



# The Bite

## Procrastination – why do we leave it until later?

Have you ever whiled away the day, churning emails, returning non-urgent 'phone-calls and undertaking routine administration while a key project deadline is looming - only to burn the midnight oil to meet the completion date?

This common but destructive behaviour has mystified psychologists for decades. Professor Ferrari has identified three distinct types of procrastinators:

- Arousal** thrill seekers who enjoy the pressure of last minute activity
- Avoidance** those who put off hard, boring or unclear tasks to avoid being seen as failures
- Decisional** the chronically indecisive (or perfectionists seeking **all** the facts)

Understanding the root cause of procrastination allows us to take steps to overcome it. Eg thrill seekers can set alternative challenges - "can I write this report in half an hour or 'phone fifteen people before lunch?"

A recent study by Professor McCrea gives hope to chronic procrastinators and their colleagues. Two groups of students were asked to respond to an email within three weeks - questions related to routine tasks, such as opening a bank account. One group was asked CONCRETE questions about how to open a bank account; the other more ABSTRACT questions about the sort of person who might want to open a bank account and why. In all cases, those given the more abstract tasks took longer to respond.

This has important implications for individuals and managers. Approaching tasks in concrete, as opposed to abstract, terms should reduce procrastination. So better to ask for a "one page report on the pros and cons of HR outsourcing including a case study from the banking sector" than "a discussion document about HR outsourcing"

Procrastination can also be reduced by:

- Eliminating or minimising temptation - eg disabling the pop-up that alerts you to the arrival of new email or putting your 'phone on silent
- Seeking clarity when given a task
- Breaking distant goals into a series of more immediate ones
- Pairing up with a colleague to share boring or unpalatable tasks
- Building in rewards - "I'll have a coffee when I finish this report"
- Making public commitments - "I'll get you the first draft by Tuesday afternoon"

*"All procrastination is delay, but not all delay is procrastination".*

And sometimes taking a break to stare out of the window, read **The Bite**, have a cup of tea or even go for a walk is just what we need!

### Quote, unquote

Procrastination is, hands down, our favourite form of self-sabotage

**Alyce Cornyn-Selby**

Anyone can do any amount of work, provided it isn't the work he is supposed to be doing at that moment

**Robert Benchley**

You know you are getting old when it takes too much effort to procrastinate

**Author Unknown**

Even if you're on the right track - you'll get run over if you just sit there

**Will Rogers**

One of the greatest labour-saving inventions of today is tomorrow

**Vincent T Foss**



### Our Team

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# BITE SIZE LEARNING

*"Always in motion is the future"*

*Master Yoda*

We would love to talk to you; please contact Paul, Rob or Shirine on the number below.

Contact us:

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**0845 123 3757**

## BiteSize Programmes 2009

Assertiveness in Communication  
Building and Leading Great Teams  
Business Skills Toolbox  
Coaching  
Delegation  
Effective Networking  
Leadership Communication  
Leadership Styles  
Managing Change  
Managing Difficult Situations  
Motivation  
Negotiating and Influencing  
Performance Management  
Presentation Skills 1 & 2  
Professional Behaviour  
Project Management  
Recruitment Interviewing  
Running Meetings  
Stress Management  
Success through Change  
Time Management  
Written Communication

We love designing bespoke programmes to address any unique needs your Company may have.

## Are you networking enough?



Businesses that maximise on networking are more likely to get through the recession, claims Brad Burton, Managing Director of business networking website 4Networking.

Companies that meet clients in person have a better chance of surviving the economic downturn. A recent report by Demos, entitled Network Citizens Power and Responsibility at Work, found that junior as

well as senior employees in sales and marketing jobs should be encouraged to network and form relationships with people from outside the workforce.

To successfully network sometimes our people need to polish up on a few skills to make them feel more at ease with both themselves and other people - our 90 minute module on [Effective Networking](#) offers practical tips on engaging with people and becoming a successful networker.

Networking can also be enhanced with improved presentation skills - having confidence in how you present yourself, your company and your product does yield results. These skills are also covered in the modules: [Presentation Skills 1 & 2](#) and [Maximising Personal Impact](#)

## Free invitation to a pilot - call now!

In April we offered a free pilot programme to selected Learning & Development professionals who were intrigued by our 90 minute concept and were keen to see BiteSize Learning in action.

This proved to be extremely successful - with delegates commenting as follows: *"loved your delivery style"*, *"convinced that short programmes are the way to go"*, *"excellent"*.

High on this success we have arranged for another Taster on Motivation to take place **18th June in central London** - if you are interested in attending this free pilot please email [Susannah@bitesizelearning.co.uk](mailto:Susannah@bitesizelearning.co.uk) or call on 0845 123 3757.



## Like our quotations? Want to share yours?



Email your favourite quotation to :  
[susannah@bitesizelearning.co.uk](mailto:susannah@bitesizelearning.co.uk).

A bottle of champagne and a box of chocolates will go to the best quote!

The quote will be printed in the next issue of The Bite.