



### Habit 3: Put First Things First

AFA Volunteer Development Program  
November 28, 2007

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#### Project Plan Basics

- Defines goals and objectives
- Identifies how goals/objectives will be achieved and by whom
- Outlines resources needed (e.g. people, information, funding, etc.)
- Timelines

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**You can be busy and efficient  
but not effective!**

Effective project management requires  
effective **self** management

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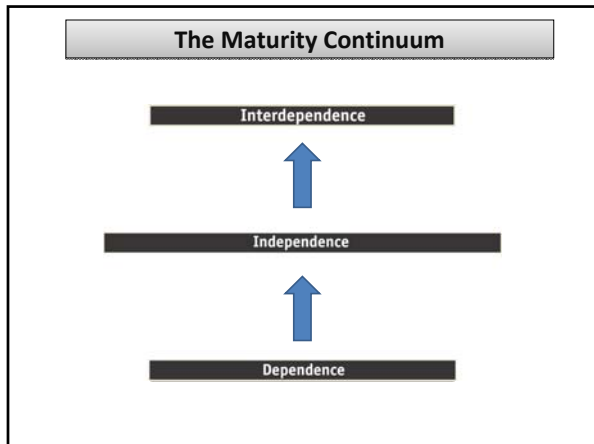
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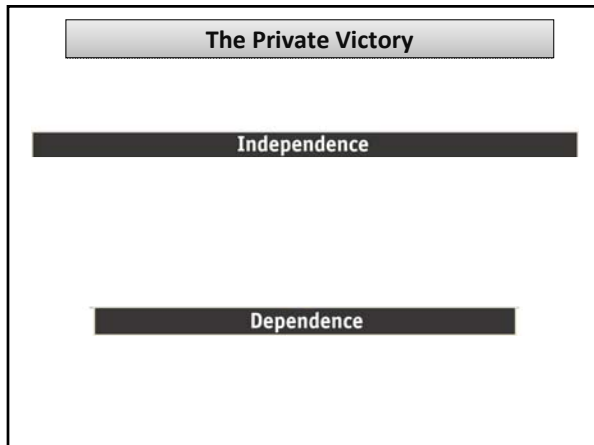
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**How do we “PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST” on a given working day?**

Video Clip

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Brief Clip Processing

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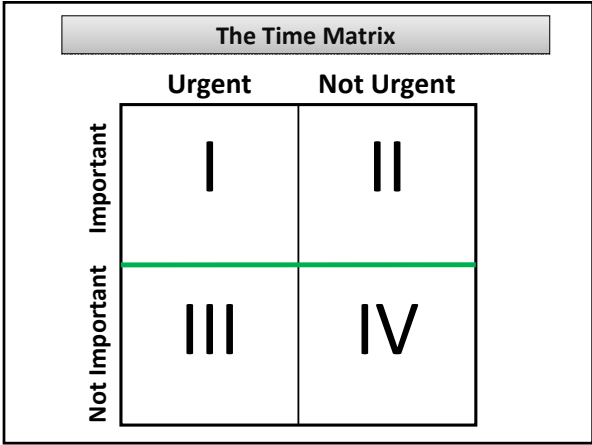
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**Group Activity: The Time Matrix**

**Discuss**

What are specific examples of activities that fall into this quadrant on a general work day?

What are the personal and professional implications of spending a lot of time in this one quadrant?

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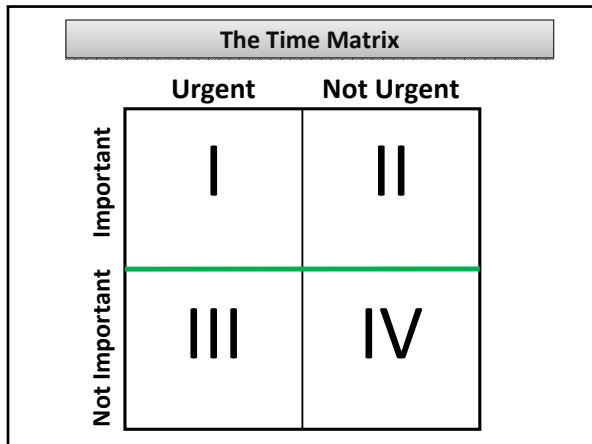
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- Tips From The Trenches**
- **Begin With the End in Mind**
  - **Protect Your Schedule**
  - **Block the Noise**
  - **Jump In**
  - **Be Realistic**
  - **Engage Others Consistently**
  - **Challenge and Support**
  - **Anticipate Curveballs**
  - **Evaluate and Communicate**

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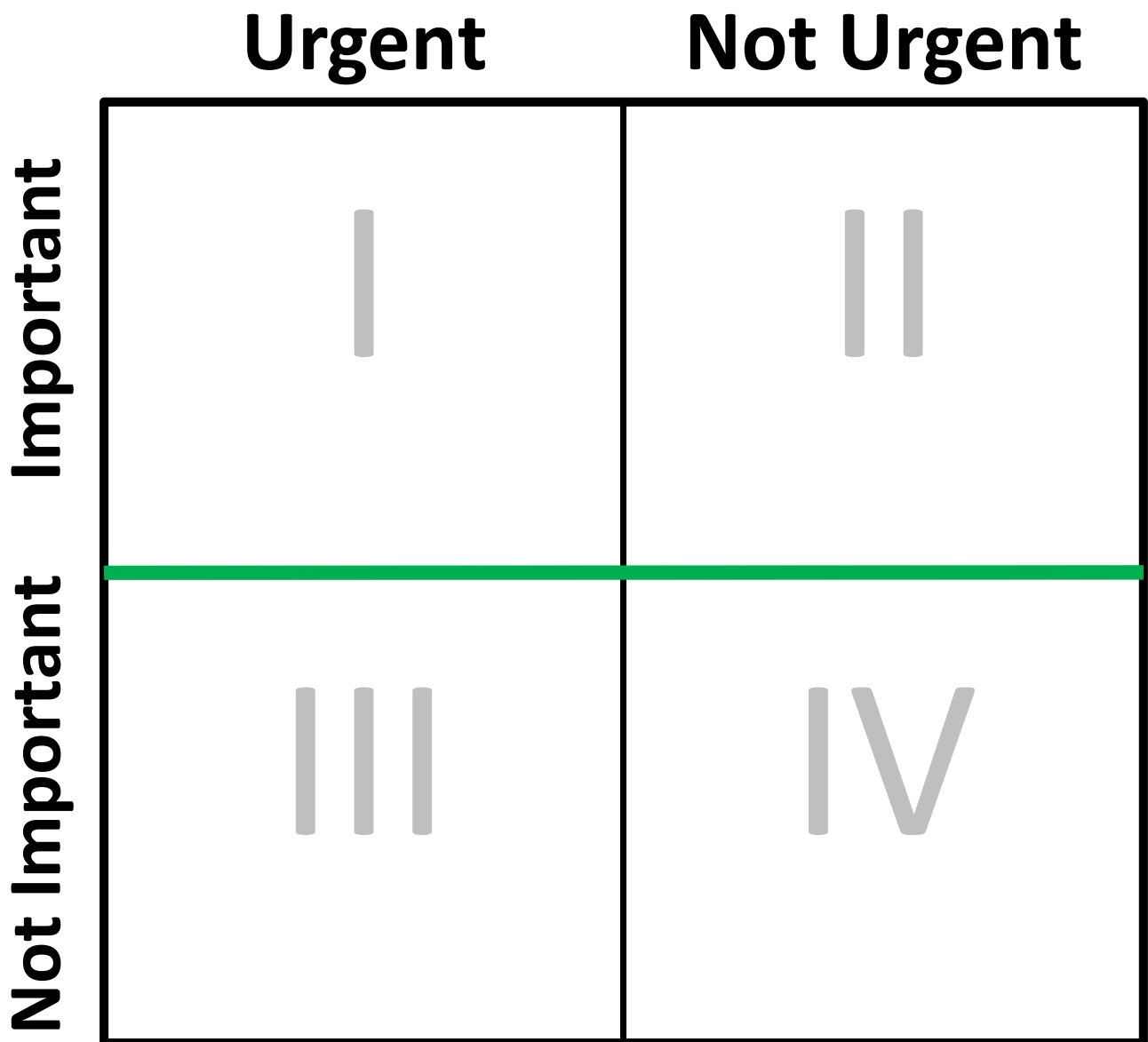
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# Habit 3: Put First Things First

In your groups, discuss and record responses to the questions below. Discuss and record both questions before moving to the next quadrant.

- What are specific examples of activities that fall into this quadrant on a general work day?
- What are the personal and professional implications of spending a lot of time in this one quadrant?



## Effective Project Management - Tips from the Trenches

Ryan King & Sue Kraft Fussell

2007 AFA Volunteer Development Program

**Begin With the End in Mind** – Another of Covey's *7 Habits*, this sentiment reflects the importance of having a well-conceived, detailed project plan with tasks, deadlines and responsible parties clearly identified. *This needs to be in place before work begins*, not created as you go. Defined roles and responsibilities will allow for projects to be more manageable and monitoring progress becomes much easier.

**Protect Your Schedule** – A wise person once told me: “No one will take care of you...so you must do so!” Make appointments with yourself and block time on your calendar for project work – and don't compromise this time. Many volunteers find success with blocking one afternoon a week for Association related work and they communicate this to their teammates so everyone is aware of this fact.

**Block the Noise!** – We have become victims of Quadrant I and Quadrant III – our days and other people's agendas/needs happen to us, instead of us taking charge of our days and focusing on what is important. Implement strategies to block the noise – the unimportant things – from your day. Turn off your email notification; better yet, only check email at two or three specific times during the day when you've blocked time to do so. Place a “do-not-disturb” notice on your phone when you are in “productivity mode” and return calls at one specific time of day. If you have the flexibility, work offsite for ½ day a week and see how much you can accomplish when the noise level in your work space is reduced!

**Jump In** – We've all heard the phrase “paralysis by analysis” – and it's likely we've been in a situation where the work in front of us seems so overwhelming that we don't know where to start. Resist the tendency to wallow in the emotion and overload. Pick a task, make a list of action items to achieve it, and jump in. Once you begin the work and achieve small wins, you'll be amazed at how much easier everything seems.

**Be Realistic** – Good project management and self management begins with setting realistic goals/objectives (remember the “R” in the SMART model?). You aren't superhuman! And neither are your teammates. Agree upon realistic workloads and deadlines *on the front end of a project* through honest dialogue and you'll find the project will go much more smoothly.

**Engage Others Consistently** – Communication is key when managing a project. If leading a team, involving and monitoring others is essential to making progress. Giving clear direction and ample support is essential to the successful completion of the task at hand. If you are a team member, remain in contact with teammates and the team leader, seek feedback from others, and don't forget to ask for help when needed.

**Challenge and Support** – Yes, student development theory does apply to project management! Working with people is an inherent part of managing projects. Don't shy away from your responsibility to both challenge and support their work (and expect this in return as well). This means offering appropriate feedback on performance and work product, as well as having tough conversations when necessary to ensure the project's success. That said, do not neglect your duty to encourage the heart and recognize the work team members are doing. Expressions of support and appreciation motivate people and help cement their commitment.

**Anticipate Curveballs** - Even the best project plans can be thrown off course...we call those fun moments "curveballs". Anticipate that something will go awry and be prepared to adjust course. What will you do if a life moment gets in the way? What if someone on your team falls ill, doesn't meet a deadline or resigns from the group? How will the work be completed? Become a problem solver on the front end by anticipating how you will juggle curveballs like these. Be prepared to make tough decisions regarding what needs to give within the project's scope in order to stay on track, or if the project timelines need to be adjusted to ensure quality results. If you have done a good job of monitoring the work being accomplished (by you or your teammates) you should not be too surprised or impacted too negatively by a curveball.

**Evaluate and Communicate** – When faced with managing projects that occur annually, how often do we get "paradigm paralysis" and just do the same thing as the year before? Have you communicated the successes and challenges of the project to the key decision makers so they can adjust the project's approach the next year? Have you asked other involved parties to give feedback on the outcomes generated by the project? Sometimes it takes three or four years of doing a mediocre project before someone asks the question, "Should we be doing this at all?" A good project manager (1) documents and assesses the project's effectiveness along the way and (2) clearly communicates recommendations for improvement/change to key decision makers.

# Volunteer Development Program

## Nuts and Bolts for Volunteers

### **A Quick Look at the Highlights of Your AFA Volunteer Year:**

- Week of January 28th: 90 Day Check-in with all volunteers by the Volunteer Coordinator
- 3rd week of April: Volunteer Appreciation Week Recognition
- May 1st: Budget Request Forms due
- May 1st—15th: Evaluation Process—forms filled out
- Mid-May: Position Descriptions Reviewed by Volunteer Leaders
- Month of June: Evaluation Process—follow up conversations held
- Late June: Nomination forms due for 2009 Executive Board and Regional Directors
- Early September: 2009 Volunteer Involvement Forms due for appointed positions

### **Don't Forget! These Happen Every Monthly OR are On-Going:**

- Monthly: submit names for Volunteer of the Month to Amanda
- Monthly: *The Association Update*: comes out the 1st Wednesday of the month—due to Amanda 1 week in advance
- Monthly: *The AFA Volunteer*: comes out 3rd Wednesday of the month
- Board Proposal Forms—Due to your Board Supervisor
- Recognition for all volunteers! Let us know about the great things going on!

### **Quarterly Status Report Forms!**

Volunteer Leaders Submit to Supervisors - Due on:

January 31st  
April 24th  
July 31st  
October 31st

### **Perspectives Deadlines**

February 15th  
May 15th  
August 15th  
November 15th

### **Potpourri from Anne and Amanda:**

- [www.when2Meet.com](http://www.when2Meet.com)—a great scheduling tool for distance work
- Communication...VERY important to copy your supervisor on all correspondence.
- Who's a "Volunteer Leader?" and why do Amanda and Anne use that term?
- Unresponsive Volunteers...how to handle
- The AFA Volunteer... let us know what you need

***Let us help you with your volunteer role!***

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