Work
Life
Psych

Productivity

Purpose. Prioritisation. Pragmatism.

We help professionals become productive – ensuring their limited resources are focused on the most important tasks at the right time.

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Introduction

Productivity is at the very core of what we do. As workplace psychologists, we work at the intersection of wellbeing, productivity and professional effectiveness, three mutually supporting themes. Our mission is to help people move from merely surviving work to actually thriving at work, supporting productive and sustainable working practices in the process.

At WorkLifePsych, we want to give employees and organisations the tools they need to prioritise, delegate, work flexibly and deliver results – all while managing their finite resources: time, attention and energy.

Read on to find out more about our approach and how we can help you and your employees attain your productivity goals.

Defining productivity

Productivity is not simply about getting more done. We define our approach as 'doing the right things, in the right way, at the right time'. Our approach acknowledges the fast pace of the modern workplace, avoids the application of strict 'rules', and leverages what we know about how people think, feel and behave at work so they can get the best from any situation.

The modern work environment would be simply unrecognisable to an employee from the middle of the 20th century. Communications technology, flexible working arrangements, global and virtual teams and 24/7 operations have combined to make the workplace a more challenging place in terms of focus and decision-making.

Employees at all levels are inundated with information, opinion and demands, meaning that being able to cut through the noise and prioritise key tasks, making best use of our limited time and attention, is what really matters. We've all experienced the sense of dissatisfaction at the end of a working day when we feel predictably tired – but with little of substance to show for our efforts.

At WorkLifePsych, we emphasise a need to move away from an old-fashioned focus on hours worked to a contemporary focus on quality and timely outputs. Indeed, from our perspective, improved productivity may result in fewer outputs – but all delivered to a higher quality, more efficiently and at the right time. All with a lower cost to wellbeing.

We know that employees need to balance productivity with wellbeing and need to be able to respond to changes in their environment in an effective and professional way. A single email can make all the difference to someone's schedule – and their mental health, for better or worse.

How we can help

When it comes to productivity at work, we can help you and your employees from several complementary perspectives.

- Strategic guidance and support, identifying and quantifying your organisational productivity challenges.

- Coaching and training in productivity principles – from strategic goal-setting to tactical prioritisation and execution.

- Support with introducing flexible working and making it a success, including managing the demands of a complex work-life interface.

1. Strategic guidance and support

It can be tempting to buy in solutions to address your productivity challenges as soon as they come to your attention. Especially given the plethora of seemingly simple 'quick fixes' available on the market. However, we suggest caution and adopting a strategic perspective.

We can work with you to bring clarity to your productivity challenges, identify appropriate solutions and evaluate the impact of these solutions once deployed. Productivity challenges aren't improved with a single workshop or by coaching a single employee. It requires a joined-up approach, in alignment with your business strategy and its values. We can partner with you to deliver the best possible result.
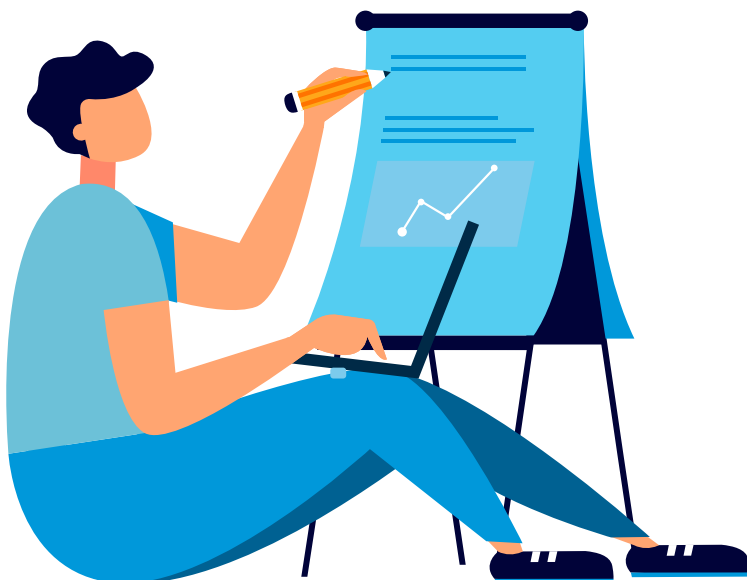
Clarifying the problem at hand

Before going straight into problem-solving mode, it can be useful to correctly identify and quantify the problem you're trying to solve in the first place. As 'productivity' can be interpreted so flexibly from organisation to organisation, we can work with you to bring some illumination to your specific challenges and identify.

Identifying quality interventions

The productivity field is full of myths, fads, misunderstandings and over-simplistic snake-oil solutions. A glance at the popular productivity literature illustrates that it's big on promises, but short on evidence. We can help you cut through the noise and identify solutions that are based on scientific principles, avoiding the trendy, but expensive, evidence-free distractions.

Evaluating outcomes

Once you've identified how you want to make a difference when it comes to productivity, we can apply some scientific rigour and evaluate not only the impact of your changes, but also how they achieve their impact. This can contribute to a more robust calculation of ROI and help you and your organisation better understand the impact these interventions have on your key people metrics.

2. Productivity Principles

We can work with individuals and groups to provide them with the insight and skills required to be productive in demanding and fluid work environments.

Our emphasis is on principles – not inflexible rules – which can be applied across a variety of roles, scenarios and organisational contexts. Our productivity principles are based on what we as psychologists know about people at work – how they think, feel and behave. Whether it's one-to-one coaching or training for larger groups, the principles are the same: effective prioritisation, clarity, focus, decision-making and execution of tasks that make a real difference.

Coaching for individuals

Productivity ranks highly as a focus with all the populations we coach – from individual contributors, to managers and organisational leaders. The challenge remains the same: how to make the best of our limited time and attention when we don't have absolute control over the work demands that come our way.

Any number of reasons can impact our individual productivity: procrastination, feeling overwhelmed, a lack of clarity on values or priorities or simply adjusting to new levels of responsibility and letting go of the old.

We can support employees at all levels in their productivity journey. Coaching represents an excellent forum for productivity and unlocking employees' potential to get more of the important and impactful things done each day.

Training to support productivity

We offer two one-day workshops focused on imparting the skills required of the productive professional.

We can also provide any one of our 'Productivity Essentials' sessions, each lasting just 90 minutes.

'Pillars of Productivity'

Our flagship productivity workshop, 'Pillars of Productivity' is based on a set of crucial principles that anyone can adopt and adapt to their own working environment. The workshop emphasises self-awareness, alongside prioritisation, pragmatism and effective processes. Delegates will leave with a workable plan to implement upon their return to work, with clarity on why they want to be productive and the goals they'll achieve once they've implemented their new approach.

'Productivity for Leaders'

Organisational leaders face unique productivity challenges, with a need to delegate elegantly, consider the longer term in balance with the short-term goals and regular pressure on their time when it comes to people management and development. We also know that leaders frequently act as role models in terms of working style and decision-making. Our workshop gives leaders the tools they need to increase their focus, their efficiency and their effective prioritisation for them and others.

'Delegate for Success'

Delegation is a crucial organisational skill and we look at it from a holistic perspective. We emphasise the need to plan, to understand the people you're delegating to and to engage in effective monitoring of delegated tasks and projects. We explore the psychology of what prevents us from delegating and how to overcome this. Delegation requires clarity of priorities, trust in those being delegated to and a sense of purpose. Delegates leave this course with increased self-awareness and an action plan for delegation they can put into practice immediately.

Productivity Essentials

When time available is short, or to minimise disruption to the working day, we can provide bite-sized learning sessions focused on the key skills of productivity. With each lasting just 90 minutes, they focus on the essential concepts and skills that will help delegates' productivity in a meaningful way.

- **Productivity 101** – the very essence of productivity: how to balance our limited time, attention and energy.
- **Prioritisation 101** – how to prioritise your workload and clarify your focus
- **Email 101** – how to tame the email beast!
- **Proactivity 101** – how to leave the procrastination habit behind.
- **Goal-setting 101** – how to identify, set and attain meaningful goals for yourself.
- **Delegation 101** – how to delegate and monitor effectively.

Development for teams

The interdependent nature of team working means that considering the needs of others is a core element of working productively. We can design and run bespoke team development sessions that are focused on boosting cooperation, communication and productivity through the adoption of joined-up working principles.

Team sessions can be augmented by the addition of simple personality assessments, so team members can learn more about what makes their colleagues tick and how to get the most out of them. Each team member would get one-to-one feedback in advance of a carefully constructed team development session centred on the team's challenges and designed to take account of the local environment and culture.

3. Flexible Working

The 21st century has seen a welcome increase in the levels of flexibility afforded to employees across Europe and further afield. Though we know that the availability of flexibility in itself doesn't always lead to the benefits organisations hope for at the outset.

The introduction of flexible working arrangements represents an organisational change, with the potential to impact culture, productivity, training needs, managerial impact and employee wellbeing. We would argue that the benefits outweigh the investment, but this doesn't mean hard work still isn't required to make it a success. This is where we can help.

Introducing flexible working arrangements

While your focus may be on policies and procedures for working flexibly, we advocate starting several steps back and considering the rationale for flexibility and its anticipated benefits. This can help you identify potential pitfalls, as well as feeding into a more robust evaluation of any changes you make.

The introduction of flexibility needs to take account of the likely impacts on productivity and wellbeing, as well as the implications of managerial and leadership effectiveness. We can assist in preparing your leaders, managers and individual contributors for the benefits and challenges flexible arrangements can bring.

Training to support flexible working

'Making Flexibility Work'

One trend that marks out 21st century working practice is an increase in flexible working arrangements. This workshop focuses on how to get the best out of flexible working whether it's Flexi-time or location-independent working. To ensure these arrangements generate the expected benefits takes planning and forethought. This workshop explores how to remain productive while working flexibly, how to manage relationships and others' expectations and how to avoid overwork and stress. Delegates will leave the workshop with a plan to improve their flexible working logistics, productivity and focus.

'Work-life Fit – develop your work-life toolkit'

The interface between work and home can be a source of immense stress. Especially when we view it as a competition between work and home or striving for a perfect balance between the two. However, when we instead work on navigating the challenges and design a work- life fit around our job and our personal life, we can leave behind outdated notions of 'balance' and engage with our multiple life roles and the work they bring with them in a much more successful and dynamic way. Delegates will leave this workshop with an understanding of their preferred work-life style, tactics and techniques for minimising unwanted 'overspill' from one domain to the other and a plan for implementing a work-life fit that is unique to them.

Flexible working 101

A 90-minute 'essentials' session for employees on how to make the most of flexible working arrangements, avoiding common errors and pitfalls along the way.

Work-life 101

An introduction to managing your work-life interface, run over 90 minutes, to highlight the concepts of spillover, role priorities, work-life boundary management and strategies for managing competing demands.

About WorkLifePsych

Founded in 2014 by Dr. Richard MacKinnon, we're a team of workplace psychologists whose expertise lies in developing people at work. We operate at the intersection of wellbeing, productivity and professional effectiveness and provide coaching, training and structured development programmes.

Our focus on people development reflects both our skill set and our passion. We've coached leaders, managers, graduates and individual contributors across and globe and in a range of organisational sectors. We love seeing people make progress towards their goals and hearing how our support has made all the difference in their working lives.

As psychologists, we're best placed to combine our deep knowledge of workplace psychology with cutting edge approaches to get you the best results. We avoid fads and fashions and focus on what actually works.

You can find out all about our activities and see the profiles of our team by visiting our website at **worklifepsych.com**.

Alternatively, get in touch to find out more about how we can help:

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What our clients say

Richard brings a combination of intelligence, robust and evidence-based practices and, above all, practical approach to his work. He is an expert in his fields yet he speaks the language of business and is always pragmatic and commercial.

He is able to diagnose issues and articulate them clearly and simply along with solutions which are innovative, relevant and understandable.

I always feel completely confident in introducing him to the business and I consider him to be very much a trusted business partner.

Wayne Mullen, Global Head of Human Resources, The Workshop

Our managers have gained confidence and are more cheerful as they go about their work – despite the day to day challenges of management.

We are extremely pleased with the programme and its impact and wouldn't hesitate to recommend Richard and WorkLifePsych. They have exceeded our expectations.

Conall Lavery, CEO, Real World Analytics

Having observed the delivery of one of the workshops, I would say that Richard's style engaged and challenged the delegates. He responded well to all their questions and provided feedback and support throughout the various practical components of the workshop. He delivered a workshop that met our needs perfectly.

Louise Morris, Learning & Development Manager, Certas Energy

We asked Richard to design and run a team development away day, in preparation for an upcoming organisational change. Richard spent time getting to know and understand our requirements, interviewed key senior team members and demonstrated an empathy for our organisational context.

He designed a workshop that ensured everyone contributed, allowed for open and challenging debate and helped us focus on the actionable changes we'd like to make as a team.

We found the session to be extremely valuable and I would be very happy to recommend Richard to any organisation looking for a professionally facilitated team workshop.

Robin McIver, Director of Strategy, Planning & Assurance, King's College