

# The Covey Time Matrix

From the Book *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People* by Stephen Covey

The time matrix was originally conceptualized by Stephen Covey (*7 Habits of Highly Successful People*) to help people shift away from *crisis* management into *importance* management. This process enables people to be less affected by external influences and become more at cause, as it relates to productivity and time management.

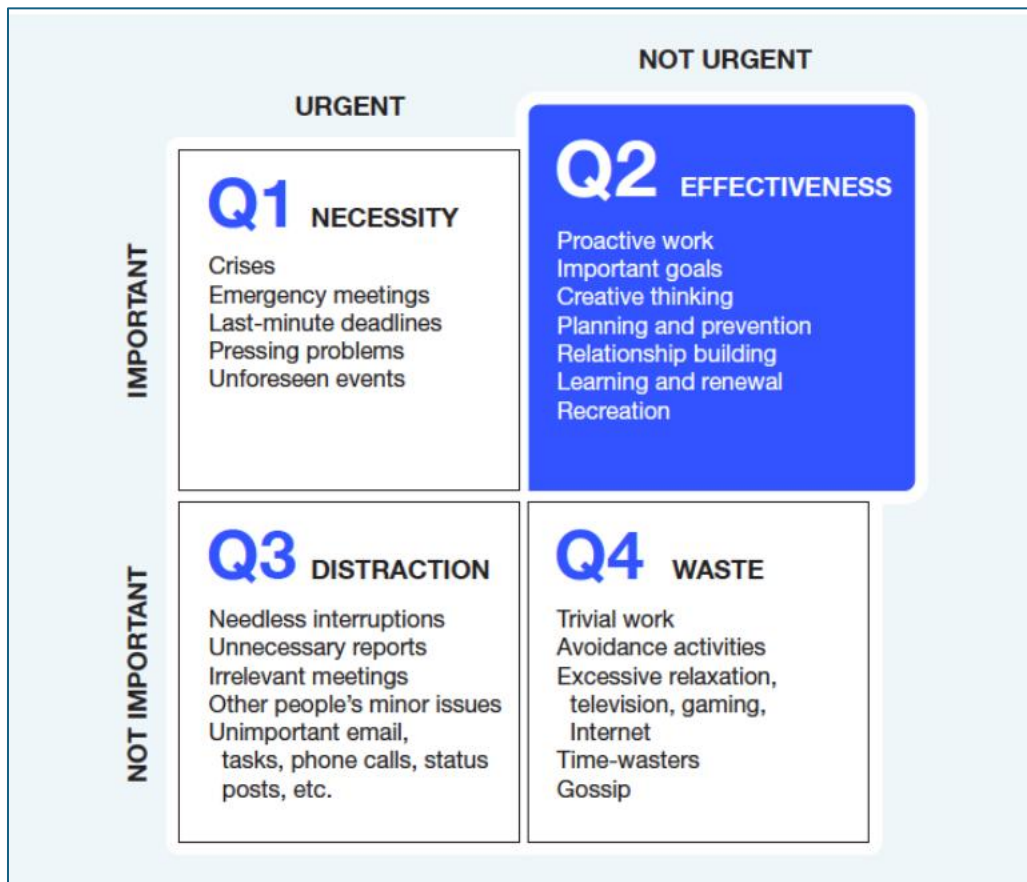
Take a piece of paper and divided into four quadrants. The top left is important and urgent. The top right is important and not urgent. The bottom left is not important but urgent and the bottom right is not important and not urgent. This is the time matrix.

Quadrant 1 holds the urgent and important things like pressing problems, deadline driven projects and production problems, as well as crises.

Quadrant 2 holds the not urgent important things like prevention, relationship building, recognizing new opportunities, planning, and recreation.

Quadrant 3 holds the urgent, not important things like interruptions, certain mail, certain reports, some meetings, and some pressing matters.

Quadrant 4 holds things that are not urgent and not important, like trivia, some mail, some phone calls, time-wasters and pleasant activities.



## Create Your Time Matrix

Put each task in your current life into the quadrant where it belongs.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	1.	2.
NOT IMPORTANT	3.	4.

Do you see a pattern emerging? If you find that you have too many items in Quadrant 1, then it's time to shift your priorities. What can you do to shift items out of quadrant one and into quadrant two? Quadrant 2 empowers you to prioritize your tasks and avoid burnout or poor performance.

The key to getting into Quadrant 2 is to 1) *pause* long enough to 2) *clarify* what's coming at you and then 3) *decide* whether it's worth your time and energy to handle it right now.

### How do you do this? Ask yourself:

- is this a Quadrant 1 thing? Do I need to do it right now?
- Is this a Quadrant 3 thing? Do I need to do it at all?
- Am I in quadrant four? What can I do to change?
- This is quadrant two. Let's spend time on this.