



# REPRODUCIBLE TRAINING LIBRARY

Customizable Soft-Skills Courseware

## Balancing Priorities

How to Successfully Manage Tasks,  
Deadlines, and Expectations

PREVIEW



Instructor Guide

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## About the Reproducible Training Library

Reproducible Training Library (RTL) offers an unrivaled range of training programs that combine quality and affordability. These learning solutions are designed using proven adult-learning methods and offered at a price that will extend your training budget a lot further than you can imagine.

Structured as instructor-led programs, the RTL provides ready-to-use content on the topics and skills most needed in today's organizations. What's more, once you purchase and download an RTL product, it's yours to keep, customize, and use over and over again.

### Affordable Classroom Training

It takes 43 hours to develop a single hour of instructor-led training, according to research carried out by the Chapman Alliance.<sup>1</sup> For a half-day workshop—the minimum length of a classroom program in the RTL—this translates into a development cost of \$23,736, significantly more than it costs to purchase the entire RTL collection.

In addition to being cost-effective, the RTL allows you to tap into a wide range of expertly developed training designs, each complete with an instructor guide, participant guide, and slideshow presentation. With just a few clicks of the mouse, you can download the Microsoft Word and PowerPoint files to your desktop in a matter of minutes.

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*"I was able to go from unzipping the RTL files to delivery in less than 2 hours, making the preparation time to delivery easy and much less stressful. The instructor guides are written in a way that is logical and makes the pre-workshop study time simple and less frustrating: No hunting for the right slides, no guessing what the instructional designer intended for each module!"*

—James T. Puett, Manager, Leadership and Organizational Development, Healthways Human Resources

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### Accelerated Learning – Accelerated Performance

The starting point for developing new titles for the RTL is to tap into the most contemporary thinking and best practices on topics that are proven to positively influence individual and organizational performance. Our experienced instructional designers review dozens of articles, books, and conference papers to isolate the critical components of a particular skill set. Then they use their expertise to create an effective training and learning design that is structured to enhance the learner's skills and improve his or her performance. A common instructional approach used in the development of RTL content is the "4P" instructional model, conceived by Dave Meier at the Center for Accelerated Learning:<sup>2</sup>

1. **Prepare** (the learner)
2. **Present** (the information)
3. **Practice**
4. **Perform** (provide job aids that help the learner transfer and reinforce the learning back on the job)

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<sup>1</sup> Chapman, Brian. "How Long Does it Take to Create Learning?" Chapman Alliance, 2010. [www.slideshare.net/bchapman\\_utah/how-long-does-it-take-to-create-learning](http://www.slideshare.net/bchapman_utah/how-long-does-it-take-to-create-learning). Calculation of development hours assumes the design includes a lesson plan, workbooks, handouts, and a supporting PowerPoint slide deck.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.alcenter.com>

## Customizable

Each classroom title in the RTL can be delivered or viewed without any modification. The open Word and PowerPoint formats, however, enable you to add your own unique elements and even change the entire look and feel of the content. Here are just a few ways you can customize the material:

- Add your organization's logo or brand.
- Place your own organization-specific content into the design.
- Change examples to fit your industry or work environment.
- Modify content to match company rules and procedures.
- Add, delete, or rearrange content to meet training time constraints.
- Change fonts, colors, and layout properties.

You can also combine more than one title into a longer training design, extract relevant sections and reuse them in other designs you have created, or use the general structure of one module to begin developing a completely new design. Whether you choose to use the material as designed or modify it to suit your needs, you'll find the RTL to be a flexible resource and a wise investment.

## License-Free

Buy once, use many times. It's a compelling model for any budget-challenged training department. Purchase any title from the library with the knowledge that you won't need to budget for any additional licensing fees or annual subscriptions. The material is yours to use in whatever way you choose.<sup>3</sup> You can freely distribute the material throughout your organization, make it available on your internal server, create unlimited hard copies, upload it to a Learning Management System (LMS), develop a customized version, and even embed the material in other training or learning systems you design.

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<sup>3</sup> Some restrictions apply.

## **Preparing for the Course**

Before conducting the training, we encourage you to read the Instructor Guide thoroughly, familiarize yourself with the program’s components, and test-run the PowerPoint presentation.

If you would like written feedback on the course, make copies of the Course Evaluation form and distribute them at the end of the training.

## **What’s Included in This Program**

This course contains several components:

- Instructor Guide
- Participant Guide
- Classroom PowerPoint Presentation
- One-page Learning Summary
- One-page Course Overview
- Course Evaluation Form

## **Materials Not Included**

You will need the following materials to conduct the course:

- Flip chart and markers
- If you choose to wrap up the program by asking participants to share key learning points, we recommend using a Koosh ball or beanbag for the activity (see “Learning Summary” section).

## **Suggested Target Audience**

This program is appropriate for employees and business professionals at every level who want to be able to accomplish their work as productively as possible in an increasingly fast-paced and rapidly changing work environment.

## **Timing**

The timing suggestions noted in this course assume that you have experience facilitating instructor-led training. If you are a new facilitator, you may wish to allow more time. Regardless of your experience level, you and your participants will gain the most from the program if you devote time beforehand to understanding the content.

Please consider rehearsing the delivery in order to gauge the pace of the program and determine whether you need to adjust the timing.

PREVIEW

Please note: Only the pages highlighted below are those featured in this preview.

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## Course Objectives

When you complete this course, you will be able to:

- Understand why it is important to manage your priorities.
- Describe obstacles to managing your priorities.
- Prioritize your tasks, activities, and responsibilities.
- Employ strategies for making the best use of your time.
- Describe ways to use technology to stay on track.

### Instructor Notes

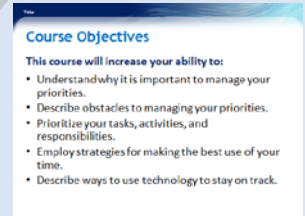


5 minutes



Introduce yourself and briefly describe your background.

Go over logistics (schedule, breaks, restrooms, etc.) and any ground rules for the day. Typical ground rules include showing respect for all participants, participating fully, not using electronics, and not interrupting or dominating the conversation.



Review the course objectives.

PREVIEW



## Introduction

In our increasingly competitive world, we all need to be more productive than ever. Not only must we do our jobs in less time and with fewer resources, we often work for more than one boss and on more than one team. As a result, we may face conflicting tasks, deadlines, and expectations, making it difficult to identify what's most important. Furthermore, the transformations in our workplaces brought about by technology have, in addition to the many benefits, increased the speed and complexity of our work.

This course will enable you to properly prioritize your obligations, allowing you to improve performance and productivity. As a result, you'll also achieve a better work/life balance, minimize the stress related to managing your tasks efficiently, and, ultimately, improve working relationships.

### Instructor Notes



10 minutes

Ask the following questions without pausing between them for a response:



“Do you ever feel overwhelmed by your work?”

“Do you ever feel that you aren't getting everything done?”

“Do you ever feel as if the people you work with and for are throwing too much work at you?”

Explain:

“Don't feel alone. These days, nearly all of us have too much to do. We must do our jobs in less time and with fewer resources. Those of us who work for more than one boss and in more than one team face conflicting expectations, making it difficult to identify what's important. Technology, which benefits us in so many ways, has also increased the speed and complexity of our work. That's the reason for this course.”






Review the second paragraph within the Introduction which outlines some of the benefits of this course.

## MODULE 1

# What's Important

## Objectives

- Set relevant goals and identify tasks needed to achieve them.
- Use a matrix to prioritize tasks and activities.
- Identify work that others could do.

Type of Activity	Section	Time (minutes)
	1.1 Setting Relevant Goals	20
	1.2 Prioritizing Tasks and Activities	20
	1.3 Identifying Work That Others Could Do	20

Total: 60 minutes

**Individual Activity: Breaking Down My Goal into Action Steps**

*Instructions:* Write down one of your current goals. Then, using the table provided, list what you need to do to accomplish that goal and estimate the time needed for each task.

Current goal:

Action	Time needed

**Instructor Notes (cont.)**



“Now that you have practiced breaking a goal into action steps, try it with one of your own.”



Activity: Review the instructions. Allow participants 5 minutes to complete the activity individually.

Optional: Give participants an additional 5 minutes to share their responses with a partner.

## 1.2 Prioritizing Tasks and Responsibilities

In addition to activities related to your specific goals, you have routine, recurring tasks and responsibilities that need to be accomplished. To decide where to focus your time, productivity experts such as Stephen Covey, author of *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, have found that it can help to sort them into categories such as the ones shown below.<sup>1</sup>

### High Urgency/High Importance

If there is a fire in your office, it's extremely important to put it out, even if that means stopping something else that you are doing. The consequences of not taking action would be too severe. You can't always foresee and avoid these crisis situations, but some may be of your own making. For example, when you leave things until the last minute, an ordinary task can become a crisis.

### Low Urgency/High Importance

These can be the most important tasks because they lead you toward your goals, yet they are easy to neglect because the consequences are not often seen immediately. Not taking the time to attend regular team meetings may mean that you miss important discussions and information sharing related to one of your projects. Neglecting to assess your goals when things change may lead you to waste time working on things that are no longer relevant. Skipping personal activities such as exercise and family activities can lead to poor health and increased stress.

### High Urgency/Low Importance

A primary obstacle in getting important work done is when things appear to be urgent but really are not. These are often interruptions and "urgent" requests. A colleague stops by to chat about next weekend's softball game. Out of ten emails that arrive in your inbox, seven are from people who have copied you on matters in which you are not involved.

### Low Urgency/Low Importance

High on the list of activities that fall into this category are things that we enjoy doing but do little to lead you toward your goals— they can even become serious impediments to getting your important work done. Maybe you'd rather read blog and twitter posts than dive into that report, or maybe you'd rather crunch numbers than attend meetings with clients. Whether you do these activities because you enjoy them or because they distract you from things you'd rather not do, they can eat up valuable time and make it much harder to achieve your goals.

#### Instructor Notes



20 minutes



"Setting goals and deciding what you need to do to accomplish them is a big first step toward identifying what's important. But you are still left with a lot of things to do. Some of them are directly related to a specific goal, and some are routine, recurring tasks."

Ask: "Do all those tasks and responsibilities have the same importance?"

(Participants will likely respond by saying no.)

"As you likely already know from your own experiences, all those tasks and responsibilities don't have the same level of importance. The question is how do you know which ones are more important at any given time. One way to decide is to consider what might happen if you *don't* do something or if you don't do it right away."



Review "Prioritizing Tasks and Activities."

(continued on the next page)

<sup>1</sup>Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Free Press, 2004).

## 1.3 Identifying Work That Others Could Do

### Group Activity: What Could Others Do?

*Instructions:* Read the scenario. Then discuss the question with your group.

Padma is feeling overwhelmed. She works for three different managers, and they have each given her projects that have overlapping deadlines. She keeps falling behind, partly because so much of her time is spent on her other responsibilities, including preparing and distributing an agenda for her team’s weekly meetings, responding to routine requests for information from colleagues in other parts of the organization, and editing a monthly newsletter sent to her department’s customers.

On one particularly difficult day, Padma realizes that she is not going to be able to get everything done. She is going to have to enlist the help of others. But how can she do this and still make sure that the work meets her own high standards?

Suppose Padma asks you for advice. What would you tell her about how to delegate her work successfully?

### Instructor Notes



20 minutes



“One obstacle to managing your priorities is trying to do everything yourself, instead of focusing on the work that only you can do.”



Activity: Review the instructions. Allow participants 10 minutes to respond in small groups.

Debrief by asking groups to share their answers with the class.

*(continued on the next page)*

PREVIEW

## 2.1 Keeping Yourself Organized

How much of your work time do you spend looking for things you need— information, documents, files, emails, pens, pencils, paper clips? How easily can you quickly put your hands on exactly what you need? A lack of organization means that you waste valuable time looking for things instead of doing what needs to be done. A good organizational system can help you move more efficiently toward your goals.

### Individual Activity: How Organized Are You?

*Instructions:* For each statement, circle the number that best reflects how well it describes you in the workplace.

Use the following scale:

1 = *doesn't describe me at all*

2 = *describes me to a small extent*

3 = *describes me to a moderate extent*

4 = *describes me very well*

Statement	Rating
1. I can easily find a specific email or electronic file.	1 2 3 4
2. I keep supplies and materials I need close at hand.	1 2 3 4
3. Each time I read an email or a document, I decide what to do with it before moving on to something else.	1 2 3 4
4. I can quickly locate the contact information for people I work with or do business with.	1 2 3 4

**Total:**

Add the numbers assigned to each statement and see how your organizational skills measure up by reading the interpretations on the next page.

*(continued on the next page)*

### Instructor Notes



15 minutes



“One reason that many people find it difficult to get everything done is that they haven’t bothered to organize their work space. A good organizational system can save you time and help you manage your priorities successfully.”

Review the opening paragraph.

“Recognizing the ways in which you are disorganized is the first step toward organizing yourself so you can accomplish your priorities more effectively.”



Activity: Review the instructions. Allow participants 5 minutes to respond individually.

*(continued on the next page)*

**Interpreting Your Total Score:**

4–6: Lack of organization may be making it much harder for you to achieve your goals.

7–9: You would find it easier to get things done if you organized your work space so you could find things more easily.

10–13: Lack of organization seldom interferes with your ability to get things done.

14–16: Congratulations! You are generally well organized.

**Individual Activity: How Organized Are You? (cont.)**

What are some things you do or could do to keep yourself organized?

***Instructor Notes (cont.)***

Debrief by asking participants to share their answer with the class.

Record them on a flip chart page.

*(continued on the next page)*

PREVIEW

## 2.3 Managing Conflicting Expectations

### Group Activity: What Can Carlos Do?

*Instructions:* Read the scenario. Then discuss the questions with your group.

Carlos has spent the last hour trying to reschedule his time for the coming week. The problem is that two of the people he works for have asked him to facilitate important two-hour meetings in different locations on the same day, one from 10:30 to 12:30, and the other from 1:30 to 3:30. He wonders, *“How am I ever going to find the time to prepare, let alone get from one meeting to the other, without being late?”*

What advice would you give Carlos about how to handle this situation?

What are some experiences you’ve had with conflicting expectations? How did you handle them?

### Instructor Notes



15 minutes



“One issue that can make it hard to schedule your activities is conflicting expectations from others. And it can be difficult to manage those expectations.”



Activity: Review the instructions. Allow participants 10 minutes to work in small groups. Debrief by asking groups to share their answers with the class. Record their responses on a flip chart.

*(continued on the next page)*



## Making the Best Use of a To-Do List

Whether you use an electronic to-do list or a pen-and-paper to-do list, here are some ways to get the most out of it:

- Review and update your to-do list every day.
- Lists all the tasks and activities you need to do on a given day, even those that seem minor.
- Note the time that you will spend on each activity.
- Check off things when you've done them.
- If you cannot do or complete an activity that needs to be done, schedule it for another day.

Other:

### Individual Activity: Your Insights

What insights did you gain from this module that might help you juggle your priorities more successfully?

### Instructor Notes (cont.)



Review the suggestions for "Making the Best Use of a To-Do List," incorporating the participants' responses when possible.



Review the instructions.

Allow participants one minute to answer the question.

Option: Give participants 2–3 additional minutes to share their insights with a partner.

"As you've learned in this module, successfully managing multiple priorities means staying focused on your important work. In the next module, we'll explore how technology can help you to do so."

## Common Technological Tools for Managing Priorities

Amy might have mentioned these common technological tools that could help Pierre work more productively and manage his priorities more effectively.

### Software

There is a wide range of software available that can help you organize your information and your time when you want to:

- Set goals, develop action plans, and monitor your progress.
- Manage your projects.
- Maintain contact lists.
- Create schedules and to-do lists.
- Set up calendars.
- Set reminders.

### Cell Phones

You might not think of your cell phone as a computer, but it is. By syncing your cell phone with your computer, you can stay on top of your priorities when you are on the go. For example, you can:

- Keep your to-do list and calendar close at hand and updated.
- Get a reminder when you have a meeting or something else on your schedule.
- Retrieve and update your contacts list.
- View and respond to email.
- Send and retrieve text messages when you need to exchange bits of information quickly.
- Capture ideas as they occur to you, no matter where you are.
- Avoid wasting time trying to find the location of meetings and appointments using GPS.
- Share documents quickly and securely.

### Instructor Notes (cont.)



Review “Common Technological Tools for Managing Priorities,” incorporating participants’ responses when possible.

*(continued on the next page)*

*(continued on the next page)*

## Test Your Knowledge

1. What are three challenges to managing multiple priorities successfully?
  - 
  - 
  -
2. Which action can help you manage your priorities?
  - a. Try to do as many things at one time as you can.
  - b. Organize your work space, data, and files.
  - c. Refuse additional work when your schedule is full.
  - d. Stop going to meetings.
3. Setting clear, relevant goals helps you to (list three actions):
  - 
  - 
  -
4. To delegate successfully, focus on how the results are achieved.
  - a. True
  - b. False
5. Which steps can you take to keep yourself organized?
  - a. Keep what you need close at hand.
  - b. Name files so they are easy to retrieve.
  - c. Immediately delete any emails that you are not sure what to do with.
  - d. Schedule time regularly to maintain your organizational system.
6. A useful schedule should include breaks and personal time as well as work-related activities.
  - a. True
  - b. False

### Instructor Notes



10 minutes



As a final activity, ask participants to complete the “Test Your Knowledge” section individually.

Debrief by reviewing the answers (on the next page) as a group.

## What our Clients Say about the Reproducible Training Library

“I have used many of the *Reproducible Training* programs and I can't say enough good things about them. The content is easy to tailor—I've even combined programs to meet my clients' specific needs. Not only am I able to provide my clients with a professionally developed, customized program at a reasonable price, but I've saved myself a lot of time and frustration, too. I plan to buy more programs in the future. I highly recommend them!”

Rosemary C. Rulka, MS, SPHR  
President  
R.C. Rulka Consulting, LLC

“We chose the *Reproducible Training Library* for the open-source format and customizable materials. The programs are well structured and rich with content. Preparation to delivery was less than 2 hours, and the addition of our company themes make the materials look like they were designed in house.”

James T. Puett  
Manager, Leadership and Organizational Development  
Healthways Human Resources

## Delivering high-quality, customized training has never been simpler.

The *Reproducible Training Library* is your comprehensive source for soft-skills content that's downloadable, customizable, reproducible, and affordable. From communication and leadership to team building, negotiating, and more, our experts have done the development work for you. Whether you use the materials “right out of the box” or tailor the content to your needs—download to delivery takes just a few clicks.

### Features and Benefits

- *Instant Access:* Your program is available to you for immediate download.
- *Quality Content:* Top-notch development enables you to deliver a rich program.
- *Ability to Customize:* Make the program yours, or use it “right out of the box.”
- *Unlimited Use:* Reprint the materials as much as you like, as often as you like.

### Get Started Today!

### Have questions?

Contact us at [office@dekon.biz](mailto:office@dekon.biz).