
THE REAL COSTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL MULTITASKING

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Agile2019

Let’s be friends!
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Stand up if...
Format

Live Action Role Play
Drawings
More LARPing
Practical Application
Organizational multitasking happens when a group is focused on too many things and overall capacity is reduced.
Symptoms

delays and interruptions
peaks and valleys in workflow
self-inflicted “emerging priorities”
competing priorities
difficulty scheduling conversations
too many meetings about work,
not enough working meeting
Reality over illusion

Reality #1: Humans are indivisible

Reality #2: The problem scales

Reality #3: A problem for leaders
Humans are indivisible. We are not the sum of our parts.
LARP Round 1
A demonstration in carrying water
There is nothing in the world more harmful than a leader who fails to distinguish between fantasy and reality.

Neil Chudgar, 2019
a drawing: how a human brain works
“Perceptions of the ability to multi-task were found to be badly inflated; in fact, the majority of participants judged themselves to be above average in the ability to multi-task. These estimations had little grounding in reality as perceived multi-tasking ability was not significantly correlated with actual multi-tasking ability.”

Published online 2013 Jan 23. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0054402
The problem scales

Bigger = more complex = higher costs
REAL COSTS

reduced quality and rework
solving the wrong problems
overwork
employee turnover
difficulty making pivots
lack of equity/limited diversity
loss of creativity
burnout
LARP Round 2
All the important things*  
*Inspired by Lithespeed
Roles

Employee – grab the marker
Manager – find a timer
Customers – everyone grab a piece of paper
Round 1 Goal

Employee makes an individual name card for each customer-FIRST NAME ONLY

Customer whose name is written first wins

Manager tracks time it takes to make all name cards

*Sit down when all name cards are complete.*
Round 2 Goal

Role of employee, customer, and manager remains the same

Implement process improvement and equity plan: write each person’s name one letter at a time, round robin style

Sit down when all name cards are complete.
Round 3 Goal

Role of employee, customer, and manager remains the same

WIP Limit of 1

Transparency of priorities

Self-Organization

Customer whose card is done when the expect it wins
It’s a problem for leaders

Individuals can’t solve the problem by themselves

Reality #3
95 percent of human resource leaders admit employee burnout is sabotaging workforce retention, yet there is no obvious solution on the horizon.

Kronos Employee Engagement Study, 2017
NOT REAL
Better is better than best.

-Brandi Olson
Common approach to portfolio prioritization
a drawing: the pareto improvement
Simple (not easy) steps forward for leaders

Set a work in progress (WIP) limit for the portfolio

Rank order prioritization of all the efforts
# Portfolio Kanban Board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do Next</th>
<th>In Progress</th>
<th>Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WIP Limit = 3**

- Prioritization
Reality over illusion

Reality #1: Humans are indivisible

Reality #2: The problem scales

Reality #3: A problem for leaders
what is the ONE thing?
THANK YOU!

Let’s be friends

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Cultural Values Mapping
Tuesday @ 10:45 am
Chesapeake 4/5/6