CLEAR THE FRICTION

Practical Business Improvement for Established SMEs

FREE GUIDE

THE FOUR RIGHTS SERIES - 04 OF 04

The Right Time



Why busy businesses stay stuck — and what to do about it.



Includes Find / Focus/ Fix framework + Reactive Tax worksheet

FREE DIAGNOSTIC **INSIDE**

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> *"I once ran a 100-seat call centre handling 300,000 calls a year. The team were working flat out. And yet week after week, the things that actually needed to move stayed exactly where they were. The reactive work consumed everything. The important work kept getting pushed."*
>
> RICKY MUDDIMER. FOUNDER. CLEAR THE FRICTION

That's not a time management problem. That's a Right Time problem. And it doesn't just happen in call centres — it's happening right now in most established businesses. The owners often can't see it because they're too busy to look.

Right Time isn't about being more organised or finding a better productivity system. It's about whether the right work is happening at the right time — and whether the most commercially important things are getting your team's best hours, or whatever's left over after everything else has been dealt with.

FIND

What does Right Time friction look like?

Right Time friction is often invisible until you measure it. But the signs are there if you know what to look for.

- **Everything is urgent, nothing moves forward.** The week feels full. Friday arrives and you struggle to name what actually progressed. That's a prioritisation problem embedded in how the business runs.
- **Firefighting has become the default.** Problems get solved when they become crises, not before. The team is reactive because the system has trained them to be reactive.
- **Your best people are working on the wrong things.** Your most capable people end up handling the most complex fires — because they can. That's your highest-cost resource consumed by your most unpredictable demand.
- **Strategic decisions get made under pressure.** When something only gets discussed once it's become a problem, speed forces shortcuts — and shortcuts create the next fire.
- **You're always behind, never ahead.** No planning horizon. No rhythm. Just this week's list of things that need sorting.

FOCUS

Where to look first

The most useful question in a Right Time conversation isn't "how do we get more done?" It's: where is your team's best time actually going?

Best time means peak hours — when energy and focus are highest. For most people, that's the first half of the working day. The question is whether those hours are spent on the work that matters most commercially, or whether they've already been claimed by email, meetings, reactive queries, and yesterday's overflow.

In most businesses, the answer is uncomfortable. The best time has been colonised by the loudest demand, not the most important one. Start there.

FIX

One thing you can do this week

Block one hour with two or three key people. Not to plan anything — just to map where the last five working days actually went. Not what was planned, but what happened.

Ask each person: What did you spend most time on? What moved forward because of it? What didn't get touched that should have?

The answers will tell you more about your Right Time friction than any time-tracking tool. The Reactive Tax worksheet on the next page will help you structure it properly.

What the worksheet won't tell you

The Reactive Tax exercise will show you where your team's time is going and where it's being lost. What it won't show you is why the pattern is so hard to break — why reactive work keeps winning even when everyone knows it shouldn't — or how to redesign the business rhythm so strategic work is protected rather than perpetually deferred.

Take the free Online Friction Diagnostic if you haven't already. It takes around ten minutes and shows you where Right Time sits alongside the other three drivers of friction in your business.

RIGHT TIME WORKSHEET

The Reactive Tax

Two steps. First, estimate your week honestly. Then map where your best people's time actually goes — not what was planned, but what happened.

Step 1 - Estimate your Reactive Tax

For a typical working week, fill in your honest estimate:

REACTIVE WORK

%

of the working week

Firefighting, urgent requests, dealing with problems as they arise

PLANNED WORK

%

of the working week

Planned, strategic, or improvement focused work you chose to do

TOTAL

100%

If reactive > 60%, you have a Right Time problem worth addressing

Step 2 - Map where the time actually goes

Think about the last full working week:

ACTIVITY	HOURS/WEEK	REVENUE IMPACT H/M/L	COULD SOMEONE ELSE DO THIS?

AFTER YOU'VE COMPLETED THE TABLE, ASK:

1. Where are the highest-revenue-impact activities sitting in your week — first thing, or last?

2. What would you stop — or delegate — if you genuinely had permission to?

3. What important work kept getting pushed this week, and what pushed it?

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