

How to be more efficient (and effective)

Efficiency means not wasting energy or effort so you can achieve what you want to in the best possible way.

When you are efficient and effective you can achieve better outcomes.

"Efficiency is doing things right; effectiveness is doing the right things"

[Peter Drucker, educator and author](#)

5 ways to be more efficient (and effective) at work



1. With repeatable tasks

Use checklists and templates

To increase your efficiency with repeatable tasks, use checklists and templates to streamline processes and save time. This also avoids you starting from scratch each time.

This could look like:

- 📌 using a project dashboard
- 📌 using a job ad template
- 📌 drafting a comms plan.

2. With your time

Avoid task-switching

To be more efficient and effective with your time, stop task-switching and focus on one task at a time.

Using short 15- 30 minute blocks can significantly improve your productivity and progress.

- 📌 set yourself a timer and don't switch from your task until the alarm sounds
- 📌 aim for 3 time blocks a day.

3. With your meetings

Subtract and streamline

To improve meeting efficiency, consider using subtraction by:

- 📌 reducing the meeting length
- 📌 limiting the number of people
- 📌 focusing on a single agenda item.

These subtraction hacks can make your meetings shorter and more focused. It increases clarity and productivity while freeing up time for other tasks.

4. With emails

Set yourself a word limit

To improve email efficiency, set a word limit for your messages, starting with 300 words.

This encourages concise and clear communication, saving you time and making it easier for others to read and respond.

If 300 words feels easy, challenge yourself to reduce your word limit to 200 words for even greater clarity.

5. With your network

Ask 'who else?'

To be more efficient with your network, use your existing conversations to create new connections.

- 📌 after meeting someone new, ask if they can recommend or introduce you to someone else who has expertise or experience of the topic you've talked about

This approach creates a chain reaction of contacts, making it much easier to expand your network.

Coach yourself question

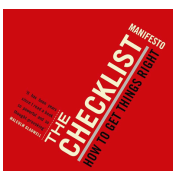
Where are you most inefficient at work?



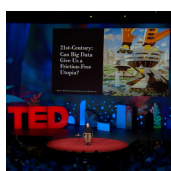
What could you achieve more of if efficiency was easier for you?



Recommended resources



The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right
by Atul Gawande



The paradox of efficiency
Ted talk by historian Edward Tenner



Helen and Sarah share 10 top tips and more ideas for action to help you to stay on task on [#176](#) of Squiggly Careers.