



# Focus in the Age of Distraction

Jane Piper  
Organisational Psychologist

An orange alarm clock is positioned behind a chain-link fence. The clock's face is white with black numbers and blue hands. The fence is made of silver metal. Behind the fence, there is a pile of crumpled white paper. The background is a solid grey color.

Time Management is Dead  
Now it's Attention Management



# Attention Economy

- ▶ Information Overload
- ▶ Digital Distraction
- ▶ 24/7 always-on culture



# Life in the Fast Lane

Are you

1. Reading your first email before you get out of bed?
2. Reading your last email before you go to sleep?
3. Planning the day when in the shower, brushing teeth?
4. Checking emails on the commute?
5. Eating lunch at the desk while working?
6. Jump from queue to queue to get into fastest queue?
7. Repeatedly pushing the elevator button?
8. Interrupting people so they get to the point sooner?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# TIP 1: Single-task don't Multi-task



Multi-tasking is really shifting your attention rapidly between tasks, so not concentrating on any of your tasks

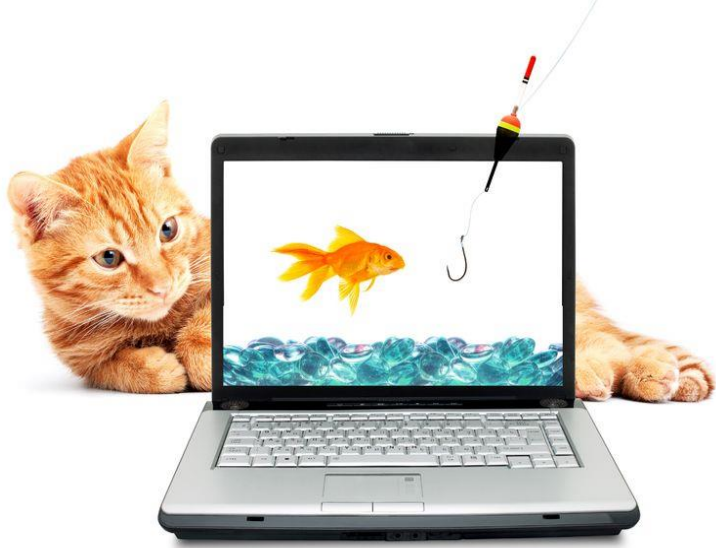
# TIP 2: Deal to Digital Distraction



Interruptions: lose time  
refocusing on your task



# TIP 3: Train your Attention Span



Attention span is 20 - 50 minutes

- ▶ Turn your phone into airplane mode
- ▶ Turn off email reminders, pop-ups
- ▶ Try headphones especially open plan office
- ▶ Set a timer for between 20 -50 minutes
- ▶ Concentrate on the task only
- ▶ Feel buzz of progress or reward yourself

# TIP 4: Create Boundaries

- ▶ Physical Boundaries
  - ▶ Space
  - ▶ Two Phones
- ▶ Time Boundaries
  - ▶ Block of Time
  - ▶ Before sleep
- ▶ Psychological
  - ▶ Buffer Zone
  - ▶ Reflect don't vent





# TIP 5: Avoid Organisation Time Wasters

- ▶ Email
  - ▶ cc and reply all
  - ▶ CYOA
- ▶ Ineffective meetings
- ▶ Global Over-collaboration



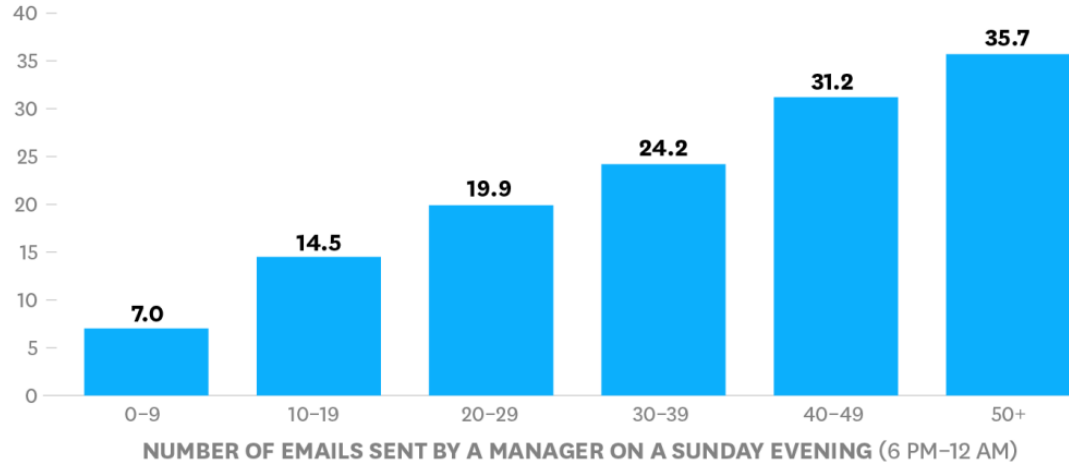
# TIP 6: Leaders: Rules vs Role Models

- ▶ Email
- ▶ Multitasking in meetings
- ▶ Competitive Overtime

## The Impact of Managers Sending Emails on Sunday Evenings

The more emails a manager sends, the more time their direct reports will spend on email.

NUMBER OF MINUTES DIRECT REPORTS SPEND ON EMAIL ON SUNDAY (6 PM–12 AM)



SOURCE MICROSOFT WORKPLACE ANALYTICS

© HBR.ORG



# Take Control



# Thank you

Jane Piper

Organisational Psychologist

Pipsy GmbH

For more info see [www.pipsy.ch](http://www.pipsy.ch)

**SIGN UP FOR PIPSY TIPS:**

A NEWSLETTER WITH REGULAR TIPS AND OTHER COOL FREE STUFF

[WWW.PIPSY.CH/TIPS.HTML](http://WWW.PIPSY.CH/TIPS.HTML)