

Turning Procrastination into Productivity

One distraction at a time

Three Reasons professionals procrastinate:

- Success - I have too much work, not enough time and lack resources
- Lull - I don't have enough on to get excited about it, lacking motivation
- Decision Making - I don't know where to start, can't focus on the task and worry about getting it wrong or not being able to do it. I fear the consequences.

Which reasons resonate for you?

Is there a pattern to the way you or someone you know procrastinates?

Factors that make a difference

- Task - how unpleasant is it? how boring is it? who asked / needs you to do it?
- Consequences - what happens if you don't?
- Self - Efficacy - how much do you believe you can do the task?

Four Types of procrastination



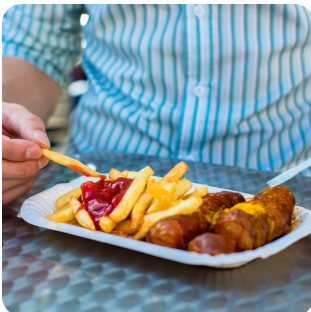
ACTIVE

- Motivated by pressure
- Getting ahead is boring
- Thrill of the deadline
- Part of identity "I'm so busy"



DECISIONAL

- Prefer to do something else
- Decided to do that later
- Decided doesn't need to be done
- Task list is delayed decision list



PASSIVE

- Can't delay gratification
- Can't pull away from enjoyable to hard or boring
- Connected to sleep, energy & ability to be proactive



IRRATIONAL

- I know it's not good, I feel awful
- I'm a bad person, I'm unprofessional
- Worried I'll do a bad job, will find out
- Negative perfectionism

Four Sets of strategies to turn procrastination into productivity



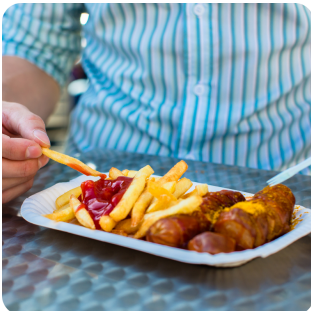
ACTIVE

- Focus on identity - I'm a person people can rely on
- I'm a person who has a block of time for admin and sticks to it
- Artificial thrill - pomodoro, 5 minute start, count list items
- Competition with myself



DECISIONAL

- Focus on prioritization with social pressure
- Choice between two priorities for powerful person
- Choice between two projects for career success
- How many tasks can I tell others I achieved today?



PASSIVE

- Set time limits on the gratification activity and the next activity
- Alternate between fun and hard tasks - not all hard
- Use rewards as motivation



IRRATIONAL

- Debate yourself - good professionals ask for help
- Address worries by making a small or easy start - cherry pick your favourite or easiest part to build momentum
- Set small, realistic goals to break the cycle
- Seek out a friend to talk things through
- Physical care to reduce worry and concern

What will you do differently?

If you had a friend or team member who is procrastination with each of the four styles. What would you suggest that do that fits with your firm and practice?



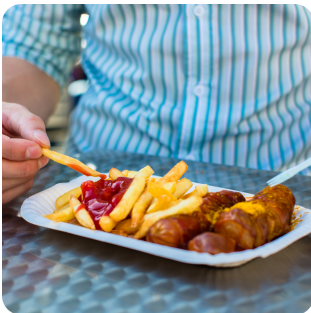
ACTIVE

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DECISIONAL

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PASSIVE

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IRRATIONAL

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Searl Street Consulting

Anna Hinder is the Principal of Searl Street Consulting. With over twenty years of experience in human resources, Anna has held a range of HR business partner and specialist roles in Australia, Asia and Europe. Anna established Searl Street Consulting in 2003 to specialise in the development of professionals. Developing the people skills of lawyers, accountants and finance professionals is approached with a practical combination of evidence based research and actions that fit with the demands of clients, practice management and motivating people.



Anna holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Anthropology from the University of Queensland, a Master of Commerce from the University of New South Wales and extensive post-graduate qualifications in leadership, human resource strategy and positive psychology.

Anna has been an adjunct faculty member of the Australian Graduate School of Management and the University of Sydney. Anna is the people and leadership specialist for the University of New South Wales Law School's Practice Management Certificate and a facilitator of Oxford Said School of Business Scenario Planning Executive Program.

Anna's academic research interests focus on the future of work for existing and emerging professions. Anna is a graduate of the Oxford Scenario Planning Approach and holds membership of the Academy of Management, The European Group of Organisational Studies and the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development.

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