



Home



Work & Career



Exercise



30 min



Client



No

My Perfect Day at Work

Work can occupy a considerable amount of our waking time, and it is easy to become dissatisfied in a position where our needs are unmet. Indeed, the extent to which individuals' needs and values are fulfilled in the workplace directly affects their level of job satisfaction [1]. Long hours and poor work-life balance, feeling undervalued, meaningless work, and a lack of autonomy are just some ways in which work can undermine people's needs and leave them feeling unsatisfied and unhappy.

Unsurprisingly, employee dissatisfaction can be detrimental to both organizations and employees. Individuals dissatisfied with their work-life are more likely to experience low morale, decreased work performance, and diminished productivity [2]. Further, the erosion of satisfaction may have a negative effect on the physical and mental health of employees [2]. Organizations with dissatisfied employees are likely to experience higher staff absenteeism and turnover and, as a direct result, more extensive human resource expenditure [3].

On the other hand, aligning one's career and values creates a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment [1]. Individuals who are happy with their work-life are likely to be optimistic [4], engaged, motivated, more committed, and loyal to an organization and thus more likely to remain with the organization [5]. Further, satisfied employees perform better and offer more significant contributions to their organizations compared to dissatisfied employees [6].

Each of us has a unique idea of how an ideal workday would look. Whether it is a desire to work at home or in the office as part of a team, indoors or outdoors, we all want something different in our professional lives. However, the more our workdays reflect our current needs and desires, the higher the satisfaction with our job. This exercise invites participants to consider their ideal day at work and reflect on the values and needs underlying this "perfect" day.



Author

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Goal

This exercise aims to help individuals consider their ideal day at work. Participants can extract valuable information that will help them reflect on the values and needs underpinning this “perfect” day.



Advice

- This exercise will also help participants highlight the disparities between their typical workday and ideal workday. In doing so, they can consider actionable steps that will help them attain their perfect workday and, in turn, increase job satisfaction.
- A selection of prompts and questions that will help identify their ideal workday can be found in Appendix C, should participants require them. Examples of completed worksheets can be found in Appendix D.



References

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2. Faragher, E. B., Cass, M., & Cooper, C. L. (2013). The relationship between job satisfaction and health: A meta-analysis. *From Stress to Wellbeing*, 1, 254-271.
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4. Inayat, W., & Jahanzeb Khan, M. (2021). A study of job satisfaction and its effect on the performance of employees working in private sector organizations. *Education Research International*, 2021.
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My Perfect Day at Work

If you could experience the *most* perfect workday that you can imagine, what would you be doing? Where would you be? Who would you be working with?

While each of us has a unique idea of how an ideal workday would look, the more your workdays reflect your current needs and desires, the more satisfied you will be.

When you are genuinely looking forward to some aspects of your work life, an average workday can transform from the mundane into something that makes you feel happier, more content, and optimistic. This exercise will help you think about your ideal day at work and reflect on the values and needs underlying this “perfect day.”

Step 1: Reflecting on a typical workday

In this step, you will think about what you currently do on a typical workday. On the ‘My Typical Workday’ worksheet (Appendix A), use the right-hand column to record the activities that make up your average workday and write the approximate time of each action in the left-hand column.

Start from the time you begin working and continue recording your daily actions in chronological order. A completed example of this worksheet can be found in Appendix D.

Step 2: Identifying your perfect workday

In this step, you will visualize your perfect workday and describe, in detail, what that day would look like. Perhaps this would entail working with children, being outdoors, or working from home. Maybe it would involve working fewer hours, leading others, or working with people who value the same things you do.

How would it look if you could have a perfect workday – the most perfect workday that you can imagine?

In the left-hand column of the ‘My Perfect Workday’ worksheet (Appendix B), write the time slot for each activity and use the right-hand column to record the activities that would compose your ideal workday. Complete this step as if it were your to-do list or schedule for the day, starting from the time when your perfect day would begin and continuing in chronological order.

If required, a completed example of this worksheet is provided in Appendix D and a selection of questions to help you visualize your ideal workday can be found in Appendix C.



Step 3: Analysis

Now that you have identified the elements that would make up your perfect workday, it is time to think about the values, desires, and needs that these activities represent.

Take a moment to reflect on your typical workday and your perfect workday, then answer the following questions. Consider each question carefully and write your responses in the spaces provided.

1. What does your perfect workday tell you about what you consider important in a job?

2. What does your perfect workday tell you about what you need from your job?

3. Which of your strengths are you using on your perfect workday?



4. In what ways does this perfect day differ from a typical workday?

5. Comparing the two days, what are the main differences in the timings of activities? What are the reasons for these differences? For example, perhaps you start earlier and end later on your perfect workday to reduce the number of days worked each week and improve your work-life balance.

6. What small steps can you take to help you get closer to this perfect workday?

Step 4: Reflection

- How was it to complete this exercise?
- What insights have you gained about your perfect workday?
- When you think about your perfect workday, how do you feel?



Appendix A: My Typical Workday

MY TYPICAL WORKDAY	
Time	Activity



Appendix B: My Perfect Workday

MY PERFECT WORKDAY	
Time	Activity



Appendix C: Prompts (step 2)

- What is the nature of your work?
- What would you accomplish on this perfect workday?
- What three words would best describe your perfect workday?
- Are you working indoors or outdoors?
- Do you work at home or away from home?
- What do you want more of? What do you want less of?
- How would your day be structured?
- What kind of people would you be working with?
- Are you leading others? Are you part of a team? Are you working alone?
- How many hours do you work? When do you start/finish your perfect workday?
- How do you feel at the end of this perfect workday?



Appendix D: Completed examples of worksheets

My Typical Workday

MY TYPICAL WORKDAY	
Time	Activity
9am - 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Try to catch up with emails.- Check-in with the manager and shift supervisor.
10am - 11am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Team meeting.- Rush to meet the deadline.- No time for morning break.
11am - 12pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Data entry.- Return phone calls.- More emails.
12pm - 1pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Manning the phones to cover lunch breaks.- Print documents for tomorrow's meeting.
1pm - 2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Too busy for a full lunch break, took 20 minutes instead.- Respond to emails.
2pm - 3pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meeting with manager to discuss missed project deadline.- Quick coffee break.
3pm - 4pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Follow-up leads.- Meeting with HR.- Catch up with emails and missed calls.
4pm - 5pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meant to finish at 5 pm, but I need to stay until my current project is completed.



My Perfect Workday

MY PERFECT WORKDAY	
Time	Activity
8am - 9am (Early start so I can work 4 days per week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Make a plan for the day.- Work on one large project (that I am responsible for) throughout the morning.
9am - 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Continue working on a large project with my team.
10am - 11am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Coffee break & time to sit down and catch up with colleagues.- Work on smaller projects.
11am - 12pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Complete smaller projects on time.- Plan afternoon tasks.
12pm - 1pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meet with my team to discuss upcoming projects and arrange schedules.
1pm - 2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Step away from my desk, go for a walk, and meet friends for lunch.
2pm - 3pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Spend time contacting clients.- Finish up a large project.
3pm - 5pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Spend time on smaller projects.- Finish tasks for the day.- Make a plan for tomorrow.- Finish promptly at 5 pm.