

Manage Your Time Like Ike!

When he became the 34th President of the United States, Dwight Eisenhower brought with him valuable skills learned as a five-star general. Principal among these was his ability to manage time. Upon assuming the presidency, he issued a directive to his Chief of Staff, Sherman Adams, stating that he wanted to spend his time wisely – and this directive has since been proclaimed The Eisenhower Grid. Simply put, the grid was based on four categories:

Important and Urgent: Tasks falling into this category assume the highest priority. In a workplace setting, this would include immediately notifying the appropriate supervisor when a co-worker is injured. In one's personal life, it could mean making the car insurance payment before coverage expires.

Important but Not Urgent: Unfortunately, these are the tasks often placed on the “back burner” since we have the luxury of a bit of time. But they need to be “near” the top of the priority list because time slips away quickly! Workplace examples might include completing a mandatory online training requirement before the due date while a personal example could be to repair the furnace before winter.

Urgent but Not Important: These are the “time robbers” that often masquerade as false priorities. President Eisenhower pegged the term “tyranny of the recent” in describing situations that take us by surprise and therefore capture our immediate attention. A home-based example might include a phone call from a pollster taking a survey. Or at work, you may be approached unexpectedly by a coworker soliciting your efforts in an upcoming

fundraiser for a local charity. Rather than engage this person on the spot, it may be more appropriate to defer the discussion to a future time and place that does not interfere with your workplace schedule and duties.



Neither Urgent nor Important: Do you respond *immediately* to each and every tweet or text message? It depends on the gravity of the message – but it's probably safe to say that much electronic chatter falls into this category!

As both a military and civilian leader, President Eisenhower understood that *procrastination* comprises the greatest threat to effective time management. We now realize that the root cause of procrastination is not laziness, but fear. This includes fear of failure and fear of the perceived enormity of the task. If you find yourself suffering from this self-imposed “paralysis by analysis,” please consider discussing your specific situation or challenge with an EAP counselor by dialing the toll-free number below. Or, go to the website listed below, click on the **Employee & Family Log In** button, sign in, and type *time management* into the search engine.