Presenter

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We live in the real world, and we have many demands on our time and attention.

Sometimes the demands of the modern-day workplace will necessitate multitasking.

We will never be able to avoid multitasking completely.

The goal of this course is to reduce our multitasking tendencies and implement best practices in productivity to increase our effectiveness.
You Might be a Supertasker

2-3% of the population
Multitasking?
Multitasking?
Multitasking?
Multitasking
Here’s the Problem…

Multitasking

- Decreases productivity
- Impairs cognition
- Makes you impulsive
- Increases stress
- Diminishes creativity
Objectives
What Exactly is Multitasking?

- Focusing on more than one assignment at a time
- Repeatedly switching back and forth between two or more activities
- Performing a number of loosely related or unrelated tasks in rapid succession
PAIRINGS that don’t affect performance
However...

If you pair two activities that require conscious thought, your performance on both tasks will suffer.
Examples @ Work?
Doing two cognitive tasks at once?

Your cerebral cortex processes the tasks in two stages.
Doing two cognitive tasks at once?

Stage 1: Goal shifting

Shift your focus from one activity to the other.
Doing two cognitive tasks at once?

Stage 2: Rule Activation

Deactivate the rules of the previous activity and then turn on the rules for the new task.
Multitasking burns up oxygenated glucose—the same fuel you need to deeply focus and do your best work.
Effects on Cognition & Productivity
Multitasking while learning information causes the new information to go to the wrong part of the brain.
A brain region for storing new procedures and skills—not facts and ideas.
Hippocampus

A brain region for organizing and categorizing facts and ideas
Loss of IQ Points
More Mistakes

Multitaskers make up to 50% more errors than those who are not multitasking.

Dr. John Medina
Author of *Brain Rules*
“Inattentional Blindness”

75% of students with cell phones didn’t see the clown!
Decreased Productivity

• A 2001 study by Rubinstein, Evans, and Meyer suggests that people who multitask can reduce their productivity by as much as 40%

• Medina founds that multitaskers take 50% longer to accomplish a single task
Multitasking Challenge
Your Multitasking Challenge

Read Email

Listen to a Discussion
Good afternoon, everyone.

Since Susy will be on vacation next week, I will be coordinating our next employee forum. Thus, I am requesting items a bit earlier than normal.

Please send me your August 2nd forum agenda items by this Thursday, July 27th. Please advise if there will be any external speakers in attendance. I am aware of one guest speaker from IT, Chris Thomas, who will present on Phishing emails. Chris, I have attached our forum template. Please use it to build your slides.

In addition, please send me your slides on Friday, July 28th by noon. I have attached a list of agenda items from our last forum. ~ Kathy

Previous Agenda Items

• Hiring process changes (coming soon)
• Benefits reminders
• Training system upgrade
• New manager training program
• Faculty and staff satisfaction survey
• Important dates
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Please approve time now.

Attention: You have two employees with vacation time that needs to be approved in the system. Please do so by 8:30 a.m. Thank you!

~ Steven
Please Begin Your Quiz Now
Directions:
Jot down your answers to the following questions on a scrap piece of paper or on your computer.

1. When does Kathy need your slides for the forum?
   
2. What criteria will the governor’s team use to select success stories to highlight in their state’s promotional video?
   A. Tax savings, efficiency, and economic impact
   B. Diversity, innovation, and economic impact
   C. Affordability, innovation, and economic impact
   D. Campus climate, multiculturalism, affordability, innovation, and economic impact

3. How many employees need their time approved and what is your deadline?
   
4. Who will be the guest speaker at the next forum?
   A. Tom Johnson
   B. Chris Thompson
   C. Thomas James
   D. Chris Thomas

5. When does Kathy need your forum agenda items?

6. Departments interested in being featured in the governor’s video should apply where?
   A. stgov-videocompetition.com
   B. stgovvideo.com
   C. stsexcellence.com
   D. stgovexcellence.com

7. Which of the following will NOT be a topic at the next HR forum?
   A. Training system upgrade
   B. Faculty and staff survey
   C. Benefits reminders
   D. Changes to payroll process

8. According to the meeting facilitator, which website recently gave their school some high rankings?
   A. Schools-excellence.com
   B. Forbes.com
   C. Schools.com
   D. Bestcolleges.com

9. What is the application deadline for the governor’s video project?
   
10. What cash award will departments receive for being selected for the governor’s video?
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Poll Question: What was your quiz score?

A. 80% or higher
B. 70%
C. 60%
D. 50%
E. 40% or lower
Debrief Questions

- What was your experience like as you tried to do these two activities simultaneously?
- Where did your mind focus the most?
- What were your challenges?
Stress, Decision Making & Creativity
Increased Stress

- Cortisol
- Adrenaline
- Overstimulation
- Mental fog
- Scrambled thinking
Increased Stress

Drs. Stephen Voida & Gloria Mark
University of California
Impulsive Decision Making
Diminished Creativity

Multitasking  Working Memory  Creativity
Diminished Creativity

Multitasking

Working Memory

Creativity
Can I listen to music at work? Aren’t women better at this?
Can I Listen to Music While I Work?

Music can help or hinder your work depending on the nature of the task you’re trying to perform and the nature of the music.

See page 6 for helpful chart.
If you’re doing a repetitive task requiring focus but not much cognitive processing, you can use upbeat music to boost your energy and focus.
If your task necessitates cognitive processing or creativity, use motivational music beforehand and during breaks.
With high-information-processing tasks, monotonous, zen-like background music can promote better performance on cognitive tasks.
For problem-solving or highly cognitive, complex tasks, avoid popular music with lyrics.
Are Women Better Multitaskers Than Men?

Women 'better at multitasking' than men, study finds

By James Morgan
Science reporter, BBC News

24 October 2013 | Science & Environment
From the Article:

Men and women were equal when tasks were tackled one at a time. But when the tasks were mixed up there was a clear difference.

Both women and men slowed down, and made more mistakes, as the switching became more rapid. But the men were significantly slower—taking 77% longer to respond, whereas women took 69% longer.
Both Performances are AWFUL

Men

Women
Both Performances are AWFUL

Men

Women

10  20  30  40  50  60  70  80  90  100
Both Performances are AWFUL

Men

Women

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Both Performances are AWFUL
What About After Multitasking?
Women
What About After Multitasking?
Multitasking Recap
Multitasking = switch tasking.

Only 2-3% of the population can multitask well.

Multitasking negatively affects cognition, accuracy, productivity, decision making, stress, and creativity.

Listening to music while working = multitasking.

Both men and women are awful multitaskers, but women tend to outperform men after multitasking.
Multitasking Challenge
Question & Answer
What are some of the aspects of your work that pull you into a multitasking workstyle?

What are some of your strategies for increasing focus and maximizing your productivity?

What implications does this multitasking research have for how we (as HR professionals) approach our work in areas such as:

- Onboarding
- Performance management
- Leadership development
Handout & More Strategies
Thank You!
Thank You!

The Mirage of Multitasking: Find Your Focus, Flow and Finish Line

March 21, 2019