

Chocolate chip pancakes, scrambled with sausage, order of french fries, rye toast — they're small tasks. On a busy day, though, they add up to a tough job for Shawn Swinson.

"My first month here, I was ready to walk out the door," he said.

Asked what it feels like when he's in the middle of rush hour, Swinson said, "Like you're in an insane asylum. It's almost unbearable."

Swinson has learned to handle the pressure. He's an island of calm, even when the orders are flying. But Swinson's boss, manager Frank Long, says very few people can keep up without losing their cool.

"It's singularly the most difficult job in this type of operation," Long said. "Four cooks. Five waitresses. Bus staff. Host. Getting them in and out."

Speed and accuracy are at a premium — especially when the customers are multitasking, too. Lunchtime is the worst, Long said.

"People may have an errand to run. Maybe go to the bank and pick up dry cleaning, and eat. All within an hour, whatever time they have."
It's all part of life these days. We answer e-mails while yapping on the phone. We schedule appointments while driving and listening to the radio. And it seems as if we're focusing on all these tasks simultaneously, as if we've become true masters of doing 10 things at once.

But, brain researchers say, that's not really the case.

Multitasking: A Human Delusion?

"People can't multitask very well, and when people say they can, they're deluding themselves," said neuroscientist Earl Miller. And, he said, "The brain is very good at deluding itself."

Miller, a Picower professor of neuroscience at MIT, says that for the most part, we simply can't focus on more than one thing at a time.

What we can do, he said, is shift our focus from one thing to the next with astonishing speed.

"Switching from task to task, you think you're actually paying attention to everything around you at the same time. But you're actually not," Miller said.

"You're not paying attention to one or two things simultaneously, but switching between them very rapidly."

Miller said there are several reasons the brain has to switch among tasks. One is that similar tasks compete to use the same part of the brain.

"Think about writing an e-mail and talking on the phone at the same time. Those things are nearly impossible to do at the same time," he said.

"You cannot focus on one while doing the other. That's because of what's called interference between the two tasks," Miller said. "They both involve communicating via speech or the written word, and so there's a lot of conflict between the two of them."

Researchers say they can actually see the brain struggling. And now they're trying to figure out the details of what's going on.

Putting The Mind To The Test

At a lab at the University of Michigan, researchers are using an MRI scanner to photograph test subjects' brains as they take on different tasks.

During a recent test, Daniel Weissman, the neuroscientist in charge of the experiment, explained that a man lying inside the scanner would be performing different tasks, depending on the color of two numbers he sees on a screen.

"If the two digits are one color — say, red — the subject decides which digit is numerically larger," Weissman said. "On the other hand, if the digits are a different color — say green — then the subject decides which digit is actually printed in a larger font size."
The tests can be tricky — which is the point. After an attempt, the technician told the test subject, "OK, do the same thing, except try to go faster this time."

MRI studies like this one, Weissman said, have shown that when the man in the scanner sees green, his brain has to pause before responding — to round up all the information it has about the green task.

When the man sees red, his brain pauses again — to push aside information about the green task and replace it with information about the red task.

If the tasks were simpler, they might not require this sort of full-throttle switching. But, Weissman said, even simple tasks can overwhelm the brain when we try to do several at once.

"If I'm out on a street corner and I'm looking for one friend who's wearing a red scarf, I might be able to pick out that friend," Weissman said.

"But if I'm looking for a friend who's wearing a red scarf on one street corner, and in the middle of the street I'm looking for another friend who's wearing a blue scarf — and on the other side of the street I'm looking for a friend wearing a green scarf — at some point, I can only divide my attention so much, and I begin to have trouble."

So the brain starts switching. Scan for red. Switch. Scan for blue. Switch. Scan for green. Switch.

The part of the brain that does this is called the "executive system." It's a bit like one of those cartoon conductors telling the orchestra: louder, softer, faster, slower. You come in here. You be quiet for a few measures.

The conductor in our heads lives in the brain's frontal lobes, basically above our eyes.

"Executive processes allow us to make plans for our future behaviors," Weissman said. "They allow us to exert some sort of voluntary control over our behavior."

The executive system also helps us achieve a goal by ignoring distractions.

"For example, if we're performing a task where we want to watch TV and ignore voices that are coming from, say, our children nearby," Weissman said, "our frontal region brain may configure the brain to prioritize visual information and dampen down auditory information."

And the brain's executive will keep us in that mode until we hear, say, one of our children screaming.

"These are the things that make us the most human," Weissman said. "We are not like jellyfish — it's not like when you poke us, we always do the same thing."

A Role In Evolution

Humans are also not like cats, or dogs, or even apes, when it comes to controlling how our brain responds, and what it responds to. Weissman says this skill probably evolved to help humans — who are pretty vulnerable, physically — to do things like hunt animals that are bigger and stronger.
"As hunters, you know, people had to hunt something, and keep track of where their friends were," Weissman said. "You've got to think about, 'What is that tiger going to do?' you know, and, 'I've got my group of friends' — and surround the tiger."

Weissman says that keeping track of all those things wouldn't be possible without the executive system in our frontal lobes.

Still, Weissman said, "There are lots of animals in the world that hunt without these increased abilities. So I wouldn't say that to hunt you have to have a lot of frontal development."

"But on the other hand, it helps. That's why humans have become dominant on the planet."

Dominant — and, perhaps, too confident in our own skill. Studies show that we frequently overestimate our ability to handle multiple tasks.

For early humans, that sort of miscalculation could have meant becoming a tiger's lunch. These days, the consequences are more likely to be stress, a blunder — or maybe a car crash.

Related NPR Stories

How To Be The Ultimate Taskmaster Sept. 30, 2008