

Impact-Effort Matrix

WORKSHEET

A 2x2 grid that sorts candidate actions by expected impact against effort required, separating quick wins and major projects from fill-ins and thankless tasks, so a team spends its limited capacity where it counts and gains licence to stop work that earns nothing.

PREPARED BY _____ DATE _____

QUICK WINS

High impact for low effort. The best return on capacity available and the right place to start, both for the value itself and for the momentum and credibility early results buy. Genuinely rare, which is worth remembering when this quadrant looks crowded.

MAJOR PROJECTS

High impact for high effort. The strategic quadrant, where the big returns live, funded and planned properly rather than started casually. The discipline is concurrency: a team that runs many major projects at once usually finishes none of them.

FILL-INS

Low impact for low effort. Harmless improvements worth doing when capacity is idle, batched or delegated, and never allowed to displace higher-value work merely because they are easy and pleasantly finishable.

THANKLESS TASKS

Low impact for high effort. The capacity sink: inherited routines, reports nobody reads, processes that outlived their purpose. The quadrant's job is to generate a stop-doing list, and retiring one thankless task often funds a quick win several times over.

Impact-Effort Matrix, 1990 · Originator: No single originator; codified through quality-improvement and Lean Six Sigma practice.

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