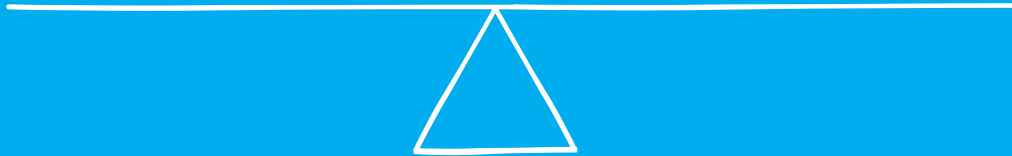




A Guidebook for Companies Aiming to Create
a Healthy Digital Working Environment

WORKFULNESS



BY TELENOR SWEDEN BUSINESS & KATARINA GOSPIC

A stylized, hand-drawn 'HI!' in blue. The 'H' is formed by a horizontal line connecting two vertical lines. The 'I' is a single vertical line. The exclamation point consists of a vertical line with a small dot below it.

Do you get frustrated when your colleagues check their mobile phones instead of listening to your important presentation?

Do you yourself get stuck on social media and text conversations when you should really be doing something else?

Then you're in the right place.

THE ABILITY TO BE CONSTANTLY CONNECTED AND REACHABLE - AT ALL TIMES AND IN ALL PLACES AND SITUATIONS - HASN'T ONLY CHANGED OUR LIVES. IT HAS ALSO LED TO COMPLETELY NEW HABITS AND BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS IN OUR WORKPLACES, AND THESE CAN CAUSE STRESS AND INEFFICIENCY.

WE SIT CHECKING OUR PHONES when we really ought to be listening to our colleague's important presentation. We check news sites and e-mail inboxes every few minutes, when we should really be focusing on more important work tasks.

SO WHY IS IT SO HARD TO RESIST THE TEMPTATION? Why is it so hard to take technology in just the right doses?

WE CAN FIND THE ANSWERS IN THE BRAIN. We're wired up for immediate reward, instant gratification, and we get this when we check our phones up to 150 times a day.

MANY COMPANIES TODAY HAVE NO PROCEDURES OR POLICIES in place for information management. Our drive always to be available is greater than our desire to turn the technology off for a while and focus.

AS AN OPERATOR, WE ARE PART OF THE DIGITALISATION PROCESS, and as such we also have a responsibility to ensure that businesses and individuals have a healthy digital working environment. Moreover, we have a responsibility to talk about the consequences of being constantly 'switched on', and how we can use technology smartly.

TOGETHER WITH BRAIN RESEARCHER KATARINA GOSPIC, we have therefore developed a programme to help **decision-makers** and employees to focus, perform and feel well in a constantly connected working environment.

**WE CALL IT
WORKFULNESS.**

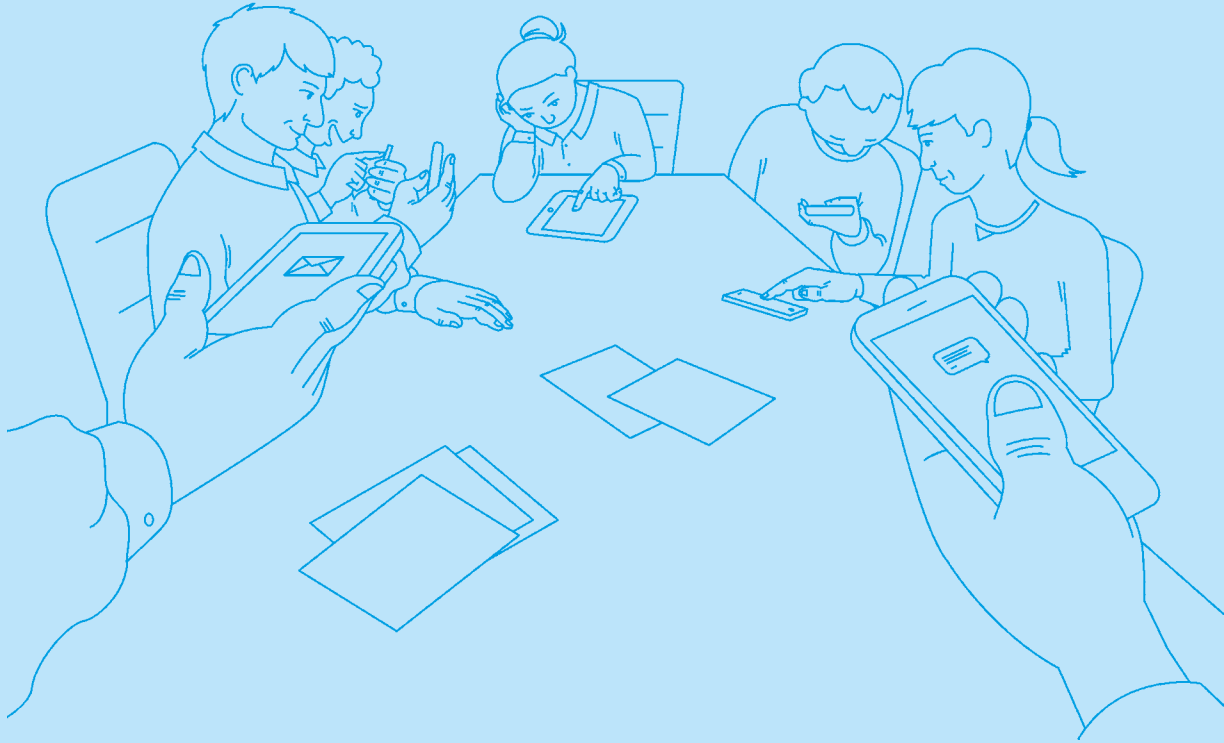
**COMPANIES CAN USE AND BE
INSPIRED BY THE PROGRAMME
TO CREATE A HEALTHY
DIGITAL WORKING
ENVIRONMENT.**

READ ON TO FIND OUT MORE!



CHAPTER 1

MEETINGS



FOR MANY OF US, perhaps even the vast majority, it is only natural to take our mobile phones into work meetings. It feels good and reassuring to know we can be reached, to be able to keep an eye on our e-mails and text messages, news and status updates – basically, to stay in touch with the world outside of the meeting room. And of course it's handy that we can (discreetly) search for important information online while sitting among colleagues.

HOWEVER, THIS NEW, TECHNOLOGY-INTENSIVE MEETING CULTURE causes problems in our brains. Our smart assistants and constant companions – our mobile phones – often take our attention away from what's going on in the room. Like a bowl of tasty treats they chip away at our attention, and in certain circumstances the temptation to pick up our mobilephone may be completely irresistible. Suddenly there we are, totally absorbed in messages and information that have nothing whatsoever to do with the job at hand. It quite simply becomes harder for us to focus and perform, which in turn leads to unnecessarily long, inefficient meetings with a higher risk of poor decision-making.

BUT WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES US BEHAVE THIS WAY? Why is it so difficult to manage technical gadgets that are actually

designed to make our lives easier, not harder? What is it that drives us to check our phone rather than listen to our colleague giving an important presentation?

THE ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN THE BRAIN! There is a constant battle between the most primitive part of our brain, the reptile brain and the most intelligent part, the frontal lobe, which is unique to us humans and helps us to plan and think strategically. All the decisions we make differ depending on which of these opposing forces wins. Individuals and businesses alike have a lot to gain by understanding what influences whether the one force wins or the other.

IN THE REPTILE BRAIN THERE IS A STRUCTURE CALLED THE AMYGDALA, and in times of stress it leads us into either fight or flight. So when we're facing a strenuous work task, the amygdala might for instance tell us "I'm not brave enough" or "This is far too uncertain/unfamiliar for me".

ANOTHER PRIMITIVE STRUCTURE in the brain is the striatum, which is a key player in our reward system. The striatum encourages us always to choose the most immediate reward. So when we face the decision either to help our colleagues solve a tricky problem or reply to a text message, the striatum will urge us to choose the text message. Picking up our phone

and sending that message gives us instant gratification. This also gives our brain a thorough soaking in the reward substance dopamine, the very same substance that's released when we eat a good meal or have sex.

SO HOW ABOUT THE COLLEAGUE GIVING THE PRESENTATION? What happens in her? The one standing there desperately trying to hold our attention while we reply to text messages, check Instagram, or even leave the room because we just 'have to' take this call? **WELL, THE FACT IS, IT HURTS.** The reaction in our brains when we're ignored in this way, a phenomenon also known as social exclusion, is similar to what happens when we experience physical pain. Social exclusion also affects our mood negatively and increases the stress levels in our body.

COMPANIES THAT WANT TO CREATE A POSITIVE MEETING CULTURE where people can focus, perform and make sound decisions need to formulate rules and policies for how technology is used. For individuals, it might be a good idea to think about your own and other people's 'mobile behaviour', and what it does to you, and to them. The best thing would be not to bring our mobiles (or ideally any other electronic devices) into the meeting room in the first place. This would help the frontal lobe **WIN THE BATTLE WITH THE REPTILE BRAIN.**

CHAPTER 1 SUMMARY>>

Checking our mobiles during a meeting floods our brains with the reward substance dopamine, which makes the action hard to resist. In competition with more challenging tasks, we choose the option that brings the most immediate reward.

Taking your phone into a meeting is therefore a bit like sitting next to a bowl of sweets when you're peckish for something sweet: sooner or later, you're bound to give in to temptation.

For the person trying to hold the meeting's attention but failing (because the audience would rather be checking their mobile phones), the reaction in the brain is similar to what happens when experiencing physical pain. This type of 'social exclusion' also affects the mood negatively and raises stress levels in the body.

Companies that want to create a positive meeting culture where people can focus, perform and make sound decisions need to formulate policies and guidelines for how technology is used.

The best thing is not to bring mobiles or any other electronic devices into the meeting room in the first place.

CHAPTER 2

AVAILABILITY

-25 MIN



WORKING in a perpetually connected environment with limitless opportunities for communication can be both a wonderful and a difficult thing. What a luxury to be able to work flexibly and be reachable round the clock – yet how very stressful as well. How convenient to just fire off an e-mail or text to a colleague and get a response immediately – and how annoyed we get ourselves when we’re interrupted in the middle of something important

MANY OF US FIND IT HARD TO STRIKE THE RIGHT BALANCE between technology’s advantages and its drawbacks. How can we, as individuals and businesses, meet the increasing requirement to always be available, while also doing our best to focus and be efficient? How can we work smarter?

THE FACT IS THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE CONSTANTLY ON STANDBY and reply as soon as their phone beeps are not doing their brain any favours. Every time we’re interrupted by something unrelated to the work task at hand, **IT TAKES ABOUT 25 MINUTES TO REGAIN FULL CONCENTRATION**. Always being ‘switched on’ and keeping an eye on text conversations, incoming e-mails and the latest YouTube clip makes us inefficient, which in turn can create unnecessary stress. The only thing that really benefits from this kind of behaviour is the striatum,

the primitive structure in our brains that is constantly encouraging us to look for instant gratification, thereby preventing us from achieving more long-term goals. The quest for instant gratification is also the reason why we feel a need to keep an eye on our information flows. However, the satisfaction we feel after achieving a long-term goal, having dealt with the harder challenge, is actually greater.

FURTHERMORE, CONSTANTLY KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD VIA YOUR MOBILE is very tiring on the brain, which needs to rest if it is to work optimally. When we turn off our information a while and focus our attention on some completely different kind of activity, such as taking a quiet walk or spending time with someone we like, our brain recovers and gathers new strength ahead of the next day’s challenges. And although there are all kinds of technical solutions that make it possible for us to disconnect for a while, such as autoreply, out-of-office messages on mobile switchboards and other smart services, we are not always inclined to use them. The quest for gratification and immediate reward is more of a motivator for us.

ANYONE WHO WANTS TO BE AVAILABLE BUT ALSO WORK EFFICIENTLY can draw up some relatively simple rules and procedures for themselves. For example, you could introduce set e-mail and

phone times as far as is possible for you. How many incoming calls or e-mails over the course of a day are actually urgent? Probably not that many. It may be enough to **CHECK YOUR E-MAIL AT 8 AM, 1 PM AND 4.30 PM.**

SIMILARLY, you could try to plan the day's phone calls and fit as many as possible into the same time span. Decision-makers can encourage or even prescribe this kind of procedure for other employees.

BY APPLYING 'PLANNED AVAILABILITY' to the greatest extent possible, individuals and businesses can free up precious time and energy that can be used to focus on long-term goals.

CHAPTER 2 SUMMARY>>

Every time we're interrupted in a work task, it can take up to 25 minutes to regain full concentration.

Being on constant standby for incoming e-mails, texts and phone calls makes us inefficient and creates stress.

Being always 'switched on' is also very tiring on the brain, which needs rest to work optimally.

Introducing simple rules and procedures, such as set e-mail and phone times, is a good way of working efficiently while also being available.

By applying 'planned availability' to the greatest extent possible, individuals and businesses can free up precious time and energy that can be used to focus on long-term goals instead.

CHAPTER 3

WORKING ENVIRONMENT



-66%

CONTRASTS

The human brain always likes to distinguish contrasts, whether in sounds, visual impressions, tastes or smells. We immediately register a red sweater in a room full of people dressed in black, and we notice directly when someone has a different accent: it's part of our makeup. In the same way, we react to different kinds of sound signals in an office environment. Ringtones, incoming text sounds and meeting reminders are impossible to shield ourselves from, because **WE CAN'T TURN OFF OUR EARS**. The sounds we find hardest to deal with are those to which we can't see a natural end; for instance when someone is talking loudly on their phone right next to us, and we don't know when the call will end.

BUT THESE SOUNDS ARE NOT ONLY IRRITATING and stressful, they also prevent us from being efficient and performing optimally. Our brains are forced to put energy into shutting out distractions, and are unable to work at full capacity. Studies show that disturbing sounds in an open-plan office environment **CAN REDUCE PERFORMANCE BY UP TO 66%**.

SO IN OPEN-PLAN OFFICES, there is every reason to minimise disturbing sounds. What would it be like, for example, to have a rule that all mobile phones should be on silent as standard? Could we introduce a practice whereby all mobile phone calls

had to be taken in a separate room? Or that anyone making or taking a call at least had to go some-where else? **WORKING REMOTELY** might also be a good option for people who need a lot of peace and quiet. Having said that, no one should have to 'flee' their normal working environment.

CHAPTER 3 SUMMARY >>

The human brain always likes to distinguish contrasts, whether in sounds, visual impressions, tastes or smells. So we immediately register deviating sounds like incoming text beeps or ringtones.

The sounds we find hardest to deal with are those we can't see a natural end to.

Studies show that disturbing sounds in an office environment can reduce performance by up to 66%.

In open-plan offices, it is important to minimise disturbing sounds and other distractors.

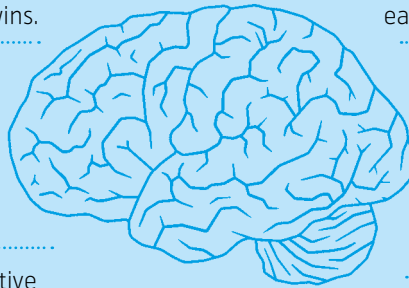
Having phones on silent as standard and separate rooms for mobile phone calls are simple ways of raising both well-being and efficiency.

FACTS ABOUT THE BRAIN»»

THERE IS A CONSTANT BATTLE between the reptile brain, the most primitive part, and the frontal lobe, the most intelligent part. Our decisions differ depending on which of these opposing forces wins.

THE AMYGDALA is the primitive structure in the brain that leads us into either fight or flight in times of perceived stress.

THE STRIATUM is the primitive structure in the brain that will always urge us to choose the most immediate reward in any situation.



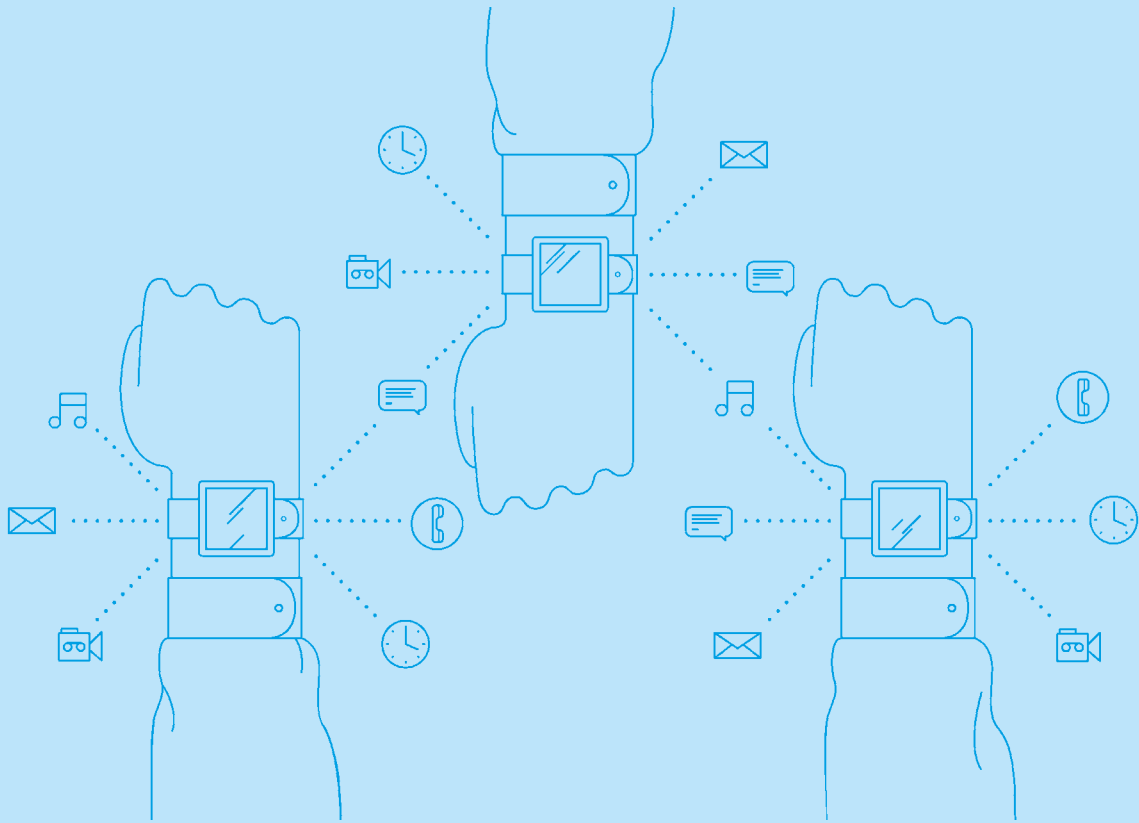
WHEN WE TAKE ACTIONS that give us immediate reward, such as checking our phone, the brain is flooded with the reward substance dopamine. This is the very same substance that's released when we eat a good meal or have sex.

THE HUMAN BRAIN ALWAYS likes to distinguish contrasts. In working environments where there are many disturbing sounds, our brains are forced to put a lot of energy into shutting out distractions and are therefore unable to work at full capacity.

THE REACTION in the brain in social exclusion – i.e. being ignored by other people – is much the same as when we experience physical pain.

CHAPTER 4

SMART USE OF
TECHNOLOGY



AS WE HAVE already seen: in a perpetually connected working environment, it can be hard to keep our concentration levels at their peak. When information is flooding in from every direction, it is easy to get a feeling of doing a hundred things at once, and still getting nothing done.

Meanwhile, the technical conditions for working smartly and focusing have **NEVER BEEN BETTER**.

MOBILE SWITCHBOARD FUNCTIONS are an easy way of regulating absence. Mobile apps can help us manage which calls should be allowed, which should be referred to reception, and which should be forwarded to a specific colleague. When we add a new meeting to our calendar, even as we book it in we can decide whether or not we want to be reachable during that meeting. In recent years, technical functions (Unified Communications) have also come along which provide availability information regardless of geographical location. We can use these functions to keep a precise eye on which colleagues are logged in, at what times they're available and how they would prefer to be contacted.

THANKS TO DIFFERENT KINDS OF CLOUD SERVICES, it is also possible

to work far removed from the office environment, and to access documents wherever we are – at work, at home or on the other side of the world.

HOWEVER, WE KNOW THAT MANY COMPANIES DO NOT MAKE FULL USE OF THIS TECHNOLOGY. Our drive always to be available – anytime, anywhere and in any situation – is often greater than our desire to turn our notifications off for a while and focus on the task at hand. It is likely that less than half of us, managers and decision-makers included, use the services the company has invested in to help us work more smartly and efficiently. There is also an evident tendency that businesses and individuals find it increasingly hard to 'switch off' as our lives become more and more connected. It has become standard to carry our technology with us wherever we go, and to be on constant standby for incoming traffic.

SO WHAT HAPPENS when more and more of us carry this technology on our bodies? Is the wearables trend a threat to our working atmosphere and ability to concentrate? Not really if we're talking about gadgets that discreetly register information about us, like our pulse or the number of steps we've taken. But we need to think carefully when it comes to smartwatches that feed us all kinds of information.

The early adopters who have already tried living and working with smartwatches have an idea of the challenges that lie ahead. People checking their watches every few minutes in a meeting can be just as annoying and distracting as a phone suddenly ringing. It creates stress and does nothing to foster a good atmosphere. Therefore, the smartwatches and all other new technology **REQUIRE A LOT OF DISCIPLINE** if we are to be present in the moment. Quite simply, we must change our habits and behaviours if we are to succeed.

AS AN OPERATOR and expert in communication solutions, we must be better at educating our customers about the advantages of using technology in an efficient, sustainable way. For example, the small time-investment needed to learn how to use a mobile switchboard service produces major gains in the long run, in the form of higher concentration levels and less stress among the workforce. Combined with clear guidelines and policies for the use of technology, this could entail serious improvements in productivity and efficiency – and indeed people’s health.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT EMPLOYERS must be more aware of the consequences of the perpetually connected working life, and what happens in the brain if we are constantly ‘switched on’.

THE HONEYMOON IS OVER.
IT’S TIME TO LAY THE BEST
POSSIBLE FOUNDATION FOR
EMPLOYEES TO FOCUS,
PERFORM AND FEEL WELL IN
A PERPETUALLY CONNECTED
WORKING ENVIRONMENT
– WHAT WE CALL WORKFULNESS. >

CHAPTER 5

WORKFULNESS

Creating a healthy digital working environment.

THE KEY TO WORKFULNESS IS MANAGERS AND
EMPLOYEES WORKING TOGETHER TO CHANGE
HABITS AND BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS WHEN IT
COMES TO TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT.

By following and being inspired by the programme on the following pages,
companies can create a healthy digital working environment.



§ TOOLS FOR MANAGERS/
§ DECISION-MAKERS

§1 SPREAD KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE RULES AND POLICIES FOR THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY.

Everyone needs to understand their own behaviour, and which functions in the brain control us. Only then will the company's employees be receptive to change and open to new ways of using technology.

§2 INTRODUCE MOBILE PHONE-FREE MEETINGS.

Do not bring mobile phones, or ideally any electronic devices, into the meeting room unless it is absolutely necessary, for instance when giving a presentation.

§3 INTRODUCE SILENT MODE AS STANDARD,
ESPECIALLY IN ENVIRONMENTS WHERE
EMPLOYEES SIT NEAR EACH OTHER..

Avoid annoying beeps and ringtones in open-plan offices.

§4 AVOID MOBILE PHONE CALLS IN OPEN-PLAN OFFICES.

Anyone who needs to make or take a call can go elsewhere so as not to disturb their colleagues.

§5 DEFINE CLEAR TIME INTERVALS
AND EXPECTATIONS AT THE WORK-
PLACE FOR ANSWERING E-MAILS,
TEXT MESSAGES AND PHONE CALLS.

What does 'reply promptly' mean? Does it mean within minutes, hours, or even 24 hours?

§6 DEFINE EXPECTATIONS ON AVAILABILITY OUTSIDE OF OFFICE HOURS.

Be clear about the rules also outside of regular working hours, such as evenings and weekends.

§7 ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEES TO MAKE USE OF THE TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS THAT ARE AVAILABLE AT THE WORKPLACE

for managing and sorting incoming calls and messages, such as mobile switchboard services and e-mail autoreply. Make it a habit always to switch off mobile phones and other devices before a meeting.



ADVICE FOR INDIVIDUAL
EMPLOYEES

#1 MAKE IT A HABIT ALWAYS
TO SWITCH OFF YOUR MOBILE
PHONE AND OTHER DEVICES
BEFORE A MEETING.

Ideally, do not bring any technology into the meeting room.

#2 SWITCH OFF ALL SOUND SIGNALS ON MOBILE PHONES, PCS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES DURING OFFICE HOURS.

#3 BLOCK ALL DISTRACTING
POP-UP WINDOWS AND PUSH
NOTIFICATIONS ON YOUR PC
AND MOBILE PHONE.

#4 IF YOU WORK IN AN OPEN-PLAN OFFICE, MAKE IT A HABIT TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE TO MAKE OR TAKE A CALL.

Ideally use a separate room for phone calls if possible.

#5 FIND OUT HOW WELL YOU USE YOUR BRAIN CAPACITY DURING A WORKING DAY,

by comparing your energy curve to your work tasks (see the exercise later on in this chapter). You may find you read your e-mails and check Instagram when you're energy levels are at their highest, when you should really be focusing on your most important work tasks.

#6 INTRODUCE SET, INDIVIDUALLY
CUSTOMISED TIMES FOR E-MAIL,
TEXT MESSAGES AND PHONE CALLS,

rather than having a constant influx that takes the focus away from other work tasks.

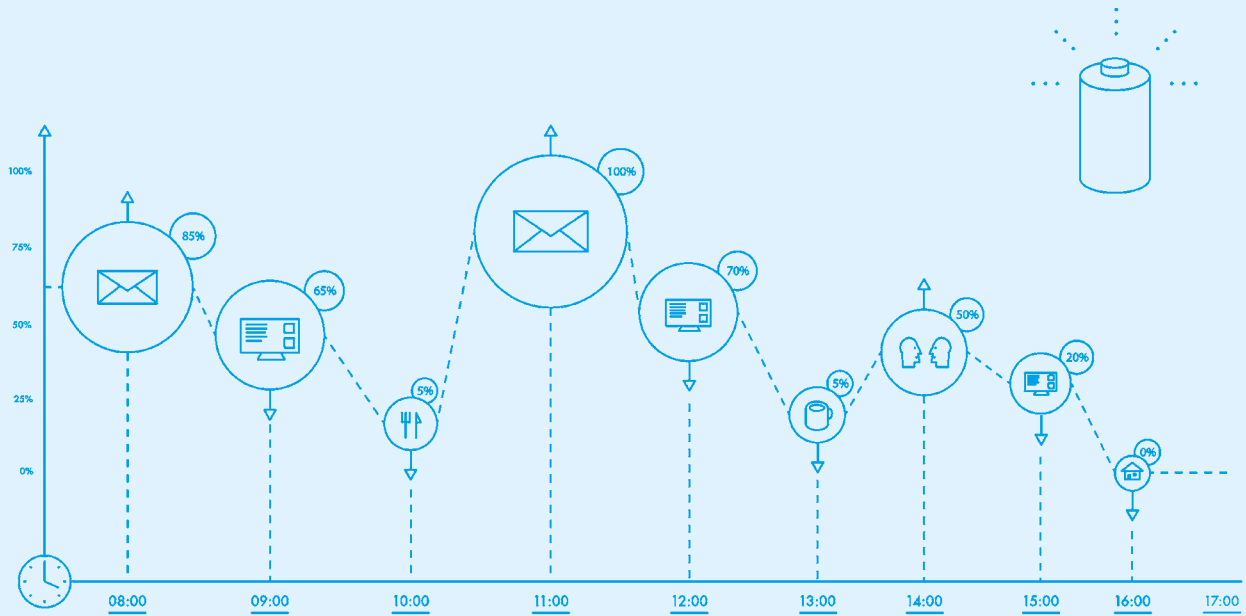
#7 BE SURE TO COMPLETELY
PUT DOWN ALL TECHNOLOGY
FOR A WHILE EVERY DAY.

Your brain needs rest if you are to perform at your best in important work situations.

EXERCISE

Using an exercise where we chart our energy levels over the course of a working day and then compare it to our work tasks, we can gain important insight into how well we use our brain capacity. We can then establish better, more efficient work procedures and learn to use technology more smartly.

RIGHT TASK AT THE RIGHT TIME?



WHAT TO DO:

1/MAKE a graph where the X axis shows the working day (time), and the Y axis is your energy level (0-100%).

2/ASSESS your energy level at each time, where 100% is maximum energy and 0% is minimum energy.

3/KEEP a work diary, making a note of all events and work tasks during a typical working day. Describe all kinds of activities in as much detail as possible, the time at which they occur and how long they last. This could be anything from meetings and phone calls, to coffee breaks and quick chats with colleagues. Grade the work tasks based on how energy demanding they are, 0-100%.

4/COMPARE your energy curve to your work diary and see how closely they match.

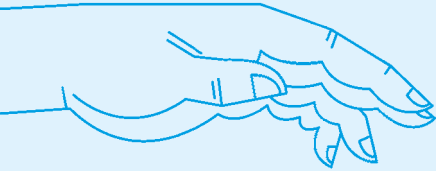
5/DISCUSS with your colleagues, especially the ones you work closest with, how you can use these insights to bring about positive change.

YOU MAY DISCOVER that simpler work tasks are done at times when your energy and brain capacity are at their peak; that you spend your 'super hour' between 9 and 10 drinking coffee and replying to ten low-priority e-mails, while the hour between 11 and 12, when you're starting to get tired and think about lunch, coincides with an important customer meeting.

THE LOWER OUR ENERGY LEVELS, the more we are driven by our reptile brain. It is in these situations that we most easily fall into daydreaming and looking for immediate reward. This considerably increases the risk of picking up our phone during a meeting and getting carried along in an unimportant activity.

BOTH INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES have a lot to gain in terms of time and energy by focusing on the right task at the right time.

IT'S TIME TO WORK SMART.
IT'S TIME FOR WORKFULNESS.



Interested in finding out more? Please contact us and we'll be happy to help!

[TELENOR.SE/WORKFULNESS](https://www.telenor.se/workfulness) • JOBBSMART.SE@TELENOR.COM

