

Working Remotely: Tip of the Week

The Importance of 'When'

Planning daily tasks and meetings involves determining how work should be organized and managed and what resources are needed. Among the common tools we use are 'to do' lists, following processes, and improvisation.

Until recently little attention has been attached to the idea of 'when' or the time of day and order that we plan and execute tasks. In his book 'When', Daniel Pink uses research to show how our mental and physical rhythms vary throughout each day, and that our moods and mental energy follow an order of Peak, Trough and Recovery. Pink argues that there is a right and wrong time for doing different types of tasks, which he categorizes as analytical, administrative, and creative work. Through planning when these tasks are performed, we can directly improve our effectiveness, productivity, and satisfaction.

According to Pink, our mental power and mood is highest at the **Peak** stage of early mornings. This time is best for analytical work that requires focus and ignoring distractions to accomplish complex tasks. The **Trough** stage develops in the early afternoon when our mood point is at its lowest. Administrative tasks that do not require much emotional attachment can be best executed at this time. In the Trough stage it is helpful to engage in low physical activity such as taking a walk without the phone or a 15-minute power nap. The type of actions we take in the trough stage help us to move to the **Recovery** stage in the late afternoon, which is a good time for meetings or creative work as our moods will be elevated. Pure night owls experience the opposite order.

The essence of Pink's work shows that humans are not inexhaustible beings; we need energy to make us effective at work. With major change in our work, perhaps Pink's strongest message needs personal reflection: the notion of taking breaks. Some supervisors may consider unconventional breaks as unprofessional, but for Pink, those who espouse not taking energy-restoring breaks are out of step and not following latest science findings.

Going further...

If you are interested to chat or have questions about the importance of 'when', join in an informal gathering with other MC colleagues. Register in MC Learns, choose the personal development learning category, and click on "Zoom Room" to obtain the Zoom link. This follow up is scheduled Thursday, 10:30-11:30 a.m., to continue learning about the Tip of the Week topic.

For more Tips on working remotely, please visit <https://bit.ly/mc-remote-working-e> and watch for the next tip on Monday, October 5.

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