

Solutions for Success

Workplace Productivity Specialists



A Strategy for Implementing the PEAK ENERGY TIME

Most executives, managers, supervisors and admin staff do not have time to think or plan. They are pressured by deadlines, paperwork, interruptions and distractions. A designated '**Peak Time**' can provide the much needed time for thinking, planning or working on top priority projects requiring concentration and freedom from interruptions.

Most people work at their highest level of performance or peak for around 1 to 2 hours of each day. Research indicates that 2-3 times as much work can be done at this '**Peak Time**' than at other times of the day, especially if it is uninterrupted. The quality of decisions made and tasks accomplished in this time is also superior.

The concept of '**Peak Time**' is simple. It calls for identifying a time segment, ranging from one to two hours daily, during which only emergency interruptions are permitted. '**Peak Time**' can be implemented department or organisation-wide and should be scheduled at the time deemed most appropriate for the majority of persons participating.

Firstly, here is a quick definition of terms;

- '**Peak Time**' is the time in the day when we have more physical energy and are more mentally alert than other times and should be used to perform highest priority tasks (ie: reconciliations, accounting, creative thinking, planning, client meetings, etc).
- '**Down Time**' is obviously the times outside of your peak performance times (usually mid afternoon) which can be used to perform less essential, more routine or mundane tasks (ie: e-mails, mail, filing, supplier meetings etc).
- **SRT** stands for **Strategic Reserve Time**. This is a time set aside specifically for returning client telephone calls, e-mails and generally get back to people who would otherwise have 'interrupted' you during your **Peak Time**. It is essential to schedule at least one **SRT** per day, immediately following your uninterrupted **Peak Time**.
- A '**To Be Discussed**' log should be used to record issues and questions that come to mind during **Peak Time**, so that there is no need to interrupt others. These can accumulate and a number of issues then be discussed in a single block of time with each colleague or client during your **SRT**. It is especially important to get others who would normally interrupt you using some sort of a log. See attached sample of a '**To Be Discussed**' log.

The following page contains some thoughts on implementing the **Peak Energy Time** strategy to increase your individual productivity and overall effectiveness while also minimising disruptions and interruptions during this vital period.

Getting Into Action:

I recommend you expose the entire team this '**Peak Time**' strategy and then ask them to evaluate the results. Everyone, with minimal exceptions, is included. Everyone is expected to remain at their desk for a period of uninterrupted concentration. Authorised exceptions to uninterrupted '**Peak Time**' must be kept to a minimum. I suggest everyone highlight this **Peak Time** on the Peak or Prime Time clock provided and post it somewhere in their workspace as a reminder and easy reference.

Clear guidelines as to the most profitable use of the '**Peak Time**' should be discussed to avoid questions about "what am I supposed to do in my **Peak Time**". Thinking, planning and getting organised are the most common uses made of this undisturbed time, so familiarity with goal-setting, planning, and project progress monitoring are essential to effective utilisation of '**Peak Time**'.

During the '**Peak Time**', staff will be able to work undisrupted whilst other staff are rostered to answer the phones. Telephone messages are taken with callbacks scheduled. Unexpected visitors are asked if an appointment can be arranged. No meetings are scheduled during this period. During times when a number of staff are out of the office, remaining staff should use their initiative and discuss the schedule amongst those remaining to ensure these responsibilities are shared.

A 'Strategic Reserve Time' (**SRT**) should be scheduled immediately after '**Peak Time**' to return calls and action e-mail or instant messages received during '**Peak Time**'. This **SRT** is also the time to approach other staff members with a list of issues that have been captured on a '**To Be Discussed**' log.

Lesser priority or routine tasks requiring only low levels of alertness and energy should be scheduled or actioned only during '**Down Time**' so that highest priority time is reserved for highest priority tasks.

Keep it Simple:

Achieving maximum effectiveness of the new strategy will require everyone's co-operation and patience during the implementation period. It is recommended that you aim at just a one hour period of **Peak Time** during the trial implementation period. Once success has been achieved, this period can be extended to 90 minutes or perhaps even 2 hours.

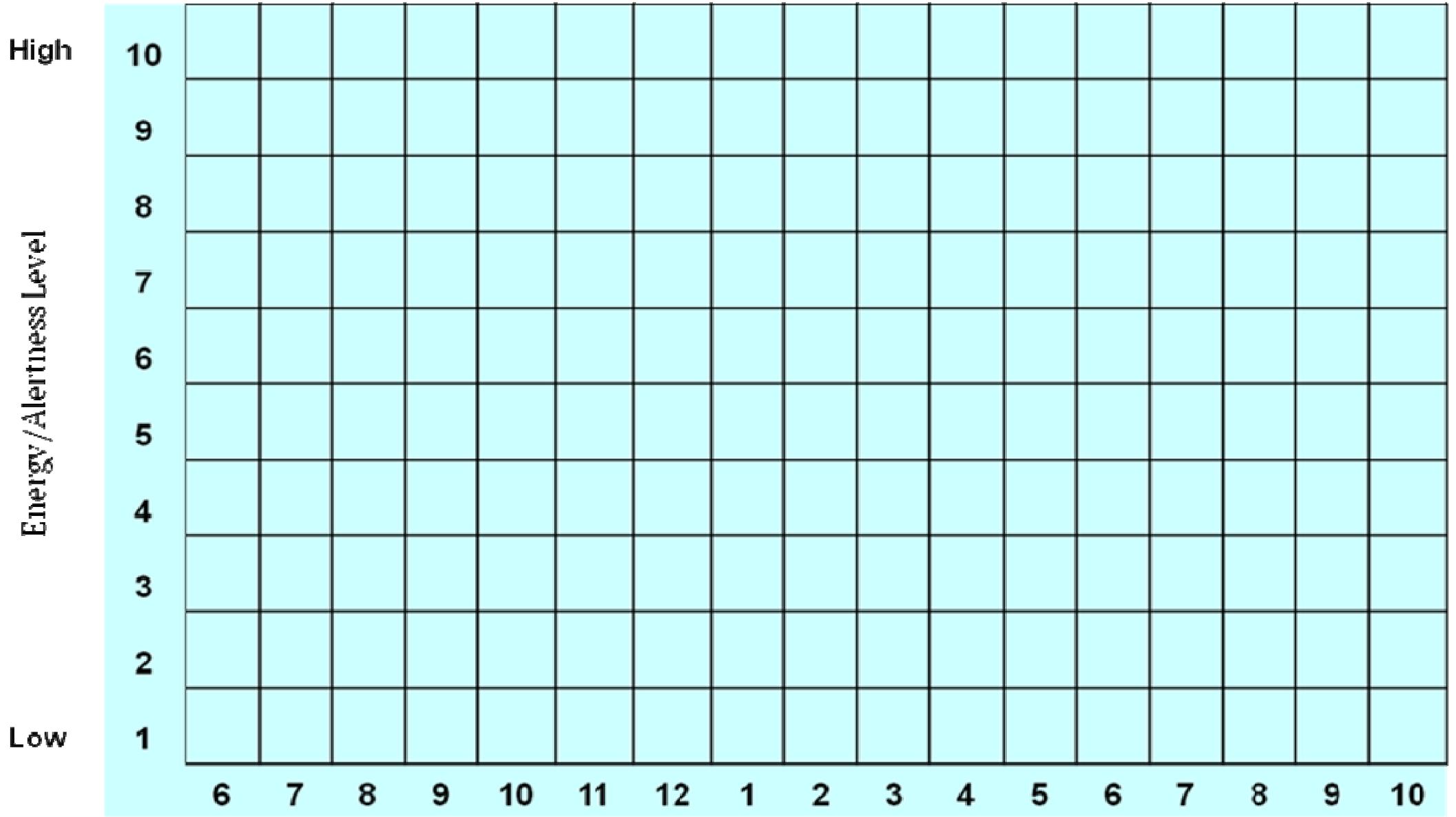
Periodic reinforcement and monitoring of results is essential. The most effective reinforcement occurs in regular staff meetings when the manager or supervisor asks for a "progress report" on time management with particular emphasis on results achieved during '**Peak Time**'. Problems can then be dealt with as they arise and plans made for further enhancing individual effectiveness through improved time management.

Expect some resistance to the changes that this strategy will involve. However, a simple explanation of the purpose and benefits will almost certainly win instant understanding and acceptance. After all, if it gains up to two productive hours a day, it's well worth it!

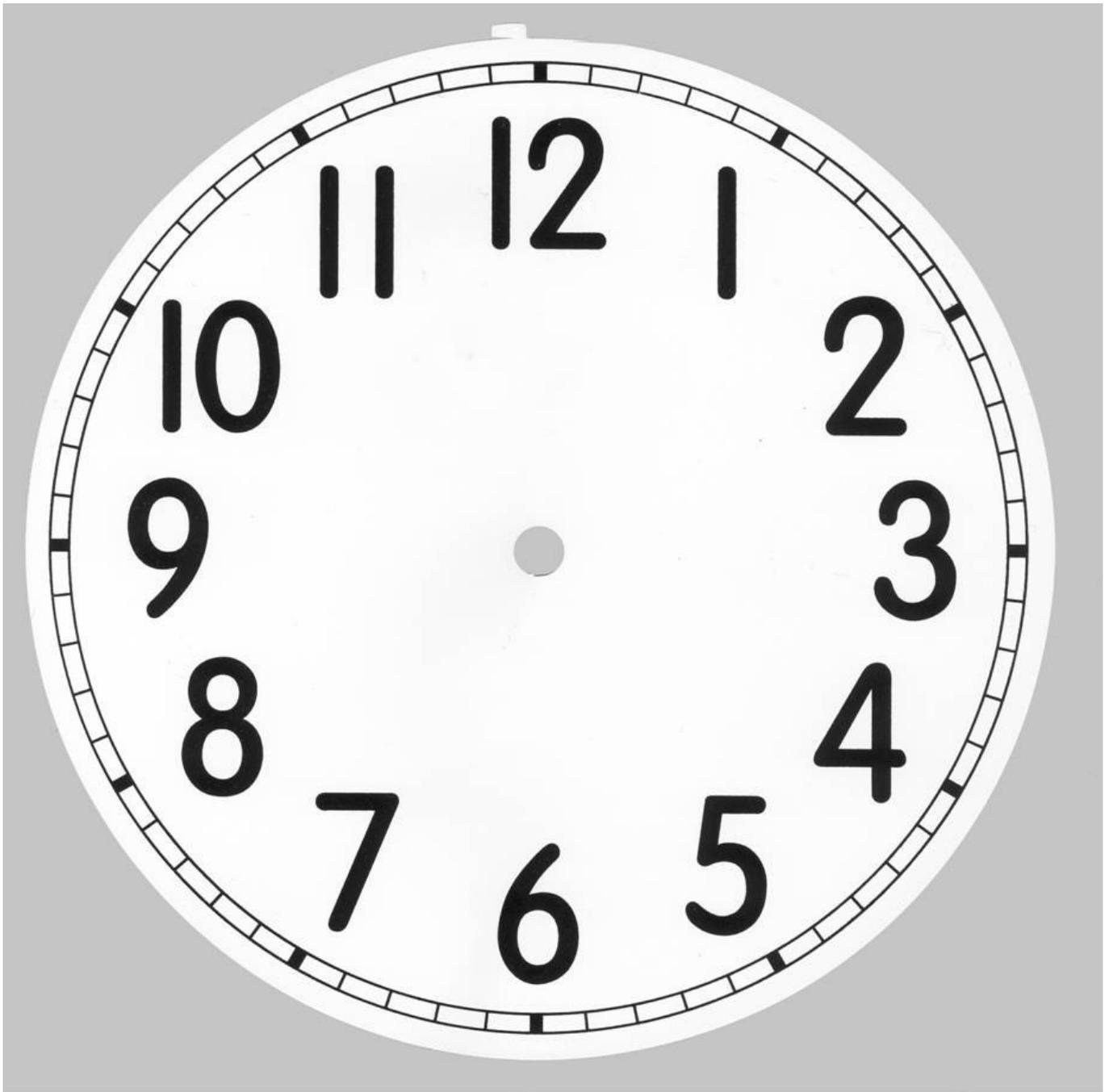
Please remember that nothing is set in stone and therefore if the system doesn't work it can always be modified and 'fine-tuned' so that it does work effectively. On this note, I suggest a 3 week trial implementation of '**Peak Time**', '**Down Time**' and **SRT** periods commencing on ___/___/___ (your choice of date).

I hope that you and your team are excited about the promise of reaching your **PEAK** performance level.

Peak Energy Time Chart



My Peak Time is . . .



Print this page and then use a colour pen or highlighter to identify a 'wedge' representing the hour on this clock when you are at your peak level of energy and alertness each day. You can then place it in a prominent location in your workspace as a reminder to you (and others) on when you should be focused on your highest priority tasks for the day. Of course, this time will be even more effective if you can have it uninterrupted.