



Focus Time

#workhack

Open-plan offices, open doors and constant responsiveness are regarded as good manners in recent years. This has tremendous advantages: fast and uncomplicated communication is easier and communication paths have become shorter. At the same time, we know that every interruption of an intensive work process costs a lot of time. By some estimates, it can take 12 minutes to get your mind back to work. And by other estimates, it can take 18 minutes! No matter how many minutes have been scientifically proven – one thing is certain: the constant interruptions prevent concentrated work. That is why there is focus time.

The focus time is a time of the day when nobody in the team – or even in the whole company – is allowed to be interrupted: neither by phone calls, small talk, questions from colleagues, nor meetings. There is simply peace and quiet for concentrated work. Most teams start with one hour per day. Focus time can, however, be extended to several hours per day.

HELPS WITH

- frequent interruptions of work which disrupt concentration.
- the processing of complex projects or topics which require an intensive examination of the topic.
- very talkative team members who struggle to control their urge to engage in conversation.
- introverted team members who prefer to work in peace.

TO BE CONSIDERED

- All team members should stick to the same time – that makes it easier for everyone to hold out until the habituation effect occurs.
- The time should be put to the test after a month – finding the right time is not always easy and often requires adjustments and compromises. Notification alerts from emails, calls, etc. should be switched off.
- A solution is required for incoming calls – sometimes an answering machine is sufficient, and sometimes it helps to set up a “telephone service” which is taken over by team members in rotation.
- It’s better to allow exceptions than to be too strict – sometimes you just can’t postpone an appointment.
- Proactive communication inside and outside of the company such as “we are practicing our focus time to provide better service” can be helpful.

TOOLS

- No tools required. Some teams design posters, and some create signs to hold up or hats to wear: there are many tactics which can serve as a reminder.