

Your Weekly Diet

Phil Olley

There has been no shortage of news recently about the Atkins Diet, and the many other regimes available. So don't worry, this piece is not about losing weight.

Yet, the principles are the same as with any diet.

Having a balance of the right ingredients, in the right amounts, every week, makes for a recipe for success. If you have the wrong ingredients, or they are in the wrong proportion, or not enough of the most important ingredients, the taste is off.

So what are the ingredients of your week?

The starting point is to be clear about what your goals and objectives are. And then taking your specific role, identifying your Key Result Activities... those activities which directly lead to the achievement of the results you want. In most cases, you will have around 5 or 6 Key Result Activities. These are your priorities... they take precedent above all else in order for you to achieve.

How much time and energy do you need to devote to these in order to achieve your goals? To fit the requisite amount of time each week, plan time slots where you will be fully focused.

Then have enabling strategies and systems to ensure you are at your best at those times, and you are able to focus at that time. Many people spend most of their time in a sort of "mediocre zone" all of the week. The key to success is to be at a peak when you are doing the key activities.

So we need to separate out those other tasks, planning, administration and organisation to a separate time which will allow you to be fully focused when you need to be. Including a Self Organisation Session each week is an essential ingredient. And these need to be time-slotted in also. This will include time to prepare meetings for the coming week, follow-up meetings from the previous week, deal with lower priority actions and delegate where necessary. Some time for study, knowledge development, self-development, technical development, training and supervision of others, team meetings, and so on will also be included depending on your role. For example, having a Reading slot is important if you get lots of memos, reports, articles and so on which need to be read.

Separating all this out leaves you with time-slots where you can focus purely on being productive. You may even have Focus days when you only work at your Key Result Activities, with absolute productivity, for say 3 days per week. I know of some very successful sales people who now operate this system, with the other two days for administration, planning and all the other things which they need to do to keep a balanced diet. This helps their "time over target" to be optimized each week.

When you draw up your ideal week (I call it a "magic timetable") you will see how you really can get everything done (everything that is important) as long as you stick

to the plan. When a distraction comes along... ask: is it more important? Where should it go in the plan... in the weekly diet, where does it fit? This is not about being perfect. Of course, we can't pre-empt everything, and by its very nature, business will throw up things which were unforeseen. However, it does allow us, when these unforeseen things need to displace other items, to see exactly what we are choosing to leave out. Suddenly you can regain control by choosing, rather than always feeling as if circumstances foist tasks on to you and you are constantly reacting.

And part of the weekly diet is to have weekly (and daily) achievement objectives. It is incredibly satisfying to have a series of ticked boxes to look forward to each week. You know at every stage that you are on track. You also know when you have done 100 percent in the most important areas. And if you know you haven't, it leaves a harsh taste in the mouth and indicates that the ingredients were not quite right, or were in the wrong proportion, or something else got into the mix which messed up your recipe.

By making sure you have a balanced diet, you will achieve your objectives.

By the way, "All work and no play, makes for a dull recipe." So make sure you include some spice! It is great to look back over a week's achievements and reward yourself.

Until next time, wishing you every success...