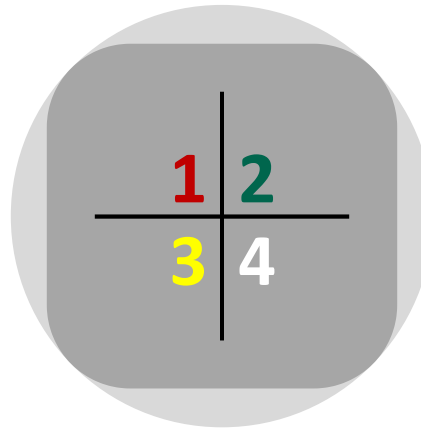


# Continuous Improvement Toolkit

## Importance Urgency Matrix



# The Continuous Improvement Map



# Importance Urgency Matrix

“We live in a time pressured world where it is common to have multiple overlapping commitments that all require immediate attention now”

“Urgency is no long reserved for special occasions, they are an everyday occurrences”

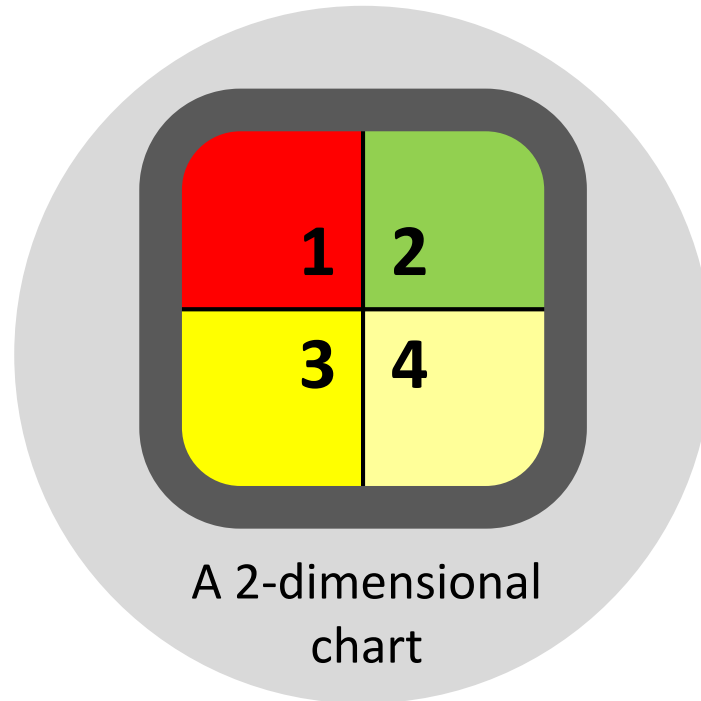
“How can one manage the flood of responsibilities, do excellent work and maintain a positive frame of mind?”



*Steven Covey*

# Importance Urgency Matrix

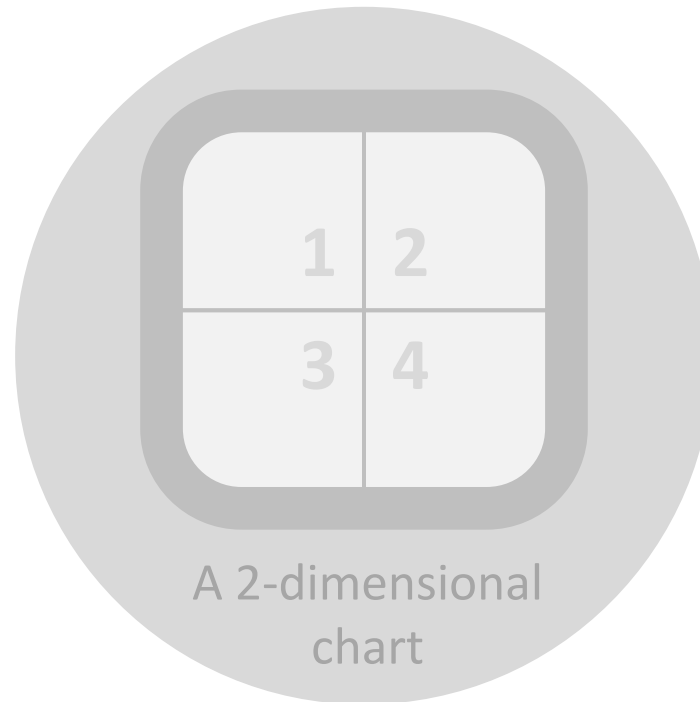
An effective method for **organizing priorities**



# Importance Urgency Matrix

Also called . . .

**Eisenhower's  
Urgent/Important  
Principle**



**Covey's Time  
Management  
Grid**

# Importance Urgency Matrix

Used to prioritize **work** activities as well as **personal** activities

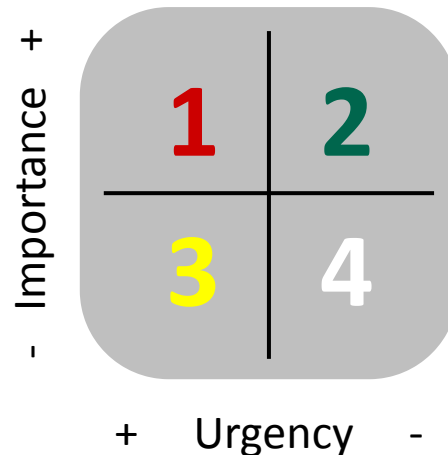
Can be used when the team is having a conflict and unable to manage the work effectively.



# Importance Urgency Matrix

All tasks can be evaluated in terms of importance and urgency

They are then placed in the appropriate **quadrants** of the **importance-urgency matrix**



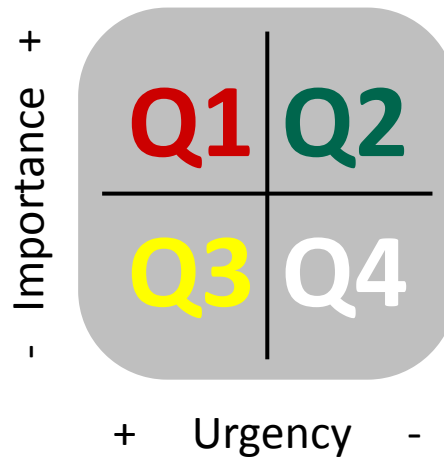
# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 1

Important activities that require immediate attention

## Quadrant 3

Activities that are not really important, but someone wants it now!



## Quadrant 2

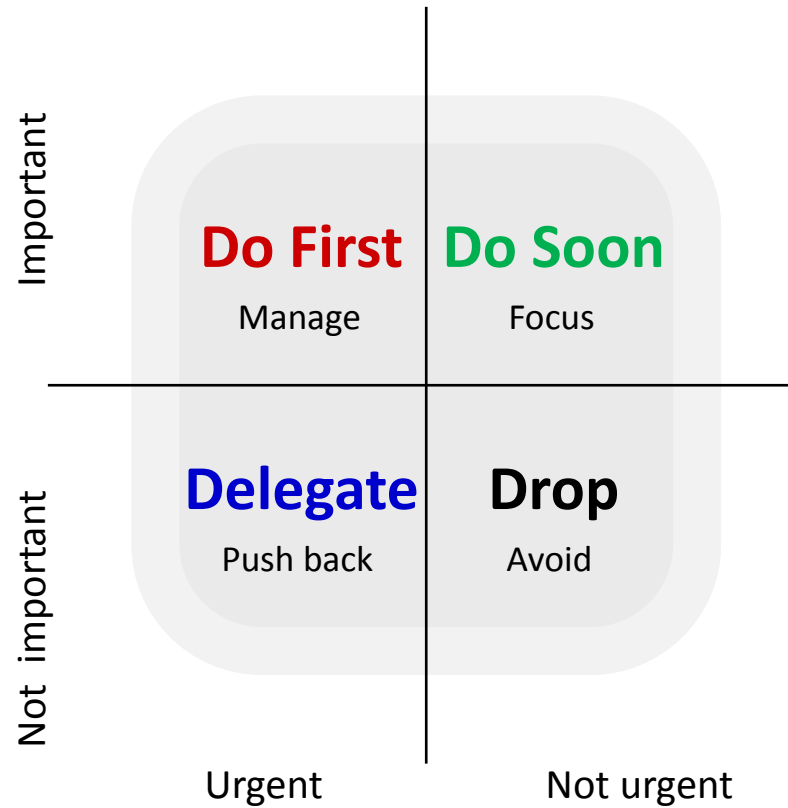
Activities that are important but not urgent

## Quadrant 4

Activities that are neither important nor urgent



# Importance Urgency Matrix



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 1

For important and urgent matters

A problem may arise when **unexpected** activities arises

Or when activities **become urgent** due to procrastination or poor planning



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 1 - Examples

Deadlines at work

Projects at hand

Performing urgent repairs

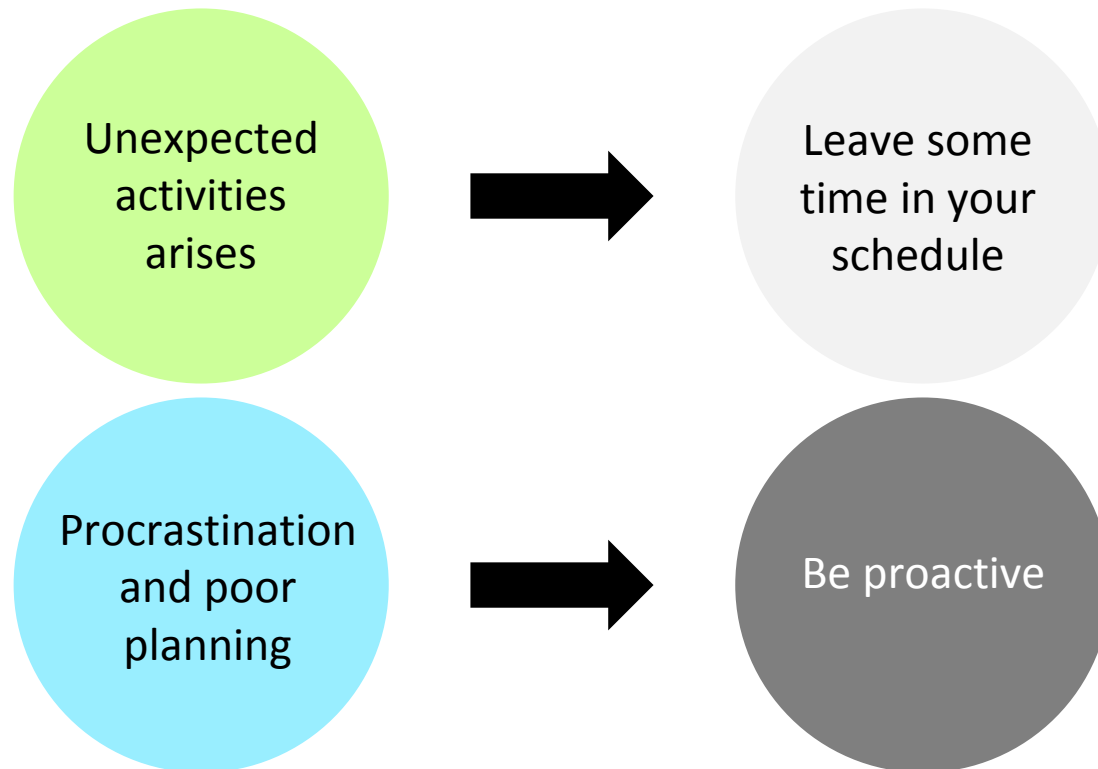
Paying urgent bills

Medical emergencies



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 1 – Examples



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 2

The **important activities** that you should spend most of your time on

Exceptionally important when it comes to **personal development** and growth

Finding ways to expand them is the main goal from using this matrix

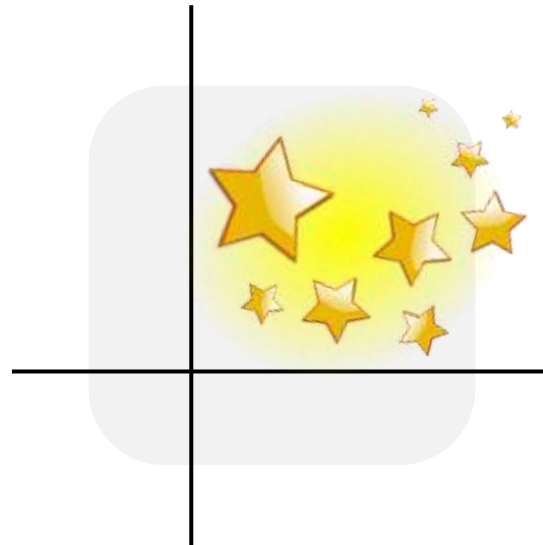


# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 2

Often under used

You should spend more time here



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 2 – Examples

Planning

Personal  
development

Prevention

Leadership  
driven activities

Research

Continuous  
improvement



# Importance Urgency Matrix

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## Quadrant 2

Athletes, entrepreneurs and other people of great achievement **find time** for this quadrant



Help you achieve your personal and professional goals



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 3

Unimportant activities that are done with a **sense of urgency**

Most of these activities are draining and time consuming



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 3 – Examples

Most emails

Some meetings

Some phone calls

Frequent interruptions

Unwanted conversations

Agreeing to do something because you can't say "no"



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 3

Push back, **delegate**, or at least don't get caught up with these activities

Arrange **regular meetings** with those who interrupt you often

Keep your phone on **silent** when you need to focus



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 3

Try to have **time slots** when you are available, so people know they can speak with you them

Learn how to **say No**



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 4

The area that most of us get caught up in

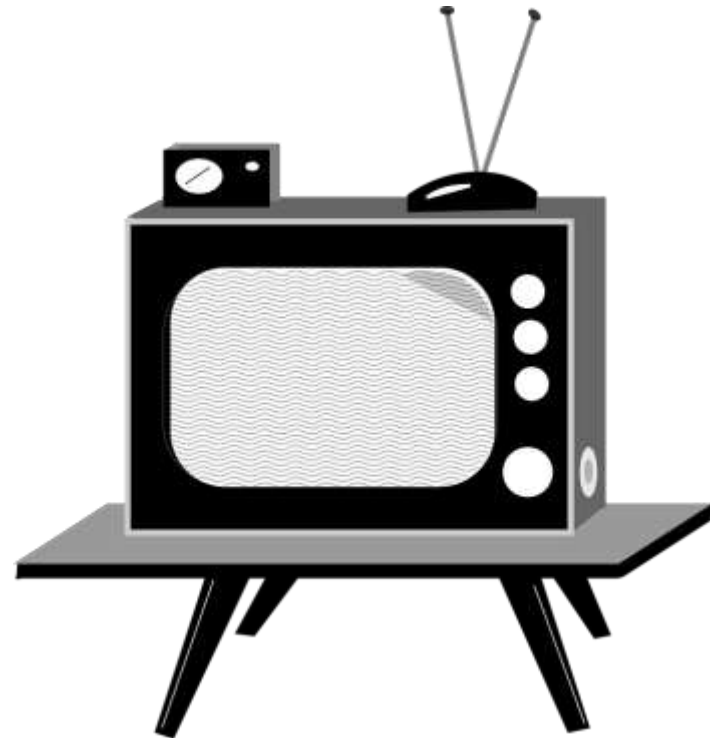
These are the activities used for **taking a break** from important and urgent activities



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 4 – Example

Watching TV and playing video games can be a relief at the end of a long day!



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Quadrant 4

**Limit the time** you spend in this quadrant.

Otherwise, you lose control of your future and may decrease your chance for success.

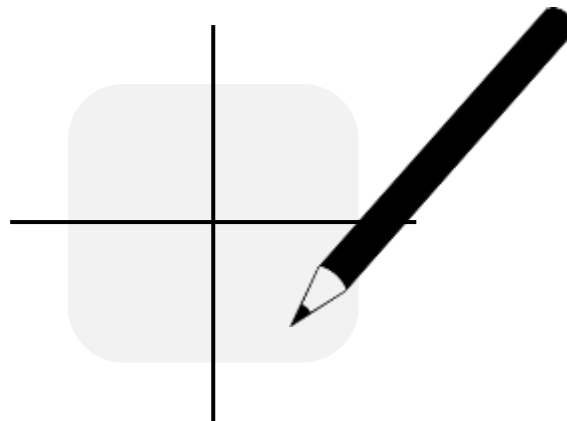


# Importance Urgency Matrix

## How to Use the Importance-Urgency Matrix

Begin by your personal or job-related **activity list**

**Draw** the importance-urgency matrix on a paper  
(or on a flip chart if you are working with a team)



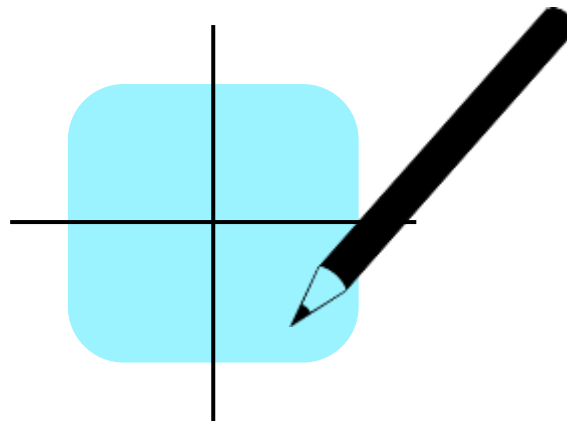


# Importance Urgency Matrix

## How to Use the Importance-Urgency Matrix

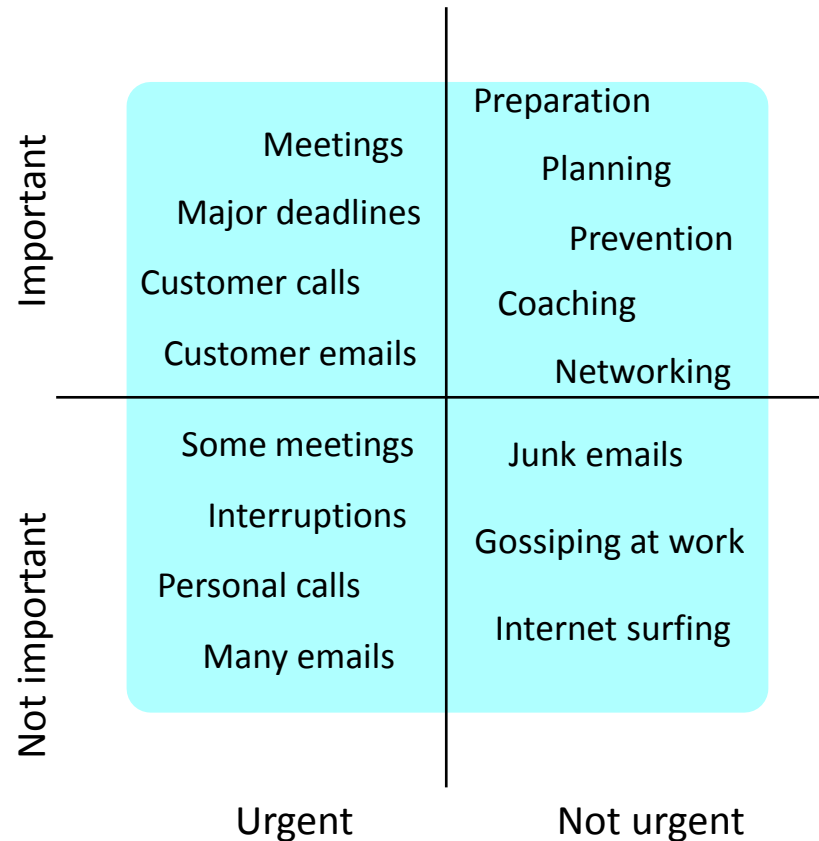
**Sort** all the activities in the appropriate quadrant

Manage and focus what's on the first two quadrants, and pushback or ignore what's on the last two quadrants



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Example – Professional Life



# Importance Urgency Matrix

## Example – Personal Life

Important	Family calls	Exercise
	A crying baby	Family gathering
	A family breakfast	Daily planning
	A kitchen fire	Mentoring
Not important	Internet chatting	Reading a book
	Work-related calls	Video games
	A neighbor visit	Social media
	Interruptions	Excessive TV
	Urgent	Not urgent