

UNAWAWARENESS OF MULTITASKING AS A SYSTEM

General perspective



OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING



UNDERSTANDING

the complexity of issues related to multitasking



REALIZING

the harmfulness of performing too many duties and the need to manage the workload



EMPOWERING

the ability and skills to a better organised and planned work



DEVELOPING

knowledge on counteracting multitasking and shaping proper habits

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To understand multitasking

What is multitasking and does it really exist?



Multitasking and brain functioning

How does multitasking affect our brain's abilities?



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How to deal with multitasking?

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What is Multitasking?

By definition, multitasking is the performance of an individual doing more than one task at a time. The popular term was derived from a term used by computer engineers, “computer multitasking”.



- Please give examples of multitasking from your everyday work.
- Do you agree with this definition?





How the brain works?



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In fact, multitasking is almost always a misnomer, as the human mind and brain lack the architecture to perform two or more tasks simultaneously.

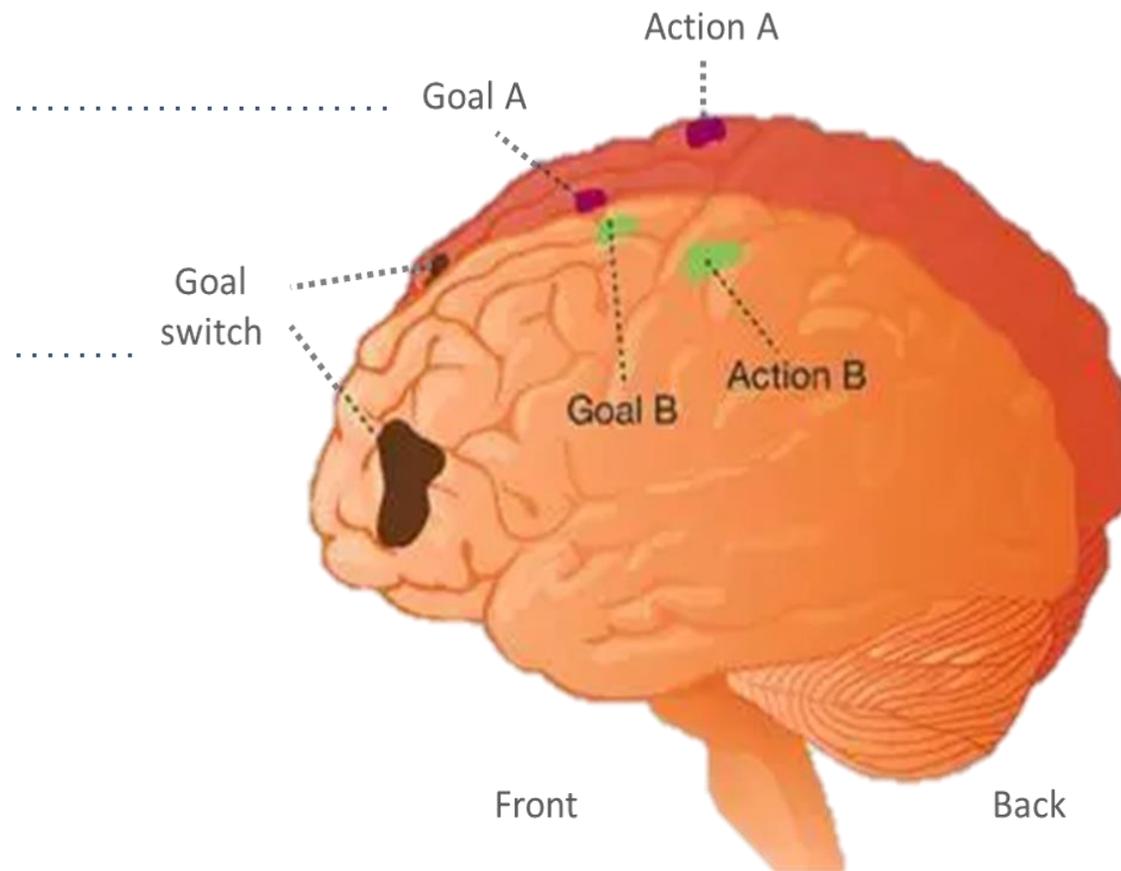
When the brain is faced with two tasks, the medial prefrontal cortex divides in two so each half can focus on one task.



The anterior-most part of the frontal lobes enables the switch between two goals.



When a third task comes into play, it's too much for the brain to handle at once. Consequently, accuracy drops considerably.



Impact on the the brain



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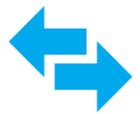
Brain isn't designed to handle information it's currently processing

Brain overload



Our brain's attention levels are finite

"Fight or flight" reaction



Due to the constant flow of information we can't focus on a single task

Brain switching to the next thing



It's a result of the brain's desire to react immediately

Recognition opportunities and threats



Switch to the next task results a squirt of dopamine

Quick gratification

Habit loop



Multitasking Exercise

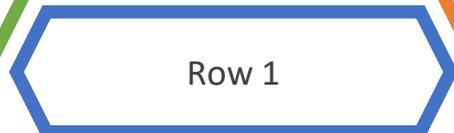
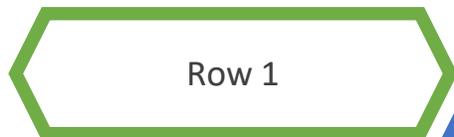


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01

Write the phrase

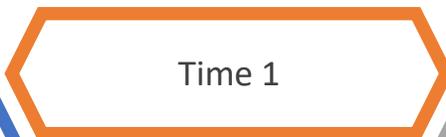
In the first row, recopy the phrase "Multitasking is worse than a lie"



03

Notice the time

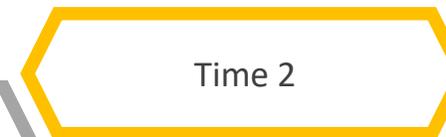
Write down your finish time off to the side



05

Notice the time

Write down your finish time off to the side.



02

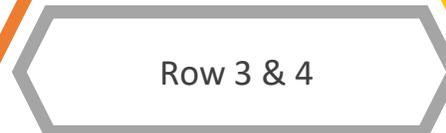
Write the numbers

In the second row, write down the numbers 1 through 27

04

Repeat another way

Do the exercise again but this time, for every letter that you write in the third row, you're going to write a number in the fourth row.





Multitasking myth



Switchtasking

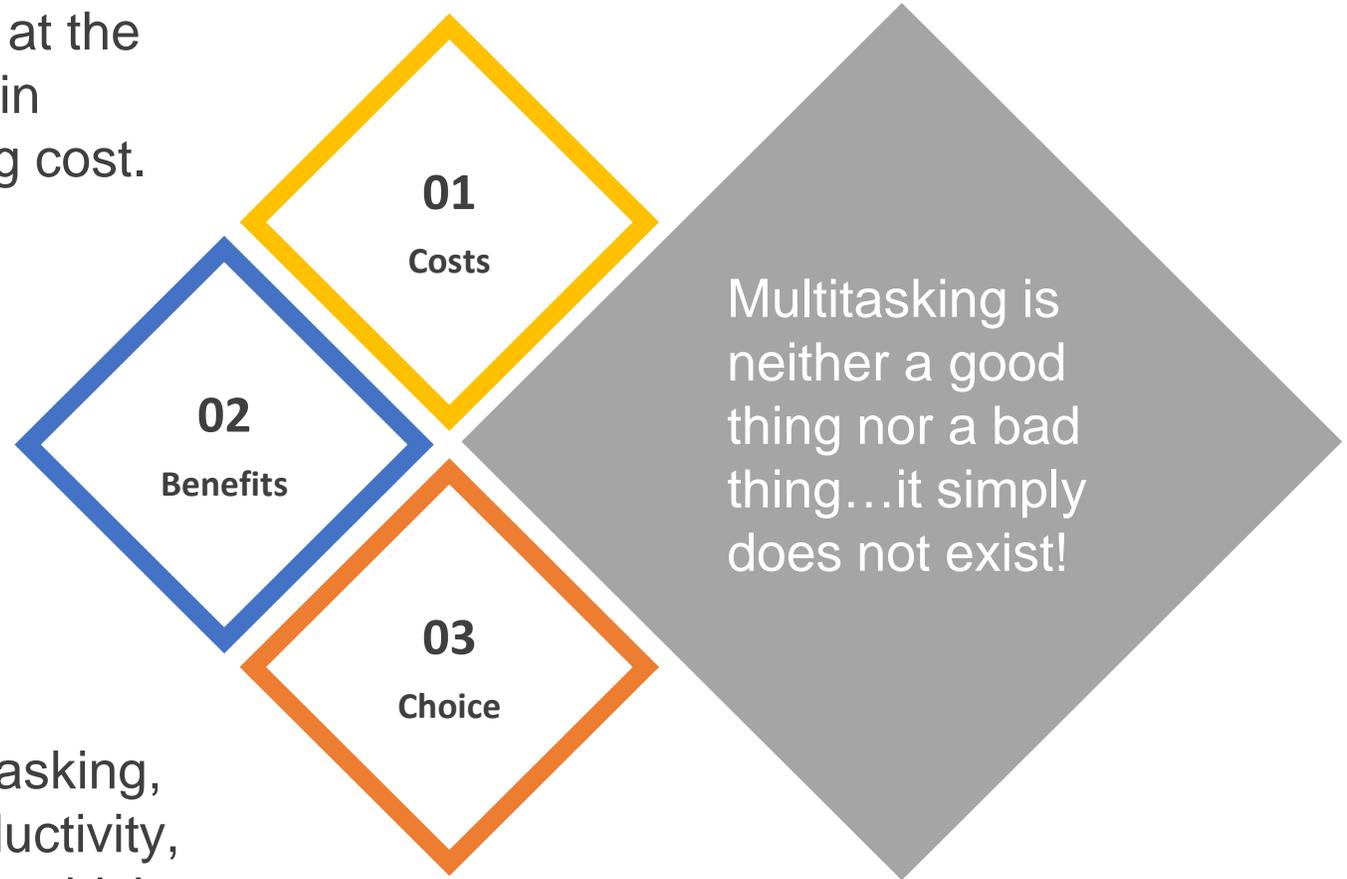
attempting to do multiple attention-requiring tasks at the same time. Each switch in attention incurs switching cost.

Background tasking

performing a task while something mindless or mundane occurs in the background.

The question is..

... are you background tasking, which may improve productivity, or are you switchtasking, which always harms productivity?





Multitasking costs



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Loss of time

Bouncing between one activity and another and we lose time as your brain reorients to the new task.



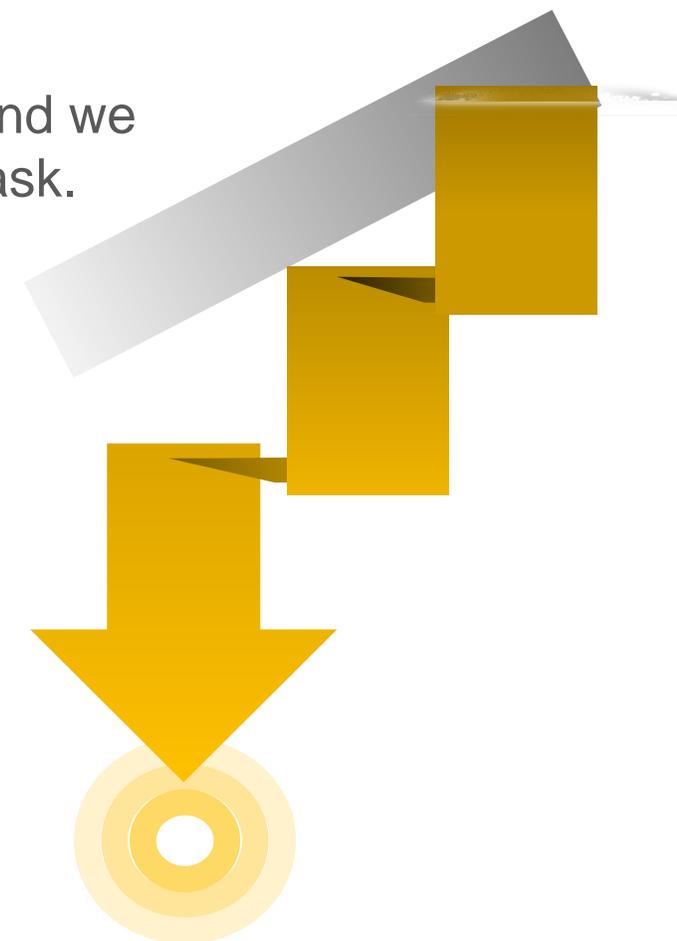
Decrease in performance

Multitaskers make more mistakes than non-multitaskers and often make poorer decisions.



Increase in stress levels

Multitasking increases production of cortisol, the stress hormone.





Damages & losses

Multitasking is damaging brain

Cognitive overload dulls the brain and our reaction times, causes lower brain density in the region of their brain responsible for empathy, cognitive and emotional control.

Lowers intellectual abilities

Multitasking, when attempting to do cognitive tasks, lowered IQ 10 points - as much as if study participants had used marijuana or stayed up all night.

Reduces productivity

Studies have found that multitasking reduces your productivity by 40%.



Reduces the ability to make connections

Decreases the ability to remember things, causing loss of the ability to remember what we were doing, to learn, makes difficulty putting what we're learning into new contexts.

Makes us prone to cheat

Cheating (intentional or not) happens when we make sloppy mistakes we otherwise would not make, being pressed for time) makes us cut corners.



What does this mean?



01

SELECTION

Multitaskers are bad at filtering out irrelevant information.

02

FOCUS

Multitaskers choose extraneous information over task-related information.

03

CONNECTIONS

Multitaskers have a difficult time pulling information from short- or long-term memory into working memory.

04

SWITCHING

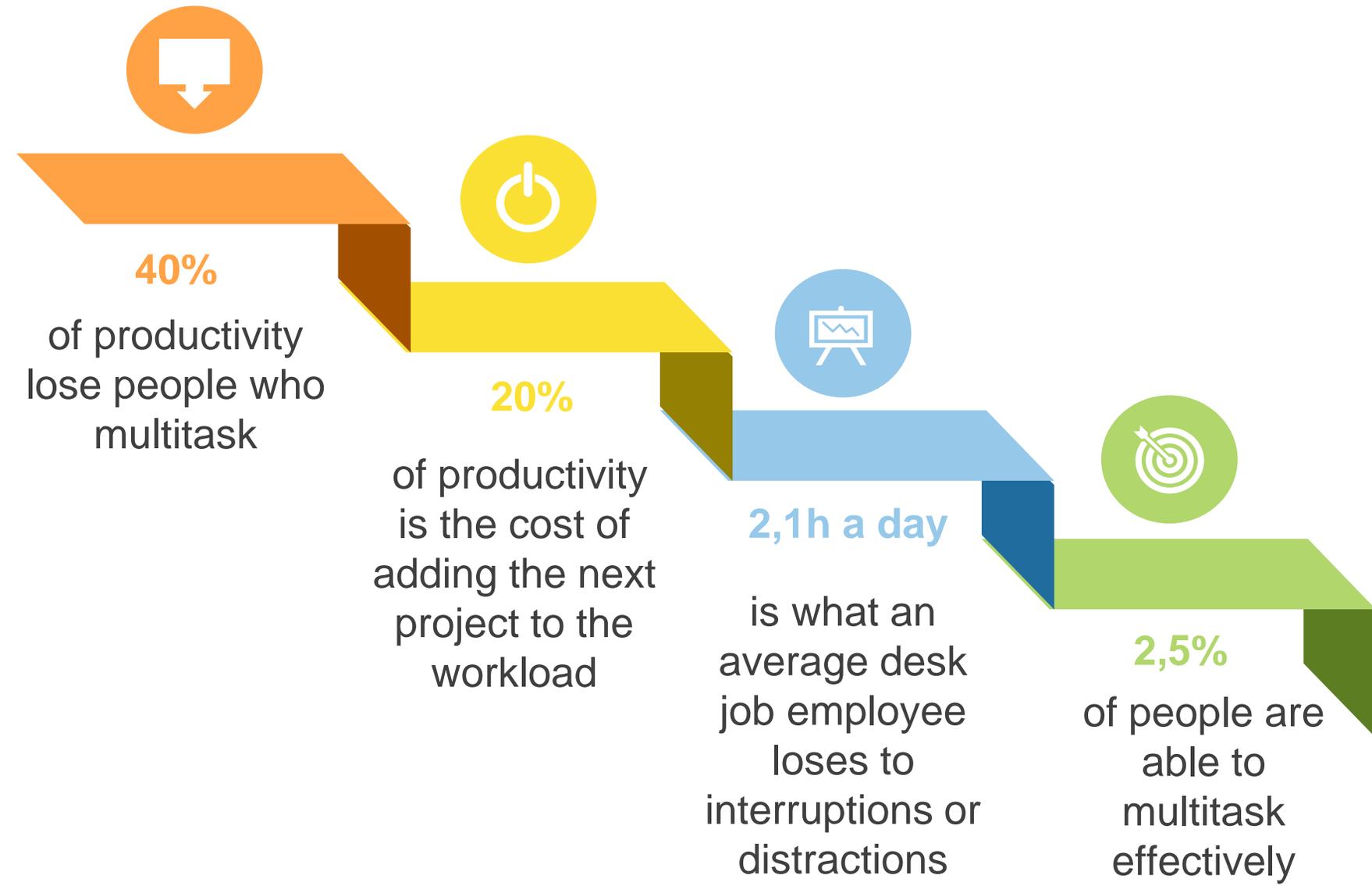
Multitaskers have a tough time switching from task to task.

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Research results

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How to deal with multitasking?

Change: break the habit

Multitasking is a terrible habit to get into. The first step to eliminate any unproductive multitasking is to stop doing it. Change your behavior. It may be hard, but you need to do it if you want to change and be more productive.



1: Activity Management

Mix your activities correctly

Match high cognitive activities with physical tasks your brain's autopilot can handle. Never pair multiple cognitive tasks together.

Prioritize tasks

Identify all the important tasks at the start of each day that you want to accomplish, do them first.

Identify the time wasters

The tasks you don't need to do and which are not contributing to getting your results and start **REJECTING** these from your day.



Use the 20/80 rule

20% of the work you give will yield 80% of the effectiveness and impact. Focus on knowing the 20% of your tasks that are really effective and then do them one at a time.

Do batch processing, group tasks

Section the day up into allocated slots of time where you respond to emails, return phone calls, appointment-free sections of the day.

Maximize concentration time

Practice focusing all your attention on the task at hand and stick with it until completion, break large tasks into smaller ones.



2: Relations Management

Stay connected

Make time to interact with colleagues and share in a conversation. Build and take care of relations.

Learn to say "no"

You can weed out the projects that bore you that drive you to distractors or don't use your potential enough.



Don't be forced into meaningless interruptions

Refuse to split your time according to someone else's schedule, and finish one thing at a time. Be mindful of your own work plans and needs related to performing your tasks.

Delegate tasks

Identify what those you work with are best at and delegate these tasks to them. The reason you delegate is to free up your time for your MUSTs.



3: Well-being Management



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Take away distractions

Turn off notifications on your devices and other visual and auditory interruptions don't distract you while you are working.

Learn to watch your own thoughts

Notice when you feel an impulse (like "I'll check Twitter now") and resist!

Take a break

Don't think of the task, relax and take a breather. Drink a cup of tea with mindful intention. Don't check your phone or read material during break. Reboot your brain. The more rest it gets, the more focused you will be.



If you can, go off the grid

Take a vacation without phone and internet. This will give you time to recalibrate yourself and kick out the habit of multitasking. You will see the difference once you get back to work.

Mindfulness meditations

Practice meditations to strengthen your brain's ability to focus on one task at a time such as your breath or the sounds in your environment.

Take good care of yourself

Get enough sleep and add regular exercise into your weekly schedule. A quick stroll is also great for improving concentration.



Summary

Our brains are **not capable** of focusing on multiple tasks at once. They simply aren't. We think they are, but what's happening is your brain is jumping back and forth between the tasks, focusing briefly one at a time.

Based on much research and experience, multitasking **can waste a lot of time** due to context switching which results in more **mistakes** due to lack of focus or divided attention.

Don't multitask. Don't damage your brain. Because that's going to have an effect on your work, obviously, as well as how you cope with the rest of the workload.

Manage smartly your MUSTs. With the time you gain back, make time for your WANTS – as little as 15 minutes 'Me Time' a day can improve your performance by 23%.



Sources of reference



The Myth of Multitasking: How "Doing It All" Gets Nothing Done, Crenshaw Dave, 2008



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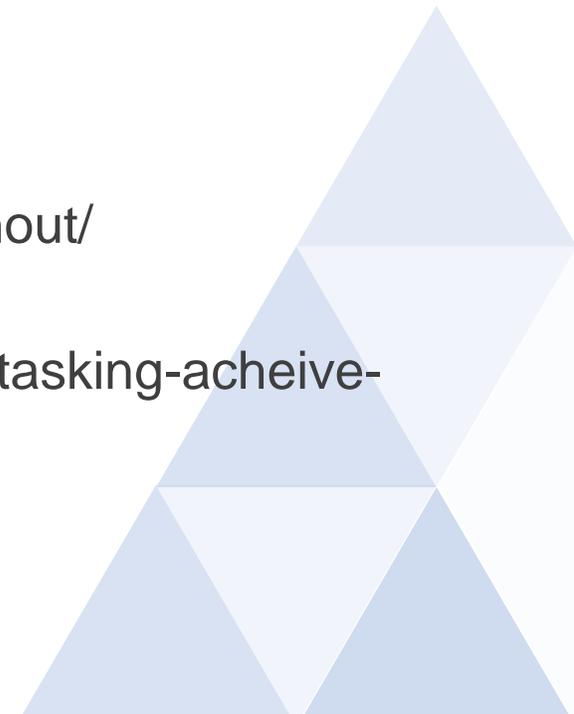
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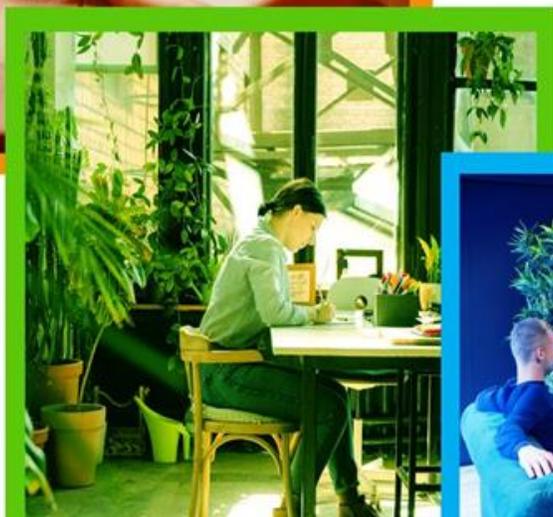


Don't multitask. Stop starting, start finishing !

THANK YOU



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