Our 20 favourite time management hacks at BossData

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When our colleagues look back on their first days on the job, they always say they could've done soooo many things soooo much quicker... Who are we even kidding? Even today, I'm sure there's still a lot we can do to work more efficiently.

You see, creating an efficient way of working for yourself isn't done overnight. It takes time - oh-the-irony - to find out what time management hacks work best for you.

At Bossdata we have a whole database on time management hacks. In this ebook we'll share our 23 favourite hacks. We hope at least one will help you create more time during your working day. Use that extra time to scroll through instagram or something. ;)

SAVING TIME WITH EMAILS

Here's a little challenge for you: take pen and paper, and put it next to your computer. Now, draw a line every time you open your inbox for a whole day. And don't cheat! Even just a quick check deserves a dash. What's your final count? Mine was 13 today. Not good. Here's how we can both do better.
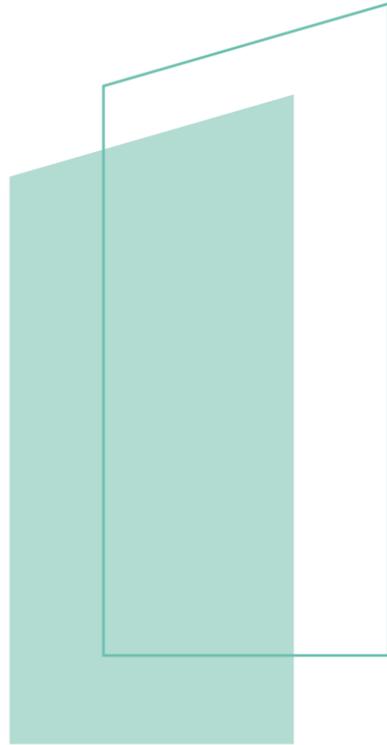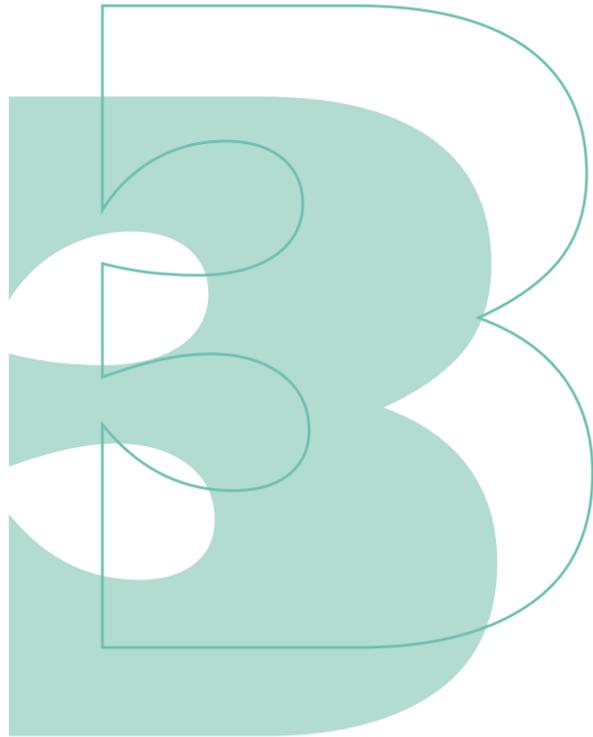
Turn off notifications

I know, it's hard. "But, what if there is something important?", you say? Trust me. When there's something urgent: they'll call you.

Challenge yourself

Only **look at your inbox three times a day.**

Use priority inbox

Reading an email does not mean you need to answer the email. **Use priority inbox** (trust me, they're the shit), **highlight emails, and respond to them when you're in a concentration dip.** Use your concentration for *real work*.

Email group labels

Do you often need to reach the same group of people? Then, **make email group labels** to reach them in one click. Here's a little tutorial we use internally to show how you make group labels in Gmail.

Loom to explain

Did you watch the tutorial from hack 4? We **use Loom to explain more complicated things.** Why spend a lot of time figuring out how to explain something in an email? Just make a quick screen recording and talk someone through as you would do in real life. Loom is a fantastic tool that helped us save countless hours of explaining stuff.

SAVING TIME WITH MEETINGS

"This meeting could've been an email"... A classic, but sometimes the sad truth. It's a given that most meetings can go a liiiitle bit more efficiently. Here's 5 ways how we make that happen:
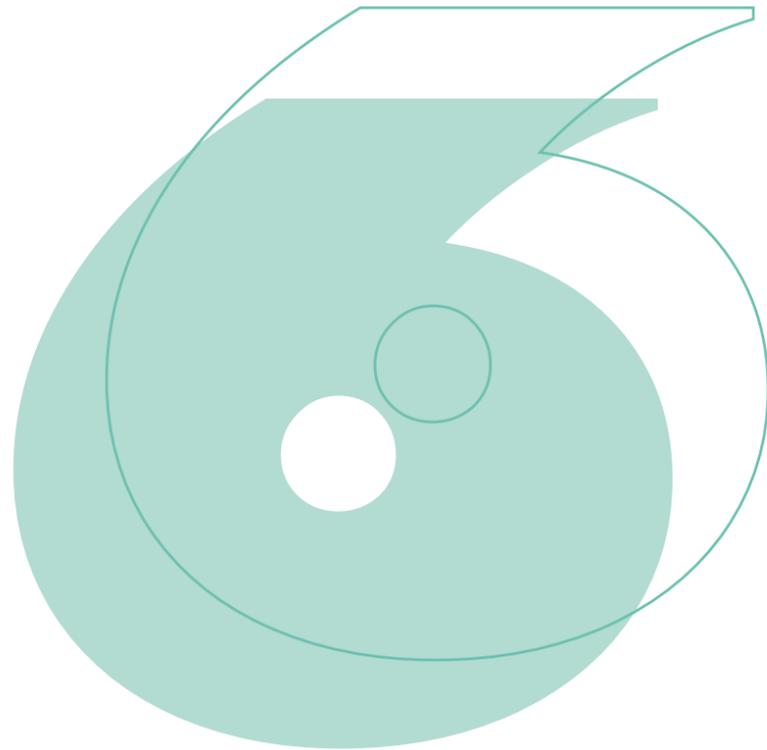
Asynchronous communication

Should a meeting even take place? If there is one thing that remote working taught us at BossData, it's that asynchronous communication is the future. Let people answer your questions in their own time, instead of planning meetings like a madman.

Is everyone relevant?

Before scheduling a meeting, **ask yourself if everyone needs to be in this meeting?** Sometimes you automatically invite the usual suspects, while not everyone is relevant for every meeting.
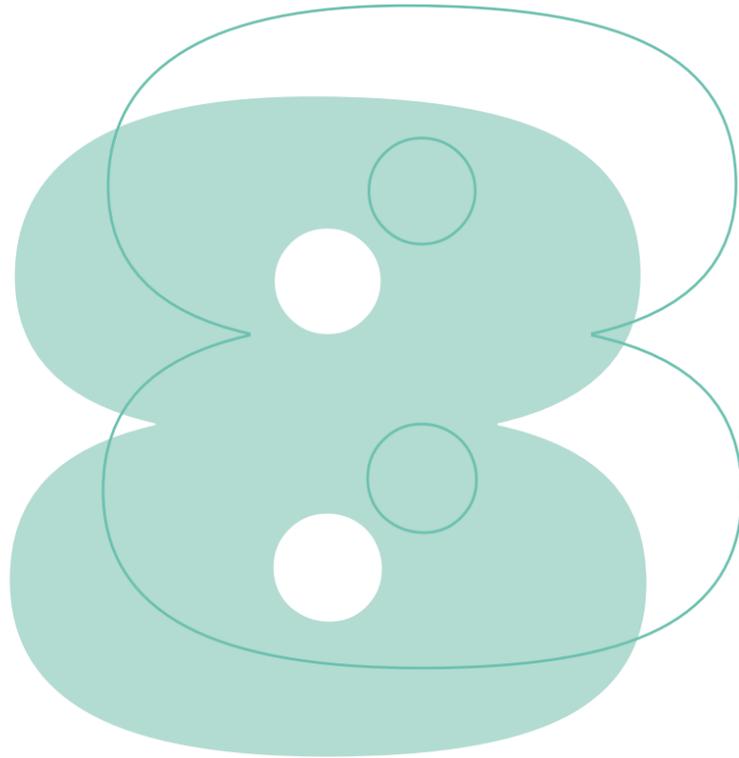
What's-this-meeting-about-again-b*llsh*t

Before a meeting: **write a summary of what you'll discuss in the calendar invite.** Now everyone can be prepared when they enter the meeting. *No what's-this-meeting-about-again-b*llsh*t anymore.*

Prepare your questions

Do you come across some questions you want to ask in a **future** meeting? **Put your questions in the meeting notes**. Besides not forgetting what you'll have to ask, it gives others the chance to prepare your questions before the meeting.
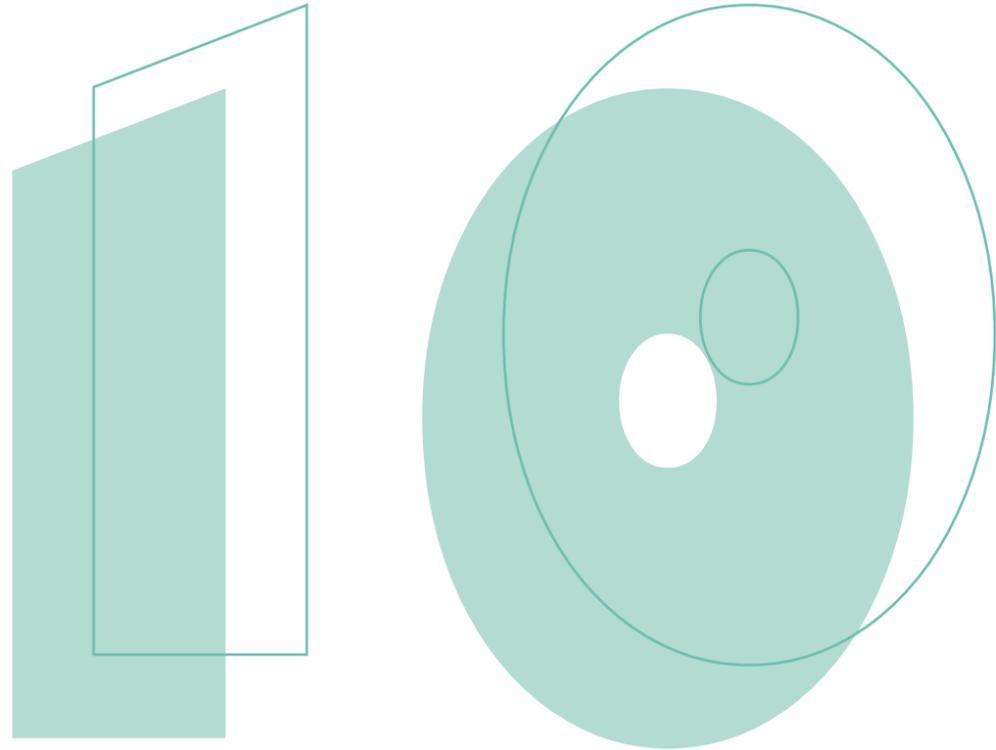
Quick recap

Are you leading the meeting? Take notes, and **send a recap email with everyone's to-do's** after the meeting has ended. That's the last time Jimmy got away with doing nothing around the office!

By the way, we did not make this stuff up ourselves. There are enough successful business leaders who have their own take on making meetings more productive. Like Elon Musk, who says you can walk out of a meeting at the moment you feel you're not adding anything to a meeting. Or Jef Bezos who makes everyone read a **written 6-paged-memo** before a meeting.
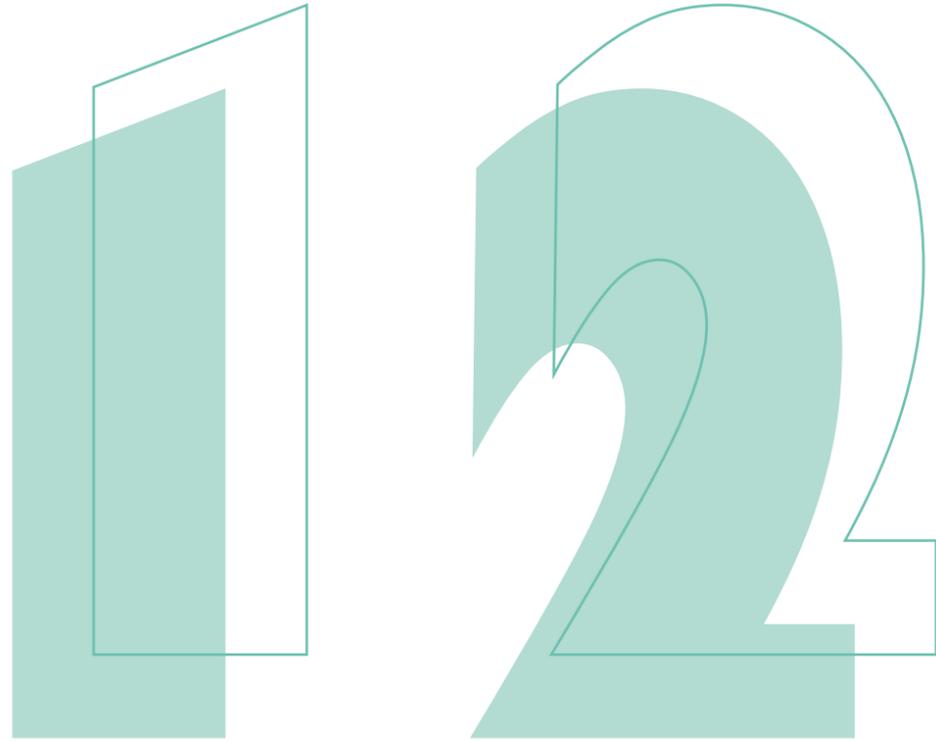
SAVING TIME WITH YOUR AGENDA

Look at your calendar as an extension of your brain. We're sure you already keep a clean schedule. Nevertheless, here's how you can optimize yours even better.
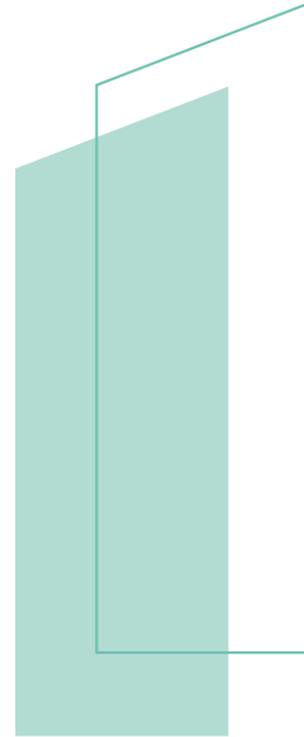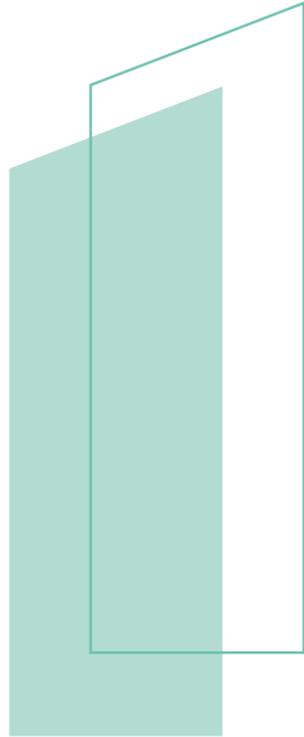
Quick access

Put your calendar on the homepage of your browser. Now you always have it as a quick access.

Weekly planning-hour

Have a weekly planning-hour to map out next week's schedule. We suggest doing this on Friday afternoon or Monday morning. But, you see what fits you best.

KKB

At BossData **we plan 'Korte Krachtige Blokken' - KKB -** in our calendar. It's better to concentrate on one task for an hour, than working for three hours with half the amount of concentration.

Oxygen blocks

We want everyone to have enough time to finish their to-do's of the week. That's why **we plan 'oxygen blocks' in our schedule**. When initially planned, you have no clue what you're going to do within this timeframe. Throughout the week it fills up with tasks you couldn't finish within your original planning. Last-minute tasks can also be taken up here.

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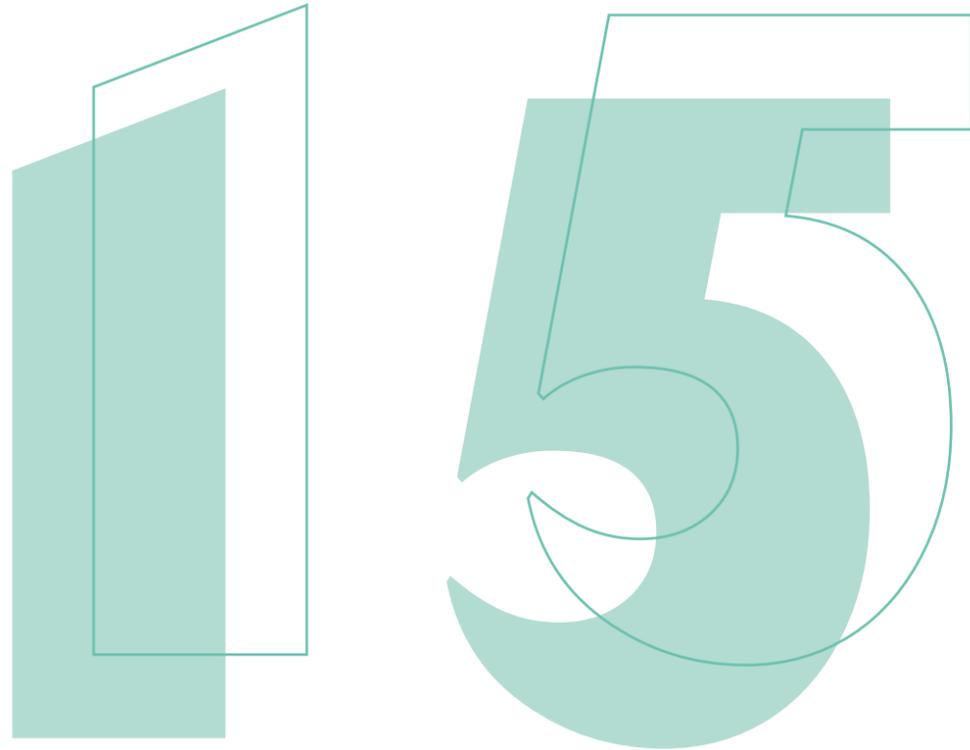
Meeting-free day

Have **one meeting-free day a week.** At BossData we have no external meetings on Tuesdays. All our colleagues focus a whole day on actual work, instead of hopping from meeting to meeting.

SAVING TIME WITH TASK MANAGER TOOLS

If you're not using task management tools yet, what are you waiting for? They're life-changers. At BossData we use <u>Trello</u>. With their free version, you can basically do everything you need, except some fancy shmancy stuff. Our biggest tip: you should only remember things once. As soon as a thought or to-do pops in your head? Put it down in a Trello-card.
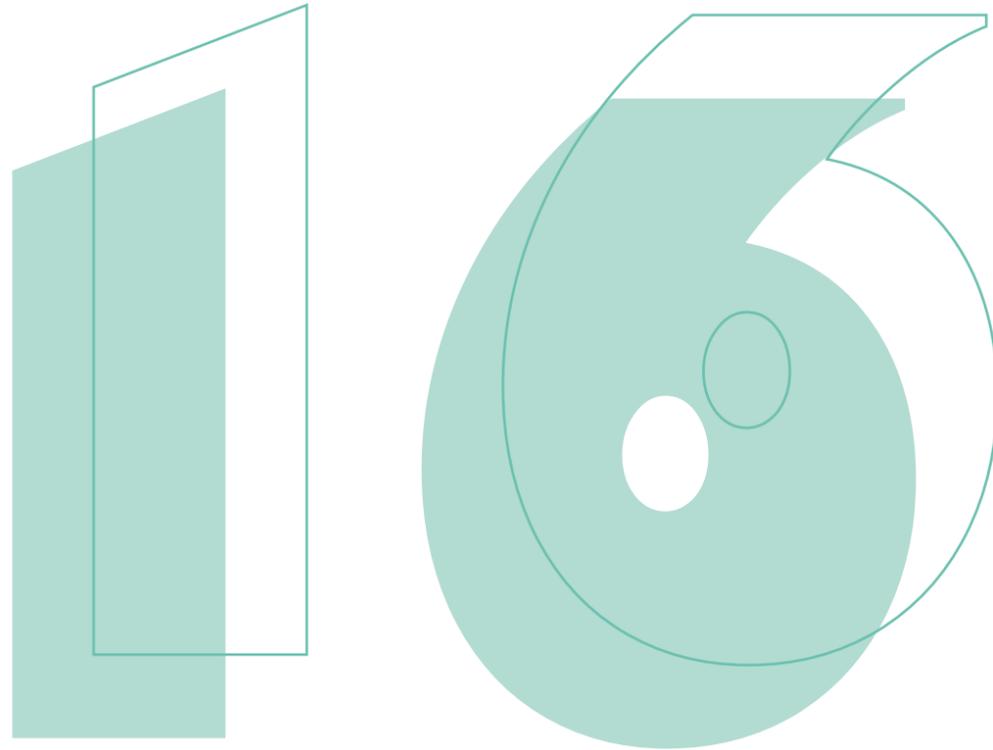
Well-thought-out structure

Use a well-thought-out structure for your Trello overview. Here are some useful columns our colleagues at BossData use to structure their boards, but feel free to build a structure that works for you.

**Low prio**: these are the last tasks you'll start working on.

Medium prio: There's no immense time pressure here, but remember to do these tasks.

High prio: these are the tasks you'll start working on first.

Waiting for input: You can't start working on these tasks yet. Don't forget to put in your notes whose input you're waiting for.

Done: Here you keep all your finished tasks. To see what you've been working on last, put your most recent cards up top. Look at this tab as your professional museum or hall-of-fame. It doesn't serve a big practical purpose, but it's fun sometimes to look through.
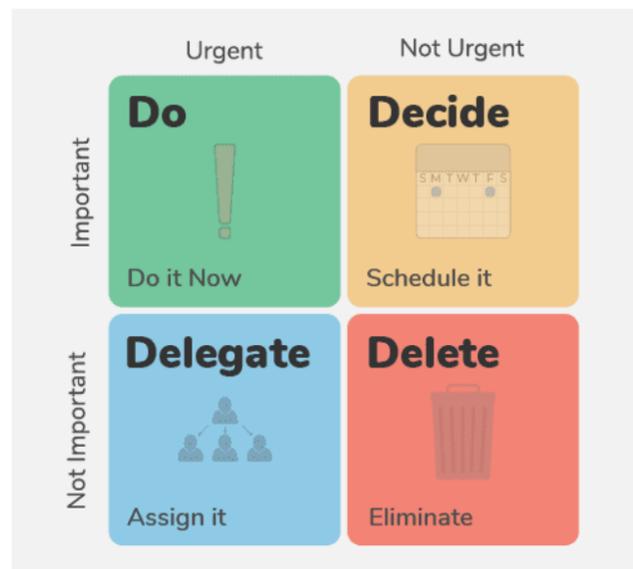
A small example of a Trello-template we use at BossData.
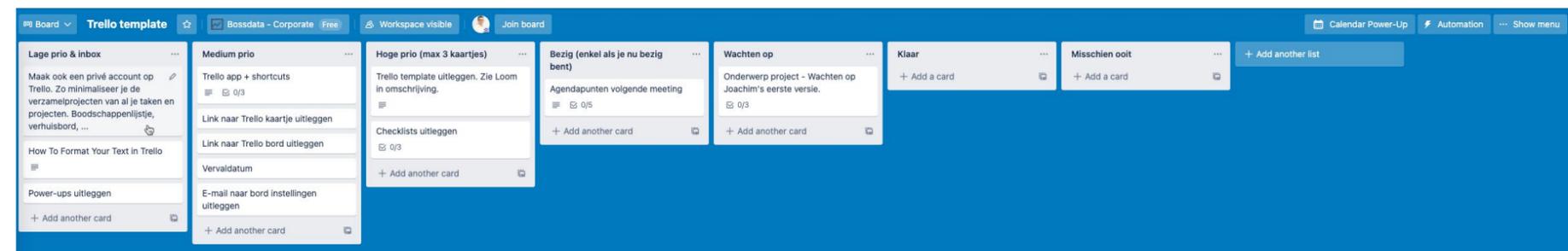
Priority tasks

Struggles to decide if tasks are low, medium, or high priority? **Use the Eisenhower framework**. It's pretty basic, but why make things complicated when you're trying to save time?

SAVING TIME WITH THESE EXTRA'S

To finish this time management master course - can you feel the efficiency flowing through you? - we'll share some nice extras that will help you perform better, faster, and with less stress.
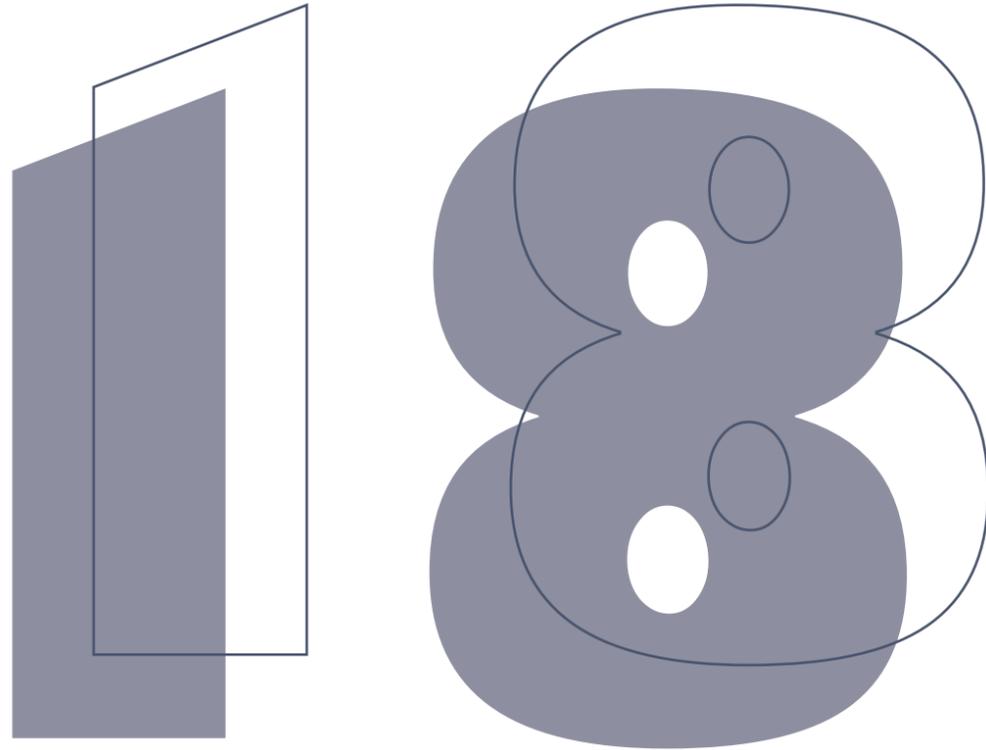
Book tip 1

[Getting things done](#) is about how your performance is intertwined with your ability to relax. When your mind is clear and your thoughts are organized: you'll achieve effective productivity. Feel free to visit our company's library and *get some reading done*.

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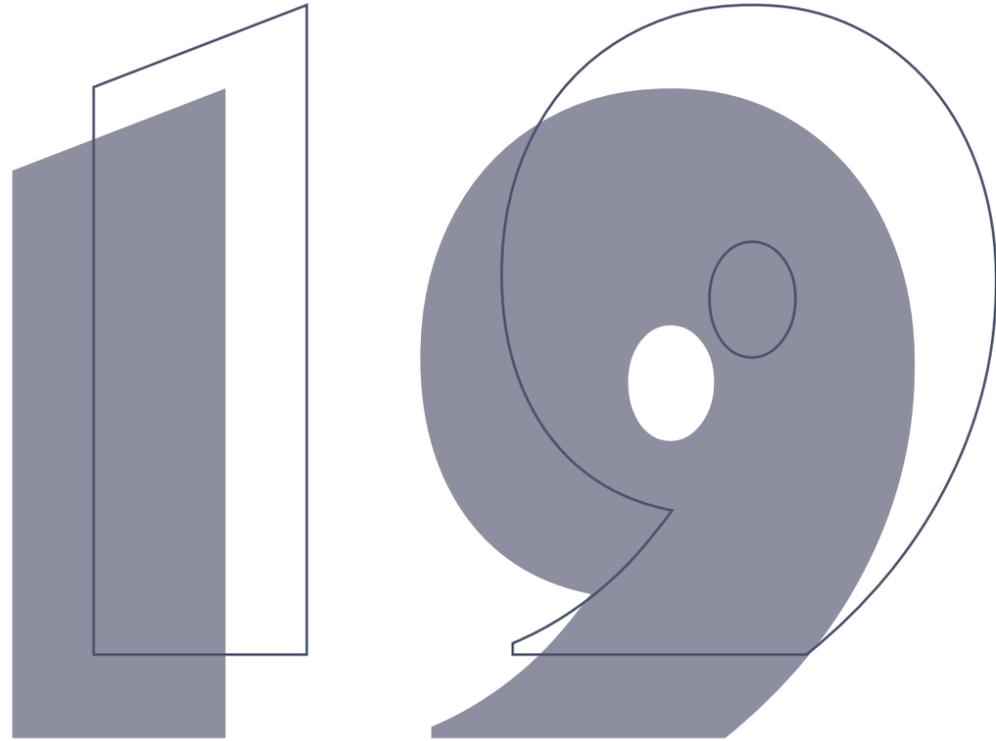
Book tip 2

[Win tijd op jouw manier](). If you didn't notice it yet, this book is in Dutch. Sorry to all the Anglican readers! This book talks about the EFFECT-method, and how it helps you to use time better and more efficiently.

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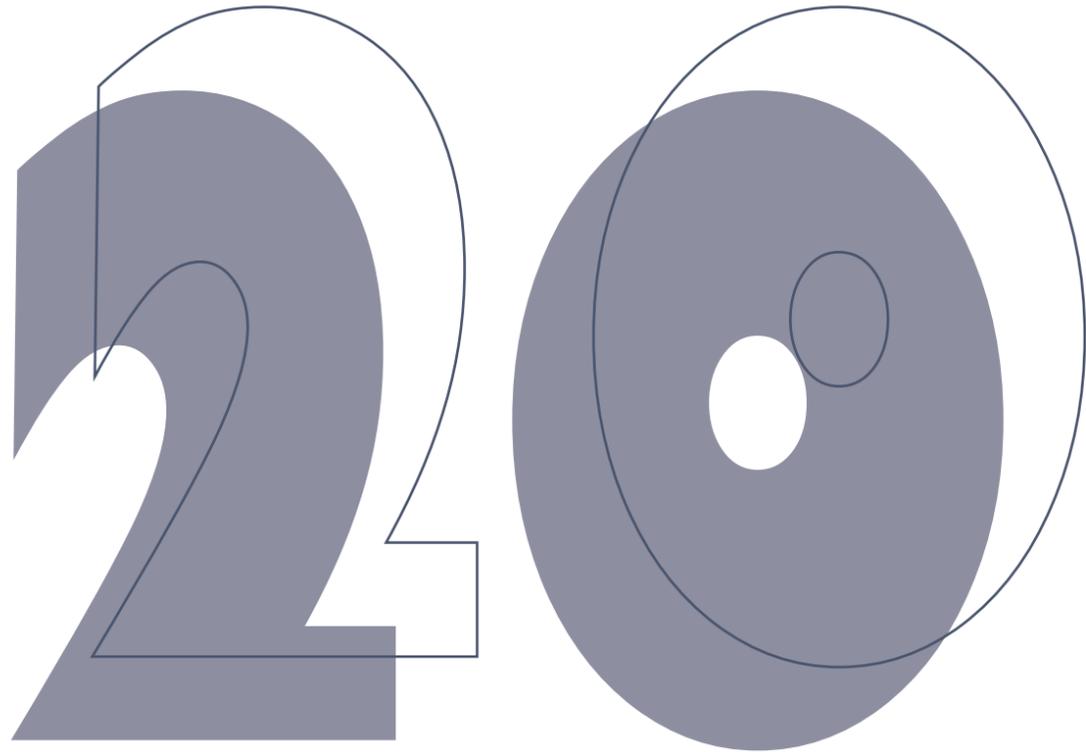
Podcast tip 1

Listen to this episode on how to make meetings less terrible from Freakonomics Radio. Because let's be honest: some meetings are just… terrible.

Start saving time now!

By using these tips, in one weeks you'll have caught up with the time you invested in reading these hacks. And in one year of using time hacks: you will have saved a whole week's worth of time. Yup, you read it right! That's a whole extra week in a year!

We do understand that not every trick works equally well for everyone. Find your pace. And if even only one of the hacks above works for you, we think it's worth making this ebook.

Enjoyed the ebook? Reach out!