



Module 3

PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS

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1 ABOUT THIS PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS MODULE

Economic Development Officers (EDOs) play a crucial role in fostering economic growth and development within communities. Given the complexity and variety of their tasks, having a productivity method can significantly enhance their efficiency and effectiveness. Here are some reasons why EDOs would benefit from a productivity method:

- **Time Management:** EDOs often juggle multiple projects and responsibilities. A productivity method helps them prioritize tasks, allocate time effectively, and meet deadlines.
- **Focus and Concentration:** Techniques like the Pomodoro Technique can help EDOs maintain focus and avoid distractions, leading to higher quality work and better outcomes.
- **Improved Collaboration:** Clear organization and time management facilitate better collaboration with colleagues, stakeholders, and community members.
- **Goal Achievement:** Productivity methods help EDOs set and achieve specific goals, ensuring that their efforts align with the broader objectives of economic development.
- **Stress Reduction:** Structured productivity methods can reduce stress by breaking down large tasks into manageable chunks, making it easier to tackle complex projects.
- **Work-Life Balance:** Efficient work habits can lead to a better work-life balance, allowing EDOs to maintain their well-being while effectively serving their communities.



2 PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS

Whether they are working on a community survey, a request for proposal, a contribution request, a job posting or an invitation to a community event, EDOs are more efficient when they adopt a productivity method. By doing that, EDOs can enhance their ability to drive economic growth and development, ultimately benefiting the communities they serve. Let's dive into some of the most commons that will make EDOs achieve more.

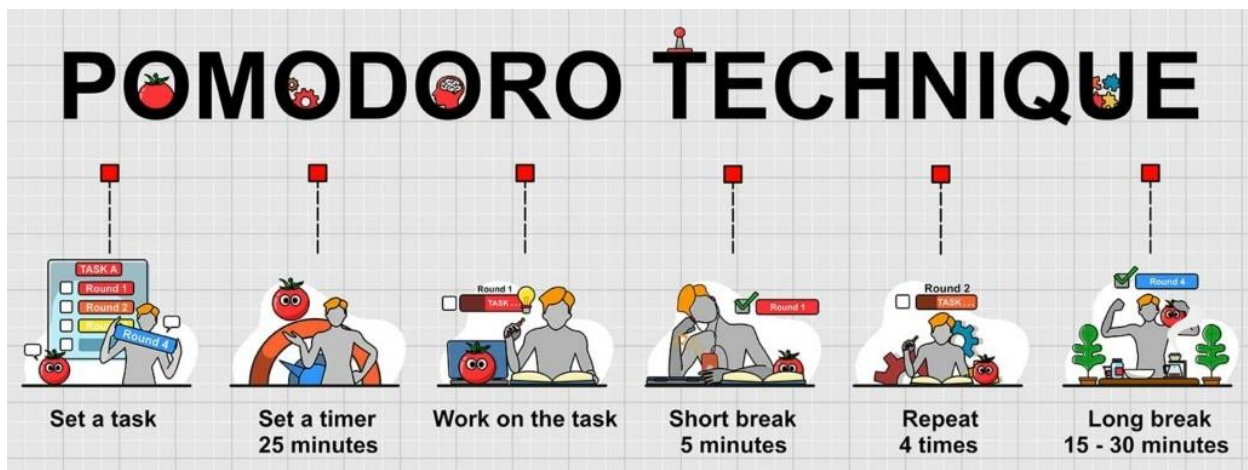
2.1 Pomodoro

What is the Pomodoro technique?

The Pomodoro technique consists of **four work sessions of 25 minutes** each and **5-minute breaks** after each work session. After the last labor-intensive phase, you are rewarded with a half-hour break. These phases form a session that lasts a total of 2h25min. This includes 100 minutes of work and a 45-minute break. Nowadays this method is incredibly popular with students, CEOs, executives and workers since the Pomodoro Method leads to higher concentration, efficiency in the workplace and productivity.

How does it work?

So, first set your timer to 25 minutes and work on one task during this time. As soon as your alarm clock rings, take 5 minutes to recover. It's best to drink some **water**, eat a small **snack**, get some **fresh air** or **stretch**. Repeat this process four times. Depending on how many different tasks you must complete, you can choose a different task for each work cycle. However, you should only tackle one task per work cycle because you work better when you concentrate on one task.

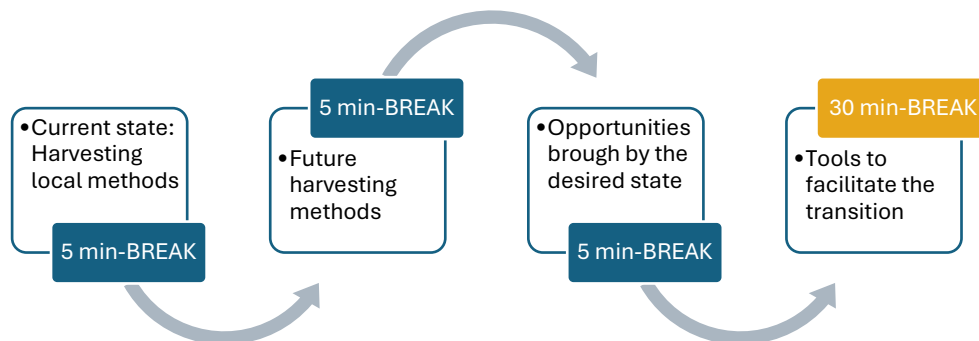


A concrete example of Pomodoro use case by an EDO

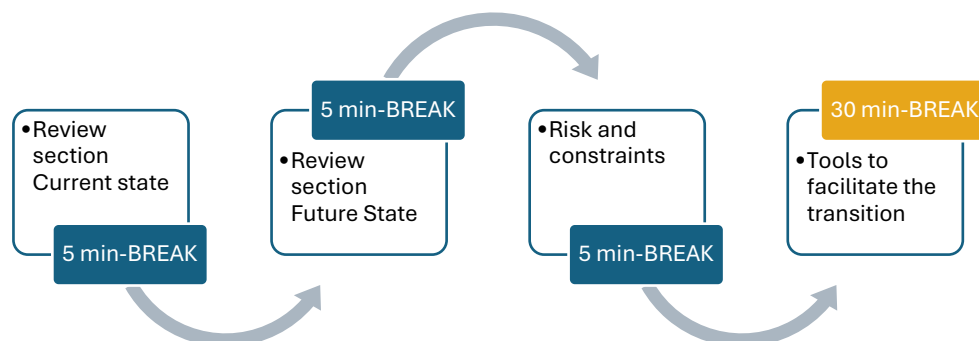
EDO John Bosum is finalizing this strategic report on modernizing harvesting methods in the community. Recommendations from the report will help the council in prioritizing budget allocation for agriculture. He must submit it to the council next week. We all know how reports can mean time consuming. By adopting the Pomodoro method, John can break work into manageable intervals, maintain high levels of focus, and avoid burnout. This method can be especially effective for tasks that require sustained thinking, like reports. Let's assume parts of the report are the current state, the desired state, opportunities, tools, risk assessment and recommendations.

Modern harvesting methods report with Pomodoro technique

DAY1



DAY2



1.2 Eisenhower tool

What is the Eisenhower productivity tool?

The Eisenhower Matrix, often referred to as the Eisenhower Decision Matrix or Urgent-Important Matrix, sorts and prioritizes tasks regarding urgency and importance. It helps an individual or organization zero in on what really matters by dividing tasks into four categories: urgent and important, important but not urgent, urgent but not important, and neither urgent nor important. You can use the Eisenhower Matrix to help focus your efforts on the most important tasks while minimizing distractions and reducing the likelihood of burnout. Use this time management matrix to identify and prioritize urgent and critical tasks with ease, while delegating or freeing up time for lower and unimportant tasks. This is a great tool for workflow management and is easy to adopt.

How does it work?

Here's how to get started using an Eisenhower Matrix:

1. List all your tasks: Start by listing all the tasks you need to complete, whether they're personal tasks, everyday tasks, or work-related project tasks
2. Categorize tasks into quadrants: Assess each based on urgent and important tasks and then place them into one of the four quadrants
3. Prioritize tasks within each quadrant: Of the four quadrants, rank tasks in order of priority
4. Execute tasks in order of priority: Start with Quadrant 1 tasks, then move to Quadrant 2, and so on
5. Review and adjust: Regularly review your Eisenhower Matrix to ensure that urgent and important tasks are still appropriately categorized and prioritized

The four quadrants

Quadrant 1

- Urgent and Important Tasks: These are the critical and more urgent tasks that require immediate attention. They often have deadlines or serious consequences if not completed promptly. Examples include crises, pressing deadlines, and emergency situations.

Quadrant 2

- Non-Urgent Tasks but Important: These tasks are essential for long-term success but don't require immediate action. They include strategic planning, relationship building, and personal development.

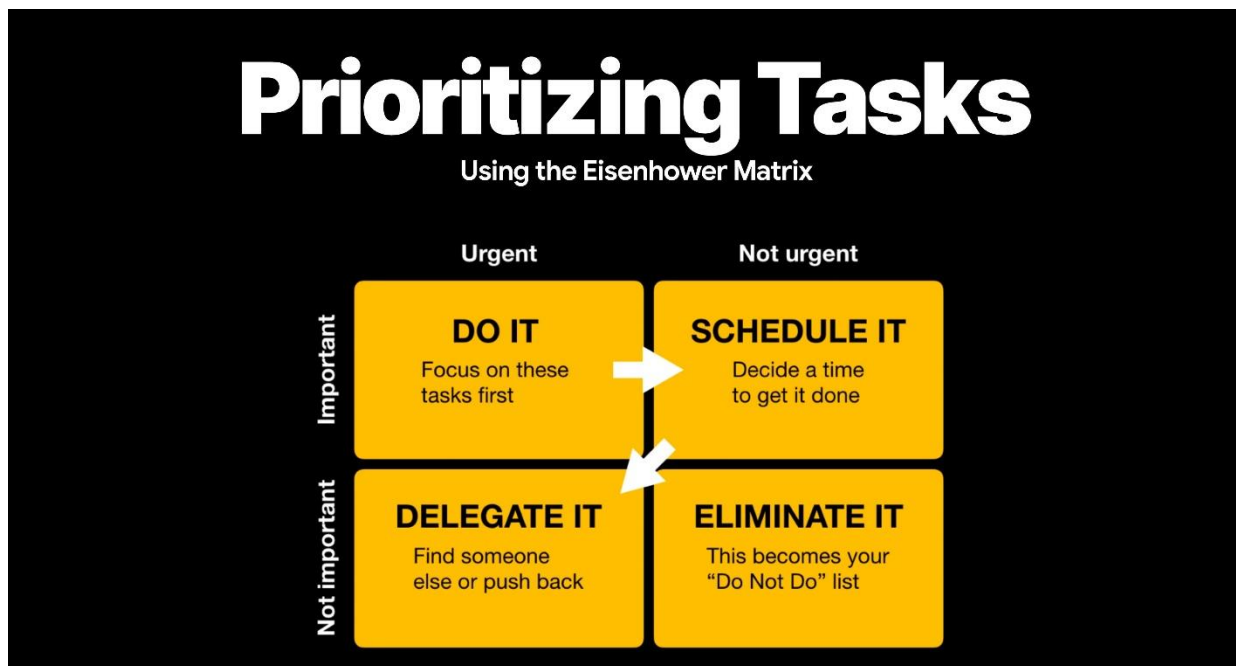
Quadrant 3



- **Urgent But Not Important Tasks:** These tasks are less important but require immediate attention. They often involve the needs or requests of others. Examples include interruptions, emails, and minor requests.

Quadrant 4

- **Not Urgent and Not Important Tasks:** These tasks are neither urgent nor important and should be minimized or eliminated. Examples include time-wasting activities on a to-do list, distractions, and excessive social media use.



A concrete example of Eisenhower matrix use case by an EDO

Like all EDOs, Mike Wanish has a lot on his plate. Today he would like to achieve the following

- Watch a procurement video lesson on virtualedo.ca
- Sign and email an overdue report to the band council
- Write a formal invitation letter to a major donor
- Proofread and approve the RFP ready to be sent out
- Read an online tutorial on how to request contributions from GoC
- Check social media for world news.
- Set up a budget for a government grant application
- Locate a SOW template of the intranet
- Help a local supplier to order machinery
- Send a medical appointment leave note to colleagues for this PM
- Create emails filters in mailbox



Using the Eisenhower method, Mike would classify his tasks in the four quadrants as shown below

Sign and email an overdue report to the band council

Proofread and approve the RFP ready to be sent out

Send a medical appointment leave note to colleagues for this PM

Set up a budget for a government grant application

Read an online tutorial on how to request contributions from GoC

Watch a procurement video lesson on edo.ca

Locate a SOW template of the intranet

Write a formal invitation letter to a major donor

Help a local supplier to order machinery

Create emails filters in mailbox

Check social media for world news



2.3 3/3/3 Method

What is the 3-3-3 productivity method?

This method is designed for people who believe their work schedule is not rigid. Many EDOs would spend nearly all day (and evening) achieving tasks. Occasionally. Sometimes they carry work at home and continue working at home. That is like they have spent the entire day working. Each 3 in the 3-3-3 method constitutes a degree of importance of the tasks from the most important to the standard ones.

How does it work?

- Spend three hours on his most important current project. Burkeman decides the day before what he'll work on, and the goal for the progress he intends to make during those three hours.
- Complete three shorter tasks, usually urgent to-dos or sticky tasks he's been avoiding. While most take just a few minutes each, some are longer. (Calls and meetings also fall into this category.)
- Dedicate time to three maintenance activities, things that need daily attention to keep things running smoothly. These don't have to be work-related. For Burkeman, email is a maintenance task, but so is exercise.

In summary

- Spend 3 hours on your VIP project.
- Accomplish 3 quick tasks.
- Tackle 3 chores that make life easier.



A concrete example of 3/3/3 use case by an EDO

Mike Wanish is an EDO and is mandated to prepare RFP for a feasibility study to establish a local helicopter business in the area. He knows that the helicopter business is a very complex one. Besides costs and regulations, it involves construction: building a heliport, a hangar and a terminal. He is aware that it takes reliable information, strong data and a good knowledge of air transportation regulations. Financial information is a critical go/no go factor for such initiatives. Mike thinks some major tasks are critical to get his RFP started. Using 3/3/3 method, Mike Wanish's agenda would look like this.



Research and data collection (3hrs)

- Market analysis
- Regulatory requirements
- Financial information
- Competitor analysis



Three important tasks

1. Call local pilots from the region
2. Generate RFP content with ChatGPT
3. Draft RFP content



Three maintenance tasks

1. Organize Helicopter project folders on the drive
2. Upload search documents on the drive
3. Send an update email to colleagues



2.4 Eat the frog

What is the Eat-the-frog productivity method?

Eat The Frog is a prioritization and productivity method that encourages people to pick the toughest task first. The goal is to recognize one challenging task for the day (the frog) and complete it (eat it), preferably first thing in the morning; then, you'll all be set for a productive day. The main idea is to tackle the biggest, hardest, most important tasks first. As you tackle your to-do lists you will become more disciplined, efficient, and focused.

How does it work?

Step 1: Decide exactly what you want

You need to understand exactly what you want to achieve. Once you have decided to be more productive, the first thing you need to do is to define your goals. Only once you know exactly what you need to do can you act.

Step 2: Write it down

Each successful goal starts with a good plan. Write out your goals and objectives on paper before you begin. Clarity is important.

Step 3: Set a deadline for your goal

If you don't set a deadline, you will land up procrastinating. If necessary, set sub-deadlines.

Step 4: List everything you will need to do to achieve your goal

Every time you think of new tasks you need to do, add them to your list. Once you have outlined your goals, plan your time in advance. Break your goals down into action steps. Break large complex tasks into small steps.

Step 5: Create a checklist

Organize your list of tasks to create a plan. Prioritize the tasks on your list. Checklists will help you visualize your goals. When you mark a task or look at the ones you have completed, you will feel a sense of accomplishment. This will motivate you to continue.

Prioritize your tasks in order to understand which ones are the most important. Think about the order in which you will need to complete the tasks. Don't prioritize them in your head. Instead, write them down and organize them on paper.



Step 6: Take action on your plan immediately

The most important step is to act on your plan immediately. It is better to execute an average plan than not to execute a brilliant plan. Act right away.

Step 7: Do something every single day that moves you toward your major goal

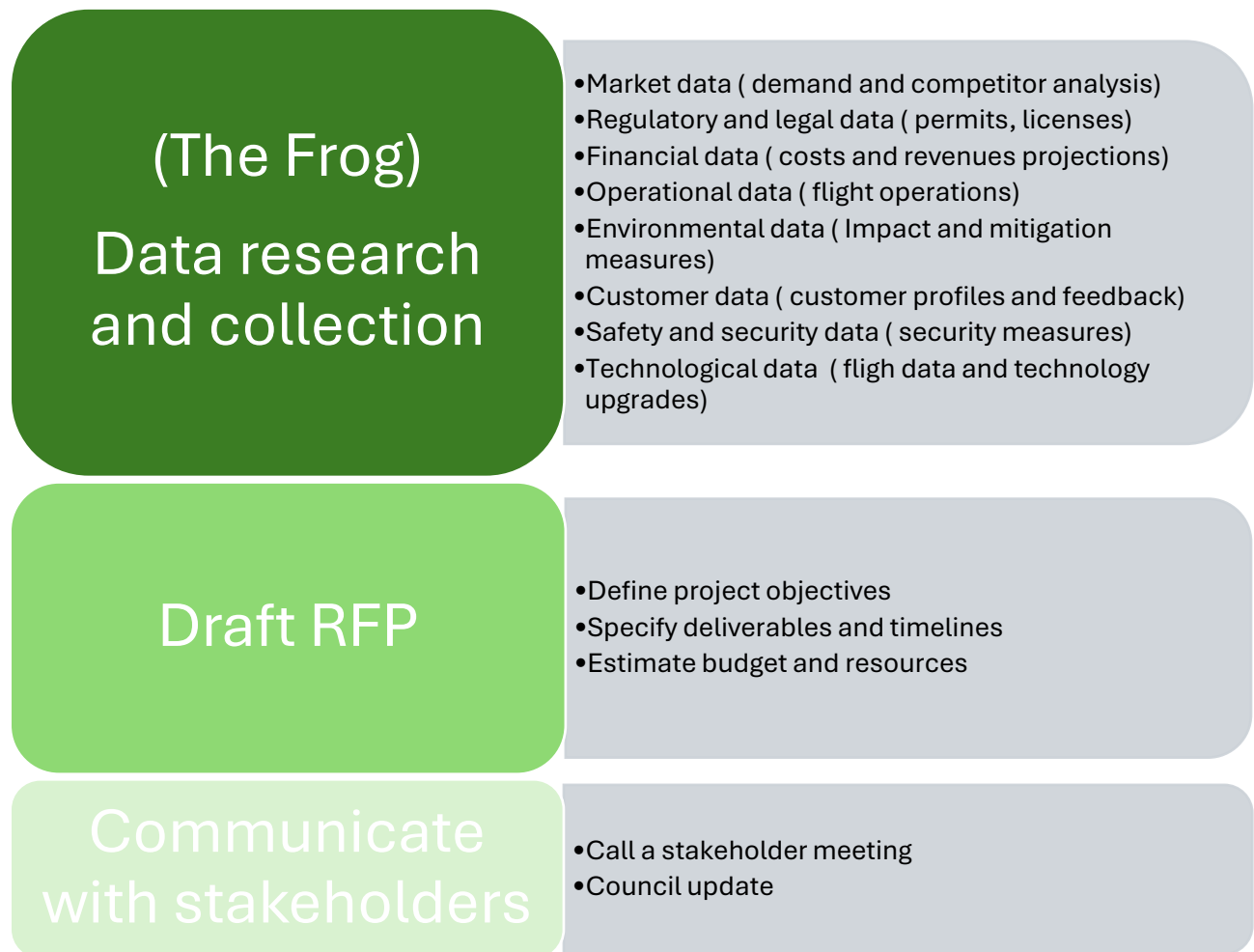
Whatever you decide to do each day, make sure you never miss a day.



A concrete example of Eat-the-Frog use case by an EDO

Taking the same Mike Wanish's RFP preparation for a feasibility study to establish a local helicopter business in the area. This is a complex project that requires a lot of subtasks and involves many stakeholders: Government instances, local pilots, construction companies, ground school trainers, community members, etc. The "**frog**" in this project is getting all the data required to move forward: Transport Canada requirements, helicopter statistics, financial data, market analysis and competition analysis. Mike knows that if this is not done, he won't be able to specify evaluation criteria in the RFP and the overall project planning is at risk. So, tackling data is hard but critical as it is the key to clarifying objectives and project deliverables. By "**eating this frog**" first, Mike could eliminate a significant stress point, streamline the project's remaining stages, and improve his overall task management. Mike methodology can be presented as below.





2.5 Seinfeld methodology

What is the Seinfeld productivity method?

The Seinfeld Strategy is a well-known productivity technique that has garnered attention for its simplicity and effectiveness in cultivating consistent habits. Understanding the origin, target audience, benefits, drawbacks, implementation process, and best practices associated with this strategy can illuminate its potential impact on personal and professional productivity.

The Seinfeld Strategy was popularized by Jerry Seinfeld himself, who reportedly used this method to maintain his comedic creativity. As the story goes, a young aspiring comedian once asked Seinfeld for tips on how to become a better comic. Seinfeld's advice was to write new jokes every day. He recommended using a wall calendar to mark an 'X' for each day so that the task was accomplished. The emphasis was on "not breaking the chain." This technique became a cornerstone of Seinfeld's



approach to success and has since been adopted and adapted by many as a powerful tool for achieving personal and professional objectives.

How does it work?

The idea is so simple: When you're trying to form a new habit or accomplish a long-term project, grab a calendar. Ideally, the calendar will be the real deal, physical kind, so you can really see it. Every day, employ the new habit or otherwise work on a step of the project you need to do, then mark an X on the calendar for that day.

Right away, you'll get a visual reward from seeing the first X, then the second. Soon enough, you'll have a chain you don't want to break, and you've gamified your productivity. People are simple creatures, wired to carry on patterns for silly rewards. Seeing the small wins laid out on the calendar also reminds you how they play into your bigger goals, which can be helpful for motivation. As a bonus, write your goal in big letters on the top of the calendar page, so you always have it at the top of mind and can see how every day's efforts are leading toward its completion.



A concrete example of Seinfeld method use case by an EDO

Stephanie Obomsawin, a new EDO, is preparing for her Technician Aboriginal Economic Developer (TAED) certification through college certificate program. She wants to make sure she gets closer to it every day. The Seinfeld Productivity Method, also known as "Don't Break the Chain," can be a powerful tool for Stephanie in preparing for her certification projects and exam. Here is what Stephanie did:

1. **Set a Goal:** Define her study goal. For example, she might aim to study for 1 hour every day until her exam.
2. **Create a Calendar:** Stephanie prints a physical or digital calendar where she can mark off each day.
3. **Start Small:** Begin by studying for a short, manageable amount of time each day. Consistency is key, so even 30 minutes a day can make a big difference.
4. **Mark Each Day:** After she completes her study session, she marks a sign on that day's date on the calendar. This visual representation will help motivate her to keep going. As she continues to study each day, she sees a chain of 'X's (or checks) forming on her calendar.
5. **Stay Committed:** On days when she feels less motivated, she remembers the satisfaction of not breaking the chain. This helped her push through and stay on track.

By using the Seinfeld Productivity Method, Stephanie Obomsawin has established a consistent study routine that can help her effectively prepare for the TAED certification. Her calendar looks like this

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑
TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑
TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑	TAED ☑
TAED ☑	TAED ☑					



2.5 Other productivity tools

There are several less common productivity tools and methods that can be quite effective, though they might not be as widely known. They are as efficient as the previously presented one. It is common and okay to try several methods before sticking to one that works for us. These are some unknown methods that have proven tracks.

- The Ivy Lee Method: This method involves writing down the six most important tasks for the next day, prioritizing them, and focusing on completing them one at a time. It's a simple yet powerful way to prioritize and focus on key tasks.
- The 1-3-5 Rule: This rule suggests tackling one big task, three medium tasks, and five small tasks each day. It helps in balancing workload and ensuring progress on various fronts.
- The 24-7-30 Follow-Up System: This system involves following up on tasks and communications within 24 hours, 7 days, and 30 days to ensure timely responses and follow-through.
- Task Batching: This method involves grouping similar tasks together and completing them in dedicated time blocks. It reduces context switching and increases efficiency.
- Mind Mapping: This technique involves visually organizing information and ideas using diagrams. It's particularly useful for brainstorming and planning projects.
- The 5-S Method: Originating from Japanese management techniques, this method involves sorting, setting in order, shining (cleaning), standardizing, and sustaining to create an organized and efficient workspace.
- The 5-15 Report: This involves spending five minutes at the start and end of the day reviewing and planning tasks, and 15 minutes at the end of the week to reflect on accomplishments and plan for the next week.

These methods and tools can provide fresh perspectives and approaches to productivity, helping you find what works best for you.



3 WHICH TOOL FITS ME?

3.1 Comparison of productivity methods

Every EDO has his/her own workstyle. By considering these pros and cons, you can decide which productivity technique aligns with your work style and goals. Whichever you choose, remember to balance consistency with flexibility to maintain a healthy and sustainable approach to productivity. Keep in mind it is ok to use more than one method. Most of the time, workers try several methods before finding theirs. It is also normal that depending on the projects you work on; your productivity method varies.

Productivity Method	Pros	Cons
POMODORO	- Little equipment needed - Sustainable studying thanks to regular breaks - Increased concentration - Individually adaptable - Efficient time management - Increased motivation and focus - Quicker learning process - Reduced exam anxiety and procrastination	- Inflexible timetable - Unrealistic application - Additional planning - Interrupted workflow - Stress through timer
EISENHOWER	- Creates an overview and order - Reduces the number of tasks - Simple and quick - Prioritize tasks - Aids in planning and time management.	- Lack of flexibility - Difficulties in prioritization - Limited support for creativity and innovation. - Risk of procrastination



3-3-3	Focus and Clarity Manageable Workload Flexibility Consistency	Rigid Structure Overemphasis on Time Not Suitable for All Tasks Limited Flexibility for Unplanned Tasks
Eat the frog	Boosts Productivity Reduces Procrastination Enhances Focus Increases Motivation Improves Time Management.	Mental Fatigue. Overwhelming May Not Suit Everyone Requires Discipline Not All Tasks Are Equal
SEINFELD	Establishing Routine and Discipline Overcoming Procrastination Building Momentum Tracking Progress and Accountability	Rigidity Pressure Lack of Adaptability Single-Task Focus Potential for Obsession

3.2 How can Internet and AI help?

AI takes a significant place in our tasks today. When looking to increase productivity, EDOs should use it, particularly for content and ideas. To save time here is the recommended use of software for project management and text editors. Many of them are freeware. Access to information through search platforms , cloud services to store and share documents are some good examples of how the use of the internet enhances productivity.

For Pomodoro, EDO can use a timer from their watch or phone , or a physical alarm clock .There are several 25 min timers on YouTube. Just play one and the alarm will ring once the time elapsed. Also, virtual assistants like Cortana, Siri or Alexa can set up timers for you through vocal commands. When working on reports with lots of data, AI Automating data entry tasks reduces errors and frees up time for more strategic activities.

EDO's whose workstyle in Eisenhower matrix can benefit from the automation repetitive tasks. For example, AI can automatically sort and prioritize emails, flag important messages, and even respond to routine inquiries.



When it's time to build a survey, there are several free solutions over the shelf, like surveyplanet, slido, etc. A simple search of Eisenhower matrix will get you a handy version diagram to remind you what to include in the four quadrants.

For some methods, a physical tool works better than a digital one. For example, when using Seinfeld technique, nothing is more rewarding than looking at the amount of 'X' you checked in timeframe.

3.3 Printable annexes (templates)

In the folder where this file is located you will also find these utilities

- ✓ [Eisenhower matrix template for EDO](#)
- ✓ [3-3-3 To do List for EDO](#)
- ✓ [Eat that Frog schedule for EDO](#)
- ✓ [Seinfeld Planner for EDO](#)

