

Simplification Tool

Killing Complexity



Simplification Process:

- 1 - Awareness
- 2 - Identification
- 3 - Prioritization
- 4 - Execution
- 5 - Habit Formation

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WHY THIS TOOL?

Do you spend your time working on high- or low-value tasks? Are those tasks simple or complex? Whether you're designing an IT system or compiling status reports, this tool will help you identify how you spend your time, determine the value and complexity of those tasks, and how to simplify or eliminate low-value work.

HOW IT WORKS

SUGGESTED AUDIENCE: • Relevant for all levels of staff

SET-UP:

- This tool can be done individually or as a group
- If done as a group:
 - Include as many team members as possible from your business unit for a variety of perspectives
 - One week before meeting, send participants the Task Worksheet for identification of typical workday tasks
 - Hold your session in a room with whiteboards or enough wall space to accommodate 2 flip charts

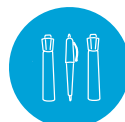
RECOMMENDED TIMING:

Step 1. List your current tasks:	10 mins.
Step 2. Assign a time to each task:	5 mins.
Step 3. Assign value to each task:	5 mins.
Step 4. Define task problems:	15 mins.
Step 5. Plot tasks on matrix + discuss:	5 - 30 mins.
Step 6. Generate solutions + discuss:	15 - 30 mins.
	55 - 95 mins.

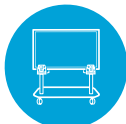
SUGGESTED MATERIALS:



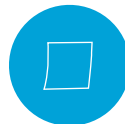
Worksheets
(emailed to each participant, plus hard-copy extras)



Colored whiteboard markers and pens (separating ideas by color will help organize your thoughts)



Whiteboard or flipcharts
(pre-draw the Complexity Scale and Value Matrix)



Plenty of sticky notes if conducting exercise as a group (10 notes per participant, plus a few extra)



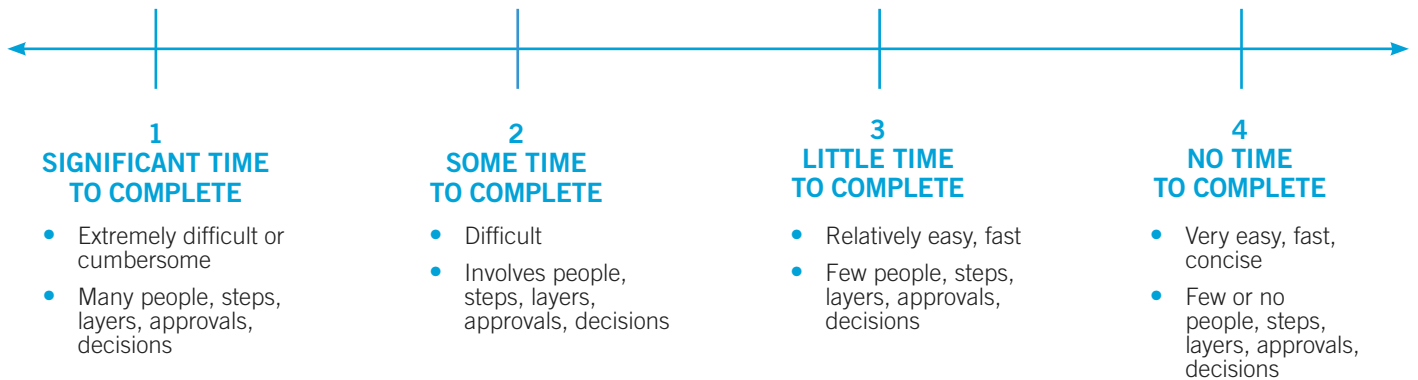
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STEP 2: ASSIGN A TIME TO EACH TASK

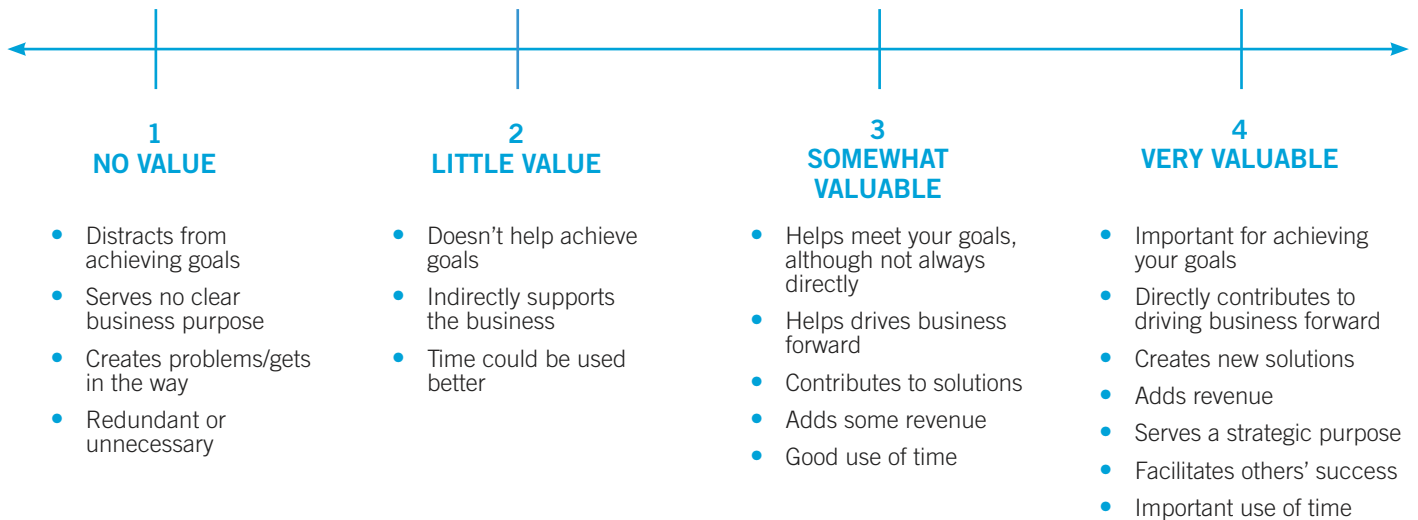
Review the descriptions below and in Column #2 of the Task Worksheet, place the number that best describes the amount of time you typically spend on each task.

TIP FOR SUCCESS: If timing for the task varies, choose a number that represents the average time you spend (i.e., are most weekly status meetings a 2?).



STEP 3: ASSIGN VALUE TO EACH TASK

Review the descriptions below and in Column #3 of the Task Worksheet, choose a number that best describes the approximate value each task provides for the business.



STEP 4: DEFINE TASK PROBLEMS

Refer back to your Task Worksheet. Next to each of your tasks in Column #4, identify which aspects of each task waste time and/or make the task less valuable.

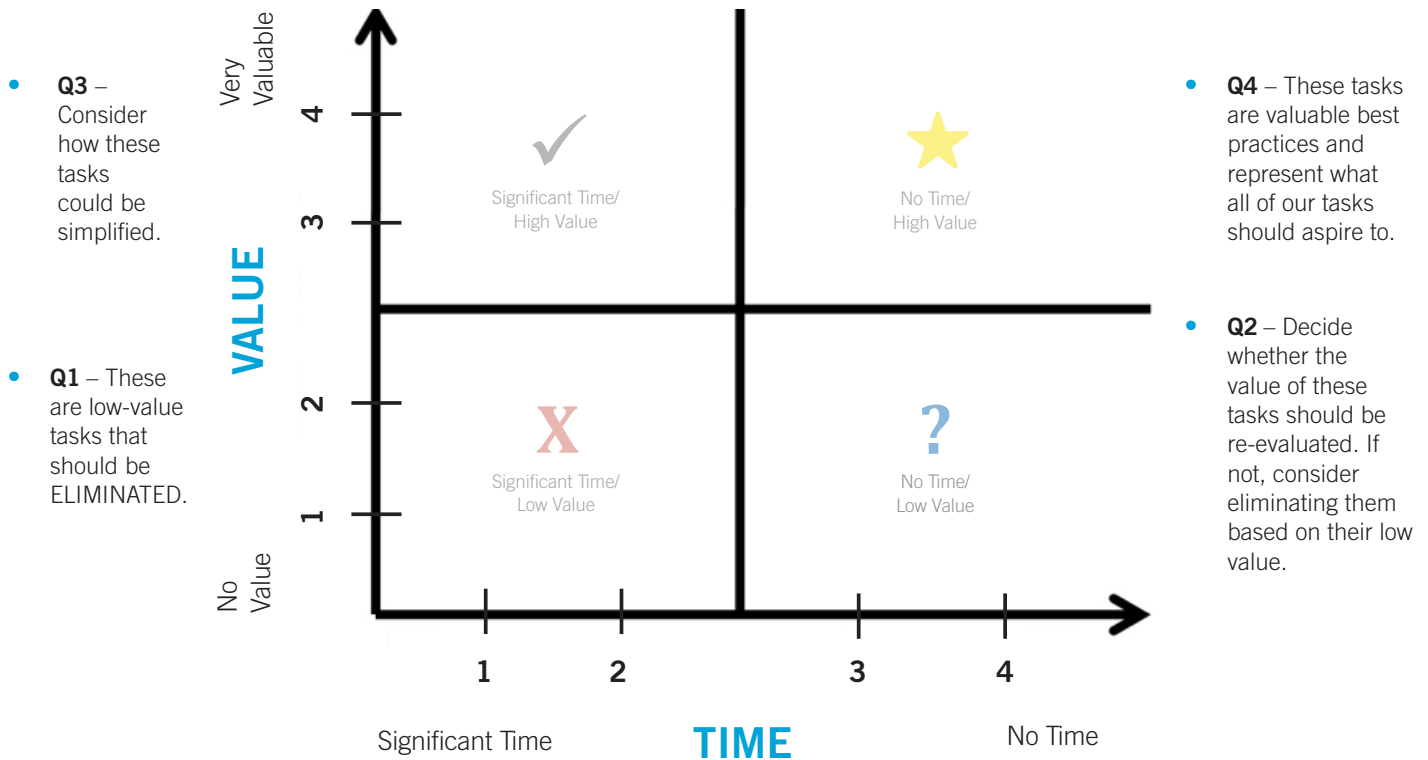


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STEP 5: PLOT TASKS ON MATRIX + DISCUSS

Using your scores from the Task Worksheet, plot your tasks on the Time vs. Value Matrix below. Each task must be placed in a specific quadrant. If conducting this exercise as a group, re-create the matrix on a flip chart or whiteboard and instruct participants to write tasks on sticky notes and plot them on a shared matrix.



Discuss:

- What kinds of tasks are represented in each quadrant (i.e. reporting, presentations, etc.)? Are there common themes?
- Is the majority of your/our time being spent time on tasks that are valuable? If not, why?
- If doing this exercise as a group, ask participants if any identical tasks received varying levels of time or value from different team members? If so, this may indicate varying experience levels, and present an opportunity for training or consolidation of the task to fewer people.
- ★ Look at the top right quadrant: can these high-value tasks be improved upon? If so, outline your approach to simplifying these tasks in STEP 6.
- X Look at the lower left quadrant: what's stopping you from eliminating these tasks from your life? Outline your approach to simplifying these tasks in STEP 6
- ? Look at the bottom right: what can you modify to make these tasks more valuable? Outline your approach to simplifying these tasks in STEP 6.
- ✓ Look at the top left quadrant: can you streamline or improve these tasks to lessen their complexity and time investment? Outline your approach to simplifying these tasks in STEP 6.



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STEP 6: GENERATE SOLUTIONS + DISCUSS

Based on your answers to the discussion questions in STEP 5, use the table below to simplify your tasks. Tasks that appear in Q1-Q3 of the matrix should be priority.

STEP 6 Simplify It		
Task	Approach	Next Steps + Solutions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate <input type="checkbox"/> Outsource <input type="checkbox"/> Streamline	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate <input type="checkbox"/> Outsource <input type="checkbox"/> Streamline	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate <input type="checkbox"/> Outsource <input type="checkbox"/> Streamline	
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate <input type="checkbox"/> Outsource <input type="checkbox"/> Streamline	

If conducting this exercise as a group, discuss:

- What was the most common approach to our solutions: eliminate, outsource, or streamline? Why do we think that is?
- Which solutions can we act on immediately?
- Which solutions involve other people/approvals to act upon?
- Which solutions should we pilot to see if they work?
- Which solutions should we prioritize to move forward on?

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