

SGS Pharma - Clinical Research

Busy ≠ Productive: Breaking The Myth Of Multitasking

PD07

Health Inspired
Quality Driven

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Introduction



Performance-oriented society

- ✓ Constantly busy
- ✓ Continuously connected to work

Workplace (post COVID-19)

- ✓ Overload of tasks, emails, IMs
- ✓ Increase in virtual meetings with 50%

Clinical Research

- ✓ Oversight of several trials simultaneously

➡ “Hustle culture”

Introduction



“Hustle culture” ~ multitasking

- ✓ ~~Productivity~~
- ✓ ~~Attention span~~
- ✓ ~~Ability to focus~~

➔ Attention crisis

- ✓ Students switch tasks every minute
- ✓ Office workers switch tasks every 3 min
- ✓ Causes:
 - Overstimulated brain
 - Addictive digital technology

The myth of multitasking

(and the science behind it)



Brain **CANNOT** multitask

<> Rapidly switching between tasks

➔ Reduces ability to focus in several ways*

- ↔ **Switch-cost effect:** lowers productivity (40%)
- ✗ **Screw-up effect:** increases the risk of errors
- 🧠 **Diminished memory effect**
- 🧠 **Creativity drain**

The myth of multitasking

(and science behind it)

Brain **CANNOT** multitask

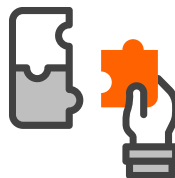
<> Rapidly switching between tasks

➔ Additionally, significant mental cost:

Brain is exhausted, leading to stress & burnout



How can we move away from the hustle mindset ?



How can we reclaim our focus & attention ?



Focus as a strategy

Focus on 1 task at a time
without distractions of digital technology

➔ **DEEP WORK***

- ✓ Higher quality of work/deliverables
- ✓ Improved productivity
- ✓ Improved retaining of information
- ✓ More creativity & problem-solving capacity
- ✓ Brain less exhausted → less stress

**Deep Work: Rules for focused success in a distracted world (Cal Newport, 2016)*

Case study: a typical workday for me

What do I do?

- ✓ Senior Project Manager Biometrics
- ✓ SGS Pharma Clinical Research
- ✓ Oversight of BIOM activities (5-7 trials)
 - Supervision of internal study activities
 - Contact with the different clients
 - Creation of timelines & FU on deliverables
 - Keeping track of budgets

What did my workday look like?



Case study: a typical workday for me

Mornings

- ✓ Start with addressing all new emails ASAP
- ✓ (Back to back) virtual meetings
- ✓ Continuously monitoring of mailbox/IMs

Lunch break

- ✓ Brisk walk while listening to podcast

Afternoon

- ✓ Repeat of the morning

Evening

- ✓ Occasional monitoring of emails on phone



Case study: a typical workday for me



Efficient day $\neq$ Productive day

My first observations

- ✓ Compulsive monitoring of emails/IMs
- ✓ The urge to always be available
- ✓ No sustained focus anymore
- ✓ Occasional forgetfulness
- ✓ Restless monkey mind

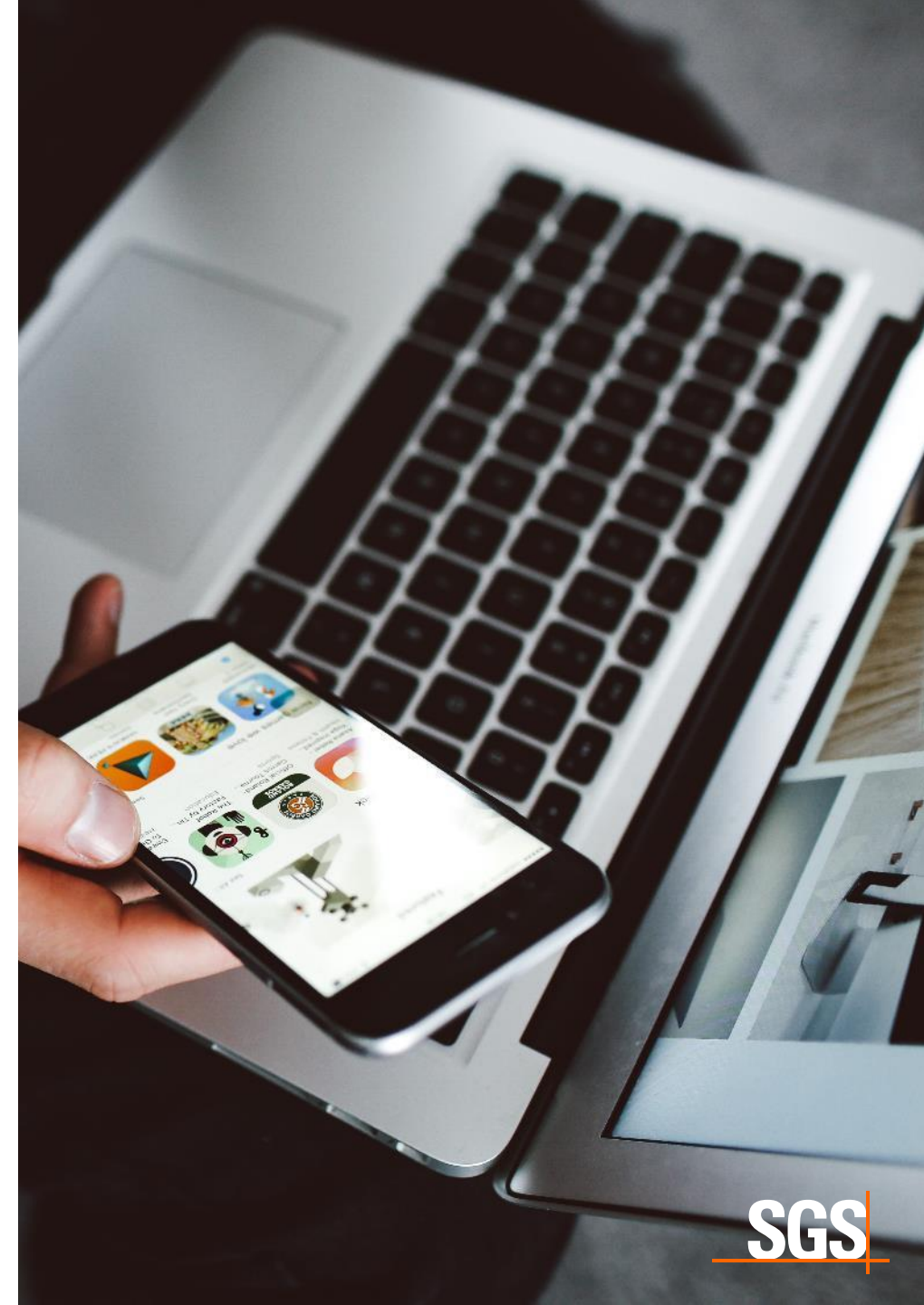
➔ MULTITASKING ADDICT

Case study: a typical workday for me

Efficient day $\neq$ Productive day

➔ Impact on my work

- ✓ Procrastinating on tasks requiring focus
 - Creation of timelines
 - Budgets & budget reconciliations
- ✓ Losing oversight of priorities/to-dos
- ✓ Not able to complete all priorities of the day
- ✓ Forgetting details



Case study: a typical workday for me

Efficient day $\neq$ Productive day

➔ Root causes

- ✓ Constant multitasking due to:
 - Overload of information (number of emails/IMs)
 - Addictive digital technology
- ✓ No separate focus time during the day
- ✓ No breaks for the brain

FRAGMENTED WORK $\leftrightarrow$ DEEP WORK





My new approach

How I reclaimed my focus



DURING WORK:

- ✓ Turning off email notifications on pc
- ✓ Small breaks between (B2B) meetings
- ✓ Smartphone on silent
- ✓ No multitasking during meetings
- ✓ Planning of batches of focus time
- ✓ No-meeting day(s) during work week



My new approach

How I reclaimed my focus



OUTSIDE OF WORK:

- ✓ No work-related email notifications anymore on smartphone
- ✓ No FU on work-related emails in evenings
- ✓ No podcast/smartphone while walking
- ✓ Partial digital detox in the evenings
 - No scrolling on social media/news sites
 - No phones during meals

My new approach

Room for improvement



- ✓ *“If you are going to hunt elephants, don’t get distracted chasing rabbits”*
 - Workday should start with setting priorities, not with smaller tasks after opening mailbox
- ✓ Only check emails & IMs in batches
- ✓ Remove smartphone entirely from desk
 - If visible, brain is on alert for a new ping
 - Even on mute, risk for compulsive checking



Impact of my new approach

Positive effects that I noticed



- ✓ Mental clarity improved significantly
- ✓ Not feeling rushed & stressed anymore
- ✓ Less forgetfulness → better oversight
- ✓ More present and engaged in meetings
- ✓ Improved prioritization
- ✓ More to-dos completed
- ✓ Improved ability to focus
- ✓ No disruption for study teams



Impact of my new approach

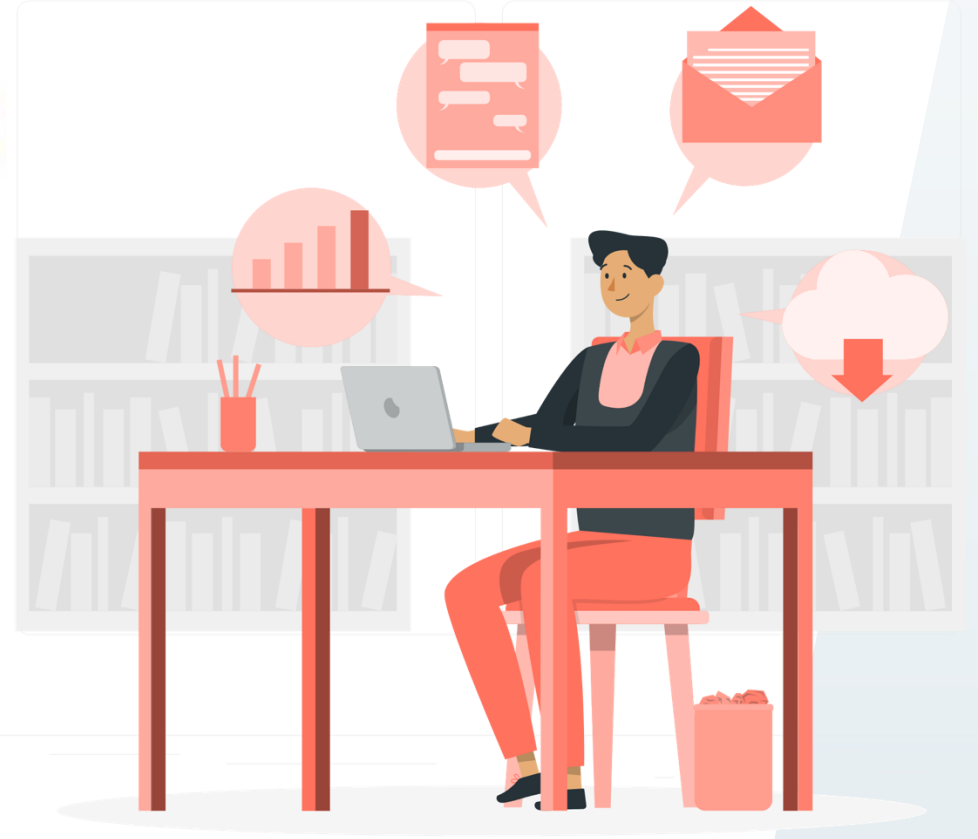
Potential for more impact



- ✓ Multitasking creeps in subconsciously
 - Deeply ingrained habit
 - Every switch in task is a new stimulus: addictive dopamine rush
 - Misconception that it is PM's responsibility to always be up to date with trial status



Ideal situation does not exist for PM:
Urgent things can always pop up!



Conclusion

Hustle mindset of multitasking

- ✓ Kills productivity and sustained focus
- ✓ Incompatible with high-quality work standards

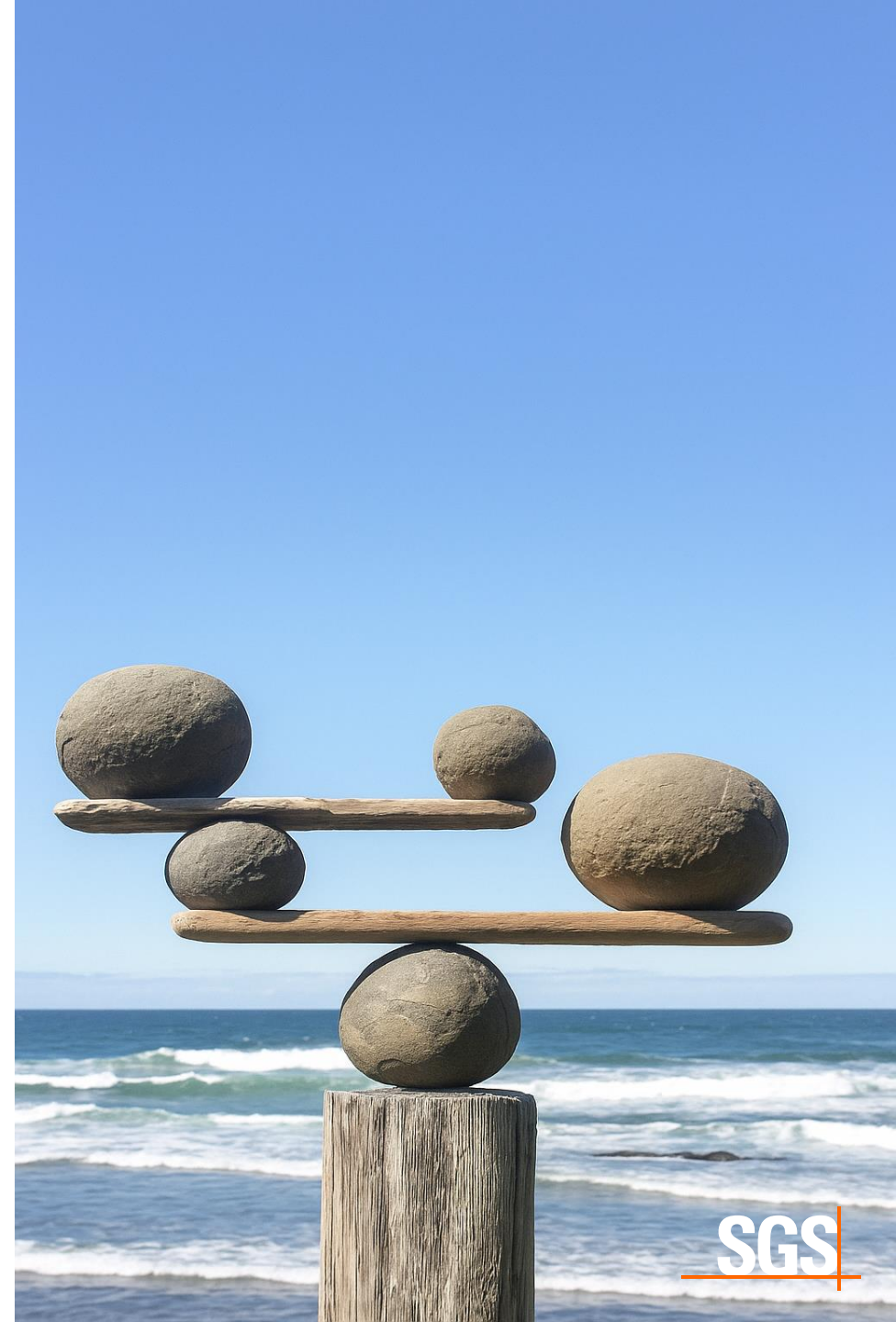
Embrace single-tasking

- ✓ Increases productivity and focus
- ✓ Ensures high quality deliverables
- ✓ Increases (mental) well-being



Balancing act

Time for focus <> quick action





Questions?



Contact us



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