

Q2

IS BETTER THAN

Q1

Q2 is Better than Q1 – from [Leadership Wisdoms](#)

For those not aware, Q2 is Stephen Covey's description of work that is Important but Not Urgent, whilst Q1 is work that appears to be Important **and** Urgent. The goal is to act on less Q1 tasks as soon as possible and also make sure you have enough space for Q2 work.

When you have too much work in Q1, you are in firefighting mode all the time. Literally solving urgent problems as they hit your desk, with no time for anything else. The goal is to reduce this by taking action to stop these problems occurring in the first place. When you solve the source of a problem, you get less of them and the load in the Q1 workload gets less. Ironically, finding the source of a problem and fixing that is Q2 time!

So, you have to stop the cycle of Q1 work to spend at least some time in Q2. When you do this, you have less crises and can spend more time in Q2 where the good work comes. For leaders this includes coaching, communication, developing others, planning, strategizing, visioning and more. The creative longer-term stuff that can get squeezed out if there is too much in crisis mode.

The key here is to break that nasty cycle by leaving a few of the crises (often they are other people's work and for you not that important – this is Q3 for which there is another '[Leadership Wisdoms](#)' poster [here](#)).

Clearly there are some things that really are Urgent and Important, but not that many (making sure you leave the building if the fire alarm rings really is Q1 – if it happens too often, it needs fixing). Recognising how to minimise these is vital for any leader to progress.

Releasing Q2 time will enable more and more work to be done to increase it in an upward spiral of growth, rather than the downward spiral of continued Q1 work.

5 Steps to Making More of Q2 (less of Q1)

1. Identify all the Q1 things that come to you and those which are not as Important as made out.
2. Stop reacting. Take time to pause, think and respond with control.
3. Identify items that you can put off, delegate or reschedule and donate that space to finding out why some of the Q1 problems are showing up.
4. Provide fixes once-and-for-all to make some apparent Q1 problems go away for good.
5. Specifically schedule 'red-circled-time' Q2 into your calendar – one hour a week to start with) protecting that vital time.

How will you make sure you schedule more Q2 and less Q1 time?

About Martin

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