

## *Balance your screen time exercise*

This guide is for managers like you who want to help your employees generate mental strength in a digital work life. Generating mental strength is not a case of switching off our screens entirely, but about balancing our screen time and finding the right balance, so that we control our devices, not the other way round. For this purpose, you and your team will take part in an exercise to help restore or maintain this balance.

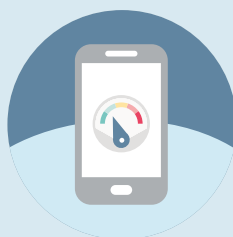
### Preparation for the balance exercise

We want you and your team to discuss the use of digital devices in your work. This discussion will help you identify focus areas that you can work on to find a better balance in your employees' screen time. When you have done this, you can challenge each other to stick to the agreed rules.

As an inspiration, we have chosen three scenarios in which you are affected by the use of digital devices. The three scenarios are: "balance your meeting", "balance your leisure time" and "balance your concentration". You can also define your own scenario, if you wish. What is most important is that the scenarios fit your team and your work life.

### Before the meeting, remember to:

- Invite your employees to a workshop on balancing your screen time.
- We recommend that you set aside one hour for the exercise. Remember that we have prepared a ready-to-use manuscript for the meeting notice.
- Download and print the slides with the scenarios (preferably in A3 format), which you will use to order the focus areas according to priority and challenge each other afterwards. You find a slide for each of the three scenarios and a version which you can define together.
- Hang the slides on the wall.
- Bring post-it pads and pens for your entire team.





### *Balance exercise in 4 steps*

- 1. Choose a scenario (10 min.)*
- 2. Brainstorm (20 min.)*
- 3. Find a balance (20 min.)*
- 4. Maintain the balance (10 min.)*



## 1. Choose a scenario (10 minutes)

Introduce the scenarios to your employees and choose one scenario for discussion. You can do this by a show of hands, for example.

### Scenario 1: Balance your meeting

Meetings are often unproductive as participants lose focus and attention because they are distracted by smartphones, incoming e-mails and the like.

### Scenario 2: Balance your leisure time

We are living in an age when it can be difficult to define when the work day begins and ends, as the digital world enables us to be reached 24/7. This has many advantages, but it also makes it more difficult to relax when we are off work – and to know exactly when we are off.

### Scenario 3: Balance your concentration

The digital work life provides great possibilities for us to make our work more efficient, but it can also make it more difficult for us to be fully concentrated, as we are constantly distracted by notifications.



## 2. Brainstorm (20 minutes)

You must now identify your challenges for the chosen scenario. You can seek inspiration in the scenarios below. Set aside two minutes to write down challenges that may affect the balance in the chosen scenario.

Each person writes down whatever comes to mind, and only one challenge per post-it note.

Discuss the stated challenges by giving each employee the opportunity to elaborate on his/her post-its.

Group similar post-its to assess the severity of the problem and define overall common challenges.

We recommend that no more than 10 people take the exercise. If you are more than 10 people, we recommend that you divide your team into smaller groups that discuss the scenario and write down challenges on post-its.

### Scenario 1: Balance your meeting

#### Questions to start the discussion:

- Are screens (such as smartphones or PCs) a problem for our mental focus during meetings?
- Are we distracted by screens, notifications and the like during meetings?

### Scenario 2: Balance your leisure time

#### Questions to start the discussion:

- Do we send work e-mails to our colleagues when we are off work?
- Can we define leisure hours and business hours in our company?
- How does it affect you when you receive an e-mail outside normal business hours?
- What do we expect from each other in relation to replying to e-mails outside business hours?
- What do we expect from each other in relation to replying to e-mails when we are off work?

### Scenario 3: Balance your concentration

#### Questions to start the discussion:

- Are you often interrupted in your tasks by incoming e-mails, notifications, calls and the like?
- Is it possible to go offline when we have tasks that need our full concentration?



### 3. Find a balance (20 minutes)

It is now time for you to make some rules. Choose the challenge that you find most important and make rules to deal with the problem. What is most important is that you are pragmatic and make practical rules that can be used in your everyday lives.

#### Scenario 1: Balance your meeting

##### Examples of rules:

- We set up our smartphones to only receive important incoming calls during meetings. Important incoming calls could be from close relatives, selected colleagues in connection with an important deadline, or the like.
- We leave our smartphones outside the meeting rooms, either in a box (for instance a charging station dock for smartphones) or in a pile on the table.
- Only persons making presentations or taking minutes are allowed to bring their PCs to meetings.

#### Scenario 2: Balance your leisure time

##### Examples of rules:

- If an employee sends an e-mail late at night, he/she cannot expect to receive a reply until the next morning at the earliest.
- If in need of an urgent reply, we contact each other by text message or call, so we do not have to check our e-mails 24/7.
- We have defined what type of e-mails that needs an urgent reply and what we mean by "urgent reply".
- We do not reply to e-mails during the weekend, and calls are forwarded to the extent this is technically possible for the company.

#### Scenario 3: Balance your concentration

##### Examples of rules:

- We have pre-defined offline business hours for tasks that require our full concentration. Offline business hours are scheduled in the calendar and agreed with colleagues.
- We have pre-defined hours in which we reply to e-mails every day.
- We do not add more people CC to e-mails than we would otherwise call.

## 4. Maintain a balance (10 minutes)

To start applying the rules, you can challenge each other. The challenge lasts 21 days, as this is the average time it takes to change a habit. This will help you and your colleagues to find and maintain a good balance.

### Challenge yourself:

- Before the challenge: Write your challenges at the top of the slide “Balance your screen time exercise” and list the names of the participants.
- During the challenge: The participants tick a box for each day they observe the rules.
- After the challenge: When the 21-day challenge is over, you will evaluate how it went and discuss your experiences, both positive and negative. You can also discuss a new scenario and perform the balance exercise again.
- To make the challenge more fun, consider rewarding a prize for the winner.

