

Realistic planning: A schedule that survives the week

Adaptive module

~20 min

Schedules filled to 100% no longer hold up: work has become interdependent, AI disrupts estimates, and sustained attention is getting close to one minute, according to Gloria Mark. This module replaces ambition with realism: a day planned to 60–70%, blocks that protect focus, dependencies built in from the start, adjustment without guilt, and a caution that time saved with AI must not come at the expense of colleagues' schedules.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 01 Understand why a schedule filled to 100% derails: interdependence, shifting estimates, and reduced attention.
- 02 Plan your week in two steps, a weekly overview and a daily adjustment, after prioritizing.
- 03 Apply the four keys: fill your schedule to 60–70%, think in blocks, account for dependencies, and adjust without guilt.
- 04 Link your calendar, task management tool, and team channel, and have AI plan without producing workslop.

WHO IT'S FOR

Anyone who wants a schedule that really helps them move forward, whether working alone or in an interdependent team.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

- 1 **Self-assessment:** on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
- 2 **Expert video:** 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
- 3 **Practice scenarios:** the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
- 4 **Dated commitment:** one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
- 5 **Memo to download:** key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

A SAMPLE PRACTICE SCENARIO

Tuesday. Adama's manager wants to deliver the migration of a new client's payroll history on Friday. Adama, a payroll specialist, has already handled two comparable migrations this quarter. The manager asks Adama whether Friday is doable: the date can still be negotiated. What does Adama answer?

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Sharp decline in sustained attention (close to one minute) – Gloria Mark (UC Irvine)
- Workslop – Stanford & BetterUp
- 60–70% schedule rule – Afthonios principle
- Time-blocking / focus, coordination, and response blocks – Afthonios method

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Stanford (Social Media Lab) and BetterUp Labs – 2025 study on “workslop”: 40% of employees received some in the past month, at an average cost of about 2 hours per incident (Harvard Business Review, September 2025)
- Gloria Mark (University of California, Irvine) – the average attention span on a screen before switching has fallen to about 47 seconds (“Attention Span”)
- Vogel, Rodell & Agolli – Journal of Applied Psychology: daily planning improves engagement and performance
- Gollwitzer & Sheeran (2006) – “if... then...” plans and taking action