

RESOURCE CENTRE

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NICKY SPENCER ON 3D VISION



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Overwhelmed by your workload? Need to increase capacity at work, career potential, confidence?

You've checked your job description and you have the right credentials for the job. The priorities for your role and the department are as clear as they can be. You're good at managing your time, prioritising the urgent.

The sheer number of tasks coming your way is the problem. Three workload dimensions – time, resource and quality, offer a framework for checking what you can do to increase capacity.

Adjust one or more of the three dimensions and your capacity either increases or decreases.

The first dimension, time, is familiar. Exploit all options for extending the delivery schedule. Time-frames may well have been set for all or parts of our tasks, but double check whether each one is really that time-critical. Some are artificially set. When possible, renegotiate the deadlines that have been requested.

Check also the deadlines that you've imposed yourself. Be sure whether they can be slipped. Answer honestly: what would happen if we were to delay the task further?

Where safe, try planned delay. You'll be surprised at the chance it gives for others (and other tasks) to inform, blend with or improve the quality of the final outcome.

Whether or not the timescale is moveable, increase the resources available to you – and your capacity and reputation for delivery increases too. The secret here is to use all the resources to the full and get more if you can.

Whatever they may be – equipment and facilities, technology and software, workspace and the like – and however limited, optimise their

use and extend their number and range wherever you can.

Pay attention to your people-power too. Consider the extent to which parts of the task would fit better with another's role – but no buck-passing. Delegate, engage or include someone else in lending a hand or providing advice.

Where a task hides a welcome development opportunity for a colleague, invite them in. Work a "quid pro quo": add a twist to the delivery of one of your tasks to enable a colleague to succeed – and agree a reciprocal action.

Delegate, engage or include someone else in lending a hand or giving advice

The third dimension is quality. Reduce the size or scale, features or facets, or significance or prominence of the outcome.

It's this dimension with which perfectionists struggle: paying due attention to risk, allowing non-essential tasks to slip away, losing superfluous detail and letting go of over-complication.

The art is to make – or draw in – sound judgement on what can and cannot be done to reduce quality while still securing the outcomes required and minimising risk to person, place and thing.

Without deliberate choices around these three dimensions, quality will be reduced by default. Risks will range from mistakes and oversights to serious casualties and "untoward incidents".

The three dimensions provide secrets to manage what we have to do now – and before accepting any new task or project.

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