



Working Smarter, Not Harder:  
*Rock your world. . . and your employer's (firm's)!*

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## **Discuss or Reflect:**

*How would you explain the notion of “working smarter, not harder”?*

*What do you currently do to “work smarter, not harder”?*

3 minutes with someone

# The 5 As of Working Smarter, Not Harder



**Adding  
value**

Attuned to impact  
and priorities



**Attention**

Focused energy



**Awareness**

Self- and team-  
awareness for  
continued  
improvement



**Allies**

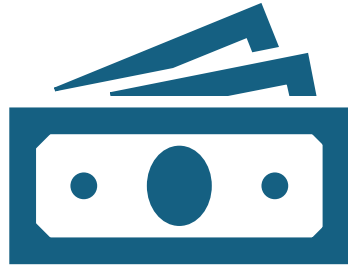
Intentional  
collaboration



**Alive**

Choosing yourself &  
your life

# The 5 As of Working Smarter



## Adding value

Attuned to  
maximum impact  
and priorities

### ***Score Yourself***

*To what extent are you lightning-focused on maximizing the value you deliver given your organization's needs?*

- 1 to 5 with 5 being “I am extremely focused in maximizing my value and impact.”

# Smarter “Adding Value” Strategies: Be Attuned to Maximum Impact and Priorities



Partner with your manager  
Ensure strategic alignment

Execute the 80-20 rule, then  
prioritize  
Identify what matters most

Do less, then obsess  
Forego the “complexity trap”

Wield the razor to fluffy tasks  
Less administrivia

# Smarter “Adding Value” Strategies: Be Attuned to Maximum Impact and Priorities



**Partner with your manager**  
Ensure strategic alignment

**More “Right Stuff”**  
Increase high-value activities

**Execute the 80-20 rule, then  
prioritize**  
Identify what matters most

**More “Gee, Whiz”**  
Design new high-value activities

**Do less, then obsess**  
Forego the “complexity trap”

**Say yes to the right moments**  
Choose impactful events

**Wield the razor to fluffy tasks**  
Less administrivia

**Create more “Five-Star Ratings”**  
Enhance the quality of activities

# The 5 As of Working Smarter



Attention

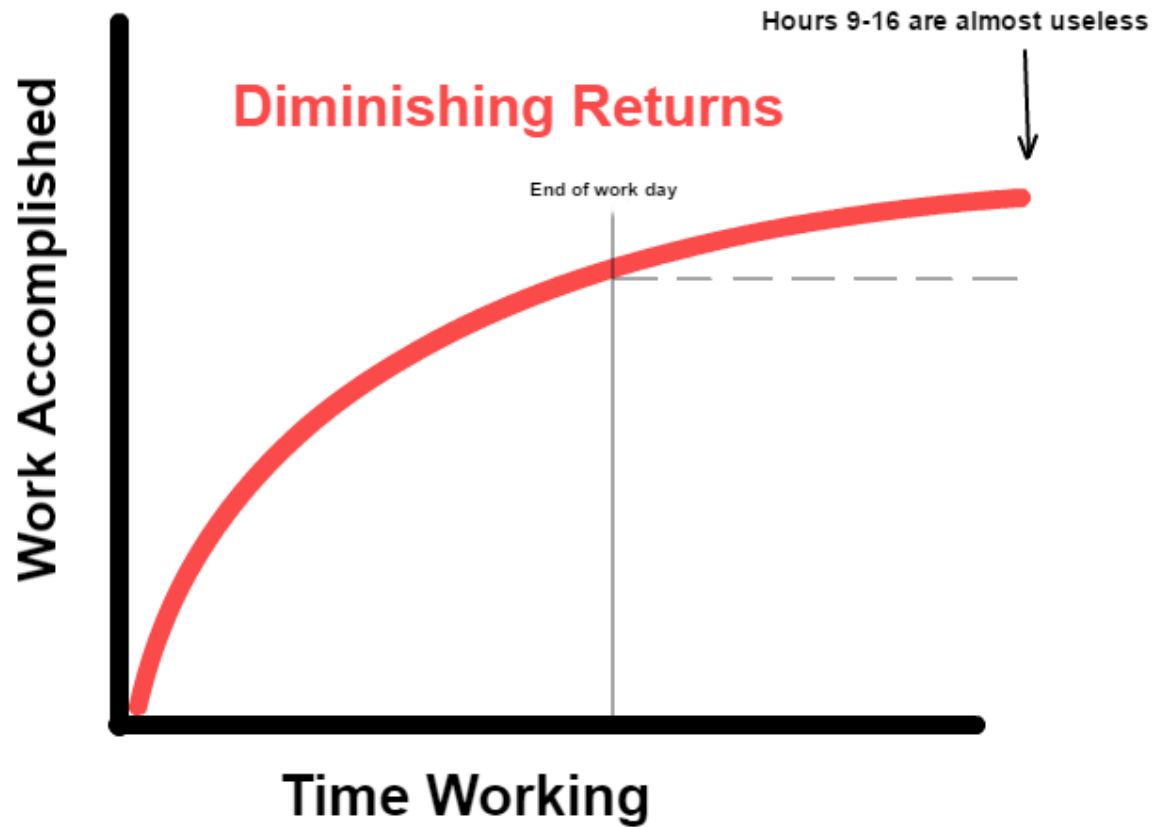
Focused energy

## ***Score Yourself***

*To what extent are you strategic about how you use your time at work to maximize your impact and use of energy?*

- 1 to 5 with 5 being “I am extremely strategic about how I use my time.”

# Smarter “Attention” Strategies: Focus Your Energy Smartly





# Smarter “Attention” Strategies:

Focus Your Energy Smartly



## Honor your chronotype

### **Strategic block your time**

Plan alone time, weekly and long-term  
“strategic planning,” block around daily endings

### **Undertake the highest priority first**

### **Use AI and Tech Strategically**

(e.g., your CRM, Trello, analytics tools, or dashboards)

# Smarter “Attention” Strategies:

Focus Your Energy Smartly



## Honor your chronotype

### Strategic block your time

Plan alone time, weekly and long-term  
“strategic planning,” block around daily endings

## Undertake the highest priority first

### Use AI and Tech Strategically

(e.g., your CRM, Trello, analytics tools, or dashboards)

## Minimize shift-tasking

Watch social media and phone glimpsing

### Do emails in batches at “lower-energy time”

## Assess meeting effectiveness carefully

### Hold after-lunch meetings

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Choosing yourself

Discuss or reflect upon what you can do **to add value and be attentive!**

# The 5 As of Working Smarter



## Awareness

Self- and team-  
awareness for  
continued  
improvement

### ***Score Yourself***

*To what extent do you focus on continuous improvement of yourself and your teams?*

- 1 to 5 with 5 being “I am extremely focused in on continuous improvement.”

# Smarter “Awareness” Strategies:

Self- and team-awareness for continued improvement



## You Awareness

- Lean into your allies (imposter syndrome 65% and the bestie)
- Ask follow-up questions on annual feedback and go to a trusted peer when needed
- Reflect at day’s end on how smartly you spent it

## Team Awareness

- Assess how you collaborate and could improve
- Reconnect with norms of teamwork (communication norms, meeting cadence)

# Personal Awareness: Don't Just Learn, Loop

Try out a new approach in a small way

1

Measuring the outcome

2

Get some feedback

3

Tweak the outcome

4

A project lead tests a new storytelling opening in her pitch deck and tweaks based on reactions.

Effective learners break an overarching skill into micro-behaviors: They are small, concrete actions you take on a daily basis to improve a skill.

Think of something you can experiment with for looping

# The 5 As of Working Smarter



## Allies

Intentional  
collaboration

### ***Score Yourself***

*To what extent are you intentional about balanced collaboration that supports value and creativity without overload or “collab-ministrivia”?*

- 1 to 5 with 5 being “I am extremely focused on intentional collaboration.”

# Smarter “Allies” Strategies: Intentional Collaboration



## **Seek out “energizers” and “givers” as collaborators**

Emotional contagion and reciprocity prevail

## **Identify “key” allies**

Focus on the ties that best support impact

## **Nurture a top performer network**

A diverse network supports valuable knowledge

## **Be vigilant against over- collaboration**

Avoid time overhead



# Smarter “Allies” Strategies: Intentional Collaboration



## **Optimize team strengths**

Support delegation and productivity

## **Facilitate connections**

Ensures intentional collaboration

## **Pursue task disagreement**

Encourages diversity of ideas needed for creativity

## **Examine the “Blue Ocean” perspective**

To chart out new uncharted territory

For You and Your Team:

**Embrace “Good Enough” Over Perfectionism**

# The 5 As of Working Smarter



Alive

Choosing you

## ***Score Yourself***

*To what extent are you actively shaping your life with work as one facet of it?*

- 1 to 5 with 5 being “I am thoughtful about ensuring that I choose me and design my life, not just my career.”

# Smarter “Alive” Strategies:

## Choosing You



### *A better life spills into a better work experience*

- Identify creative hobbies
- Create goals that interest you
- Reduce work family conflict
- Practice gratitude
- Find a bestie
- Take advantage of parental leave, adult family support, and vacation
- Make your workspace your own . . .and bring in nature
- Do walking meetings



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# Working Smarter Means Prioritizing Your Life

- Smart work isn't only about efficiency. It's about balance.
- Ask: *What matters most to me this year?*
- Align work choices with life priorities.
- A better life spills into better work.

## **Elevating Your Priorities**

- Write down one life priority you want to elevate in 2026.
- Note one concrete step you can take this month to honor that priority.
- ✓ Share with a partner or small group if you feel comfortable.

# Five of Many References



- Breus, Michael J. (2016 ). *The Power of When: Discover Your Chronotype and Maximize Your Potential*. Vermilion.
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- Oppezzo, M. & Schwartz, D.L. (2014). Give Your Ideas Some Legs: The Positive Effect of Walking on Creative Thinking. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*. Vol. 40(4): 1142-1152.
- Strack, R., Dyrchs, S., & Bailey, A. (2023, December 5; updated February 20, 2024). *Use strategic thinking to create the life you want*. Harvard Business Review



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