

# Covey Quadrant

*Urgent matters* are visible, immediate, and often gratifying to tackle. *Important matters*, because they may seem less pressing than the urgent ones, are often postponed. But to achieve success you must attend to both types of matters. Not to do so may imperil your long-term goals.

Effective people stay out of Quadrants III and IV because, urgent or not, they aren't important. They also shrink Quadrant I down to size by spending more time in Quadrant II. Quadrant II is the heart of effective personal management. It deals with things that are not urgent, but are important.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Quadrant I: Urgent and Important</b></p> <p>These activities are urgent and important: deadlines, crises, and other "do it now" tasks. Nobody can afford to sit on these activities; they are a matter of daily survival, so they get attended to every day. They don't necessary get fixed every day, though, and for that reason Quadrant I activities put an enormous drain on your energy and your composure. If you're constantly putting out fires, you're constantly in stress.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Quadrant II: Important and Not Urgent</b></p> <p>These activities are important, but not urgent, such as recognizing and acting upon new opportunities, and planning. Because they're not urgent, all but the most effective time managers routinely neglect them.</p> <p>Effective people shrink Quadrant I down to size by spending more time in Quadrant II. Quadrant II is the heart of effective personal management. It deals with things that are not urgent, but are important.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Quadrant III: Urgent and Not Important</b></p> <p>These activities are urgent and not important. This sounds paradoxical, but in fact most college professors and administrators give Quadrant III activities a very high priority, second only to the crises in Quadrant I. Phone calls, meetings, email, chores, and the myriad of interruptions that characterize most working days. Their urgency is generally established by other people, so that dealing with them is an endlessly reactive process. Most people spend too much time spinning wheels in the process.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Quadrant IV: Not Urgent and Not Important</b></p> <p>These activities are not urgent and not important. Such activities include all the rote work (i.e., mail), pleasure time (i.e., tv), and procrastination that people resort to as a way of escaping stress. The irony is that the more time you spend here, the less time you will have for truly important matters – and the more your job stress level will increase. People who spend most of their time in Quadrants III &amp; IV “basically lead irresponsible lives.” Effective people stay out of Quadrants III &amp; IV because, urgent or not, they aren't important.</p>

Adapted from Covey, Stephen R. (1990). The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change. New York: Simon & Schuster. Prepared by M. Nathan Rowell.