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How to Measure Workplace Urgency

A transcript of Stacey's interview with Dermot Crowley, productivity author, speaker and trainer, on using PuMP to meaningfully measure urgency in the workplace.



PuMP is a performance measurement methodology. More information is available at <https://staceybarr.com/about/pump>

Page 1 of 44

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STACEYBARR

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CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: Hey everyone, it's Stacey Barr here. I am with Dermot Crowley today we're going to dive into a demonstration together on how to make workplace urgency measurable. But before we do, I'm going to introduce you to Dermot.
- Dermot Crowley: Hi everyone. Dermot here.
- Stacey Barr: Dermot is the founder of Adapt Productivity and is one of Australia's most recognized thought-leaders on personal productivity. He has a combined passion for productivity and technology and that has led him to start Adapt in 2002, with a clear focus on helping busy executives manage their time and their priorities and their email, in today's modern workplace. Dermot's become one of Australia's leading thought-leaders on productivity.
- Stacey Barr: His training and coaching programs change behaviors and help participants to apply the principles to their existing technology like Microsoft Outlook. I'm a user of Outlook, so this resonates with me. To smart phones and also to tablets. Dermot is also a best selling author of two books published by Wiley. The first one is Smart Work and the second one is Smart Teams. Now, full disclosure, Dermot is a friend of mine and I've gotten to know him through Thought Leaders Business School, which we've both been a part of for quite a few years now. Dermot I've lost track.
- Dermot Crowley: I think five years.
- Stacey Barr: Five years. There you go. So thanks so much for agreeing to do this exercise with me. I'll explain a little bit more about that shortly, but is there anything else that you'd like to add about what's happening more recently in your work?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, a lot of thanks. Thanks for the opportunity, Stacey. This is so exciting to do this and it's very relevant to a piece of work that I'm working on at the moment. So, I guess, just to map my journey. I wrote Smart Work about three and a half, four years ago, which was very much based on personal productivity and that's something that

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CASE STUDY

I've been focused on for a long time. Smart Teams was published two years ago, which was much more about how we create more productive cultures.

- Dermot Crowley: Out of that came the book I'm writing at the moment, which at the moment is titled the Urgency Trap and that may change. But it's going to be all about workplace urgency. I think it's one of the biggest issues that I see in organizations these days and that are being driven by email, that are being driven by heavy meeting cultures. The challenges people are really struggling with a lot of deadlines and an urgent culture that is really killing their productivity. So this is where my head is at right now I'm very excited to try and measure it.
- Stacey Barr: Well this is cool. It's certainly part of the reason why you and I talking about this today has come to be. I think you contacted me, Dermot, when you read one of my Measure Up newsletter articles and I think it was the one called, Is Culture Really Too Intangible to Measure?
- Dermot Crowley: That's right.
- Stacey Barr: Yeah. Yeah. And then you asked me if workplace urgency was measurable and I suggested that we try out a couple of PuMP's techniques to find out and that's what we're going to do. We're going to start with PuMP's step two, it's a technique called Measurability Tests. And we're going to use that to make that little phrase, workplace urgency, more specific and measurable. And if we succeed in doing that, which we do, we're going to go onto PuMP's step three and that technique is called Measure Design. And we'll go ahead and design one or two maybe quantitative measures for it. Now, Dermot, you haven't learned PuMP before, right?
- Dermot Crowley: No, I've read high level overviews of the methodology, but it's not something that I deeply understand and it's not an area that I have any expertise in.
- Stacey Barr: Absolutely. That's fine. And therefore you don't really know how the Measurability Tests or Measure Design techniques work in detail. And the only preparation I really

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CASE STUDY

asked you to do is to ponder the question, when you walk into a workplace, what do you notice that makes you think urgency is a problem? Which is really all the preparation you need to dive into this.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

Stacey Barr: Before we do, Dermot, I'm really curious about why you're interested in measuring workplace urgency. Maybe you give us a bit of context about, why workplace urgency might matter in the work that you're doing with clients.

Dermot Crowley: Absolutely. So this has been, what I would call a soapbox subject for me for many years. So when I run training, whether it be personal productivity or team productivity training, I generally have a bit of a rant about the amount of urgency that seems to drive so many of my client companies. So I generally work in the corporate market and that could be anything from a bank to a law firm, to a hospital, to a marketing company. It doesn't matter where I go, I tend to find that urgency tends to drive a lot of our activity. I guess what happened for me earlier this year, I actually attended a leadership program at Harvard University. And the thinking that came out of that for me really helped me to understand how I could position urgency not just a problem in the organizations, but I could actually help senior people especially to use urgency as a force for good, not evil.

Dermot Crowley: So I guess the problem that I've always had is if I go into a leadership team and I tell them that they need to dial down the urgency in the organization, the challenge I have is they come back in there and they'd say, "Well, hold on. We actually need urgency because that's how we get traction. That's how we get stuff done." So it's not enough to just say urgency is bad. And coming out of Harvard, what I realized was, what people need is a way of moderating urgency because sometimes it's good and we need to get that traction. So we need to be able to dial it up sometimes, but we also need to be able to dial it down. Could I just check in? Before I go through the model that you put up on screen, can I just check in, does that make sense to you?

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CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: It does make sense. You know what? There's already clues in what you've said, Dermot, about how we can make just this phrase workplace agency more measurable, especially that idea that urgency isn't always bad. So part of, I think what we'll get to is what kind of urgency is bad and that might be where we focus.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. Yeah. So that's really great because I think there's probably a number of different types of urgency. There's real urgency and there's false urgency and there's reasonable urgency and there's unreasonable urgency and that's something that I'm playing around with. And helping people to become more discerning about what they're dealing with, I think is one of the steps that is needed. Another step is very much built into the model that you're looking at on screen. So, I've already talked about writing the book, mainly with managers in mind because I believe they are the people that can impact urgency the most because they can operate above and below themselves. But I think everyone has a role to play in moderating urgency or if we decide, moderating negative urgency in an organization.
- Dermot Crowley: I reckon that the key thing that workers need to focus on is how they themselves can work more proactively. I believe there's a lot of very practical things you can do to organize yourself that will help you to dial down the unnecessary urgency and to work more proactively. I think at the leadership level, their key focus is to build a culture, a more proactive culture. So that urgency doesn't have the same grip than it might have at the moment. But when it comes to managers in the middle, I reckon their key focus is actually moderating the urgency. The strategies that they apply will depend on whether the urgency is externally driven or it's internally driven. So they might need to actually create urgency for a project themselves, so that would be internally driven urgency and the key strategy there is they need to mobilize people. But sometimes they've got externally driven urgency coming out the team, that is not really a good use of people's time.
- Dermot Crowley: It's an unreasonable or a false type of urgency. I reckon the managers need to learn to absorb that and protect their team from the negative impact of that urgency. I also

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CASE STUDY

reckon that they need to be able to recognize when there is urgency happening within their teams that doesn't really need to happen. If people are just, very busy and the wheels are spinning but they're not actually going anywhere, they need to recognize that and diffuse that urgency. Then when things are truly urgent and it is real and they need to be able to deal with that, I reckon, rather than just reacting to it, they need to learn to respond in a reasonable way. For me there's a huge difference between responding and reacting. So, I guess this model sums up the whole book and the different areas that I'm going to talk about when it comes to the different types of urgency.

Stacey Barr: Just with that short explanation from you Dermot, what it sounds like to me is in those three blue boxes that leaders are responsible to build culture. Managers are responsible to moderate urgency, workers are responsible to work proactively. Those are the three drivers, the things that are the most important to happen that will create an effect that will cause the effect of a workplace that has an appropriate urgency going on in an appropriate amount. Have I understood that? Correct me.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah, I think so. I guess the other filter to lay over this is, I believe leaders are a subset of managers and also a subset of workers. So rather than just having a hierarchical view of this. If a leader, that's a CEO or a divisional leader in an organization was reading my book, what I'd want them to do is to definitely understand the strategies that they need to put in place to build the culture. But they also need to recognize that they also have a management role and they have a worker role. So they also need to work proactively and they also need to moderate urgency at their level. So there's a few different layers in there as well which quite fit into this.

Stacey Barr: Yeah. And that sounds sensible. So I think what we're going to look at now is what is the measure of the outcome of that model working the way it should. Which is this thing that we're currently labeling workplace urgency, but we'll need to dive into to figure out what the outcome really is of this model working as it should.

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CASE STUDY

- Dermot Crowley: Right.
- Stacey Barr: You're ready?
- Dermot Crowley: Yup...
- Stacey Barr: All right, cool. All set. Alrighty. So I did ask you to ponder, what does that workplace urgency look like?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: The reason I asked you to do that Dermot, is because, really, we want to be able to make this thing, workplace urgency, a lot more tangible, a lot more specific than it currently is. So the Measurability Tests in PuMP are going to help us do that. The Measurability Tests will take us through five, we might get through all five, but the first three tests are the most important. Each of these tests is going to help us find better words to say what you really mean by this thing called workplace urgency. So, the first test is to turn it into a result. What's the result that you want to have that has to do with workplace agency? Do you want to just go top of mind or whatever...?
- Dermot Crowley: I'm wondering if it would be helpful if I talk about what I notice when I go into an organization and see what drops out of that...?
- Stacey Barr: Yeah, start there.
- Dermot Crowley: So, I guess, when I walk into an organization, often it's in a training situation where I've got a group of people in front of me, but sometimes it's actually onto the floor in an organization. When there is a very urgent culture, the first thing I notice is, people's obsession with email and the amount of distraction that email can cause these people. So often you get people who can't even stop and listen to you because they are doing emails while you're talking and they're constantly reacting to those emails.

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CASE STUDY

- Dermot Crowley: A second thing that I noticed is, the volume of meetings and a lot of managers and senior managers who are just going from one meeting to another, often late, and it feels very reactive.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. When you said volume, did you say volume, Dermot?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, the volume of meetings. Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Volume. Okay, great.
- Dermot Crowley: That could mean that they're spending 80% of the day in meetings just going from one back to back meeting to another.
- Stacey Barr: Oh, okay. So the actual quantity of time in meetings, volume of time.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. Yeah, that'd be right.
- Stacey Barr: You know what I thought? I was getting really sensory specific and I was thinking it was how loud they were.
- Dermot Crowley: Oh, right. Okay. Yeah. Okay. Fair enough.
- Stacey Barr: That's all good.
- Dermot Crowley: It's important to get the words right.
- Stacey Barr: It is.
- Dermot Crowley: A third thing that I notice is people tend to have a... well they're more likely to work in one of two reactive zones. So what I call the first minute or the last minute. So they've either got a work style where they're just constantly reacting to things the minute they come up, so when an email comes into their inbox, they respond to it immediately. Or

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CASE STUDY

they procrastinate about things and they leave those things, again for the sake of argument, let's say it's an email delivered in their inbox until it becomes urgent and then they deal with it. So that's what I call leaving it until the last minute. So, rather than working somewhere in the middle of those two zones, which is what I call the proactive zone, they tend to always put themselves in the situation where they're reacting and often unnecessarily.

Stacey Barr: Okay. Okay. That's super useful. Anything else?

Dermot Crowley: Yeah, I think there's often a confusion between and the meaning of urgent and important. So people would say to me, "Oh, that's really important. It's due tomorrow." And I'd go, "Just because it's due tomorrow, it doesn't mean it's important." They're different things, but people often prioritize by urgency and they don't realize that it's a more nuanced thing than that.

Stacey Barr: Okay. Cool. I'm just looking over these words that you said that I've been typing down and it seems, distraction and reactivity and procrastination are the important themes. I think in my mind, urgent versus important relates to the reactive a little bit. It's super important, so I have to react right now. But, no, it's not actually important. It's just that somebody else has told you that you need to react... So distraction, reaction and procrastination.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah, absolutely. I guess ultimately, again, if I was to go into a workplace and I saw all this happening, what I would ultimately see is a lot of stress. And I would probably hear stories of a lot of burnout... So I guess one of my theories is the idea that, working reactively is sometimes necessary and sometimes a good thing and that's what I would call acute. When we're forced into a reactive zone and that is acute, it's like a spike and that's not in itself a problem. But when urgency and reactivity becomes acute and chronic, that's when the burnout happens. That's when the anxiety levels go up and teams quite often implode.

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CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: Chronic, that's good. All right. Actually I might leave that up here. Now our job right now, Dermot, we set that more rich description of what workplace urgency is about or the bad kind of workplace urgency is to turn this into a statement that either... and you can do this in one of two ways. You can either describe the state of really bad workplace urgency that you want to reduce or you can state it as what a workplace is like when there isn't unnecessary or the bad kind of urgency. It doesn't matter which way you want to go. In the positive or in the negative. But let's have a go at writing down a statement that describes, this workplace urgency as a result or as a goal that brings in some of that richness of what you've just described.
- Dermot Crowley: Sure. Could I add one more thing to our list?
- Stacey Barr: Why not.
- Dermot Crowley: That has occurred to me and I think it's really important here. There's an overall theme for me about, people having control and having urgency. So I guess a lot of people that I talk to about urgency feel that they have no control over it because they're working in an urgent culture and that's just the way it is around here. And that I don't agree with that. I think there's lots of things that they can do to get control over it.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. Absolutely. No, it's good. Good, good.
- Dermot Crowley: Right.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. If you want to take a moment to just ponder this and see what statement comes out that describes what you really mean by workplace urgency, given that lovely description, just take a moment, but when you've got your first set of words, just say them out loud, Dermot, or write them down. Sometimes just seeing them written down helps you then go back and tweak and change. So don't aim for perfection before you start.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Dermot Crowley: Sure.
- Stacey Barr: There's a nice little birdy in-
- Dermot Crowley: So I might have a go at the negative if you like, rather than the positive.
- Stacey Barr: Yeah, for sure.
- Dermot Crowley: An urgency driven workplace...
- Stacey Barr: Yup. Don't wait for me to type, just go.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. Results in lots of busy work. Lots of low quality busy work, that causes stress and burnout.
- Stacey Barr: Nice. That's a great first... [typing into the template and thinking]... so this stuff here is the key?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Lots of low quality busy work that causes stress and burnout. So if I say to you, what does workplace urgency mean? You'd say, lots of low quality busy work that causes stress and burnout.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. Or, so lots of activity but not a lot of outcomes. So I think what's missing from that is, lots of low quality busy work that does not achieve outcomes but causes stress and burnout.
- Stacey Barr: It does not achieve outcomes but causes stress and burnout.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

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CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: How's that looking?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. I think it could be tighter.
- Stacey Barr: And in time it probably will be. I don't think I've mentioned this to you before, Dermot, you might like it. I live by the 80% rule that especially with PuMP is that once it's 80% there, move on because when you move on, when you realize what you can do with the rest of the 20%, if it's worthy...
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: That's great. I think that's a-
- Dermot Crowley: If there was one change I would change it would be remove low quality because I'm not sure it's fair to state that. But I think it is fair to say this is lots of busy work, I think it does not achieve outcomes is suggesting that it's about quality anyway, so.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. You know what? I'm actually going to just... Can I... Strike that out? I just don't want to lose it... Sometimes it's really useful to have a record of these things.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: So what I'm going to do now is just paste it here without the low quality. That is our current result statement, lots of busy work that does not achieve outcomes but causes stress and burnout.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: And this is what we're trying to get a measure of, ultimately?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

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CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: How much is this happening in any given workplace?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. Is there a point where we need to bring in the idea of unnecessary urgency versus necessary urgency or real versus false, that dynamic?
- Stacey Barr: At this point, I don't think so. I think as we go through this process, it'll become clearer to you probably before it becomes clear to me whether that's relevant. But I think given that you've decided to frame this in the negative, then we really are looking at how we're describing the unnecessary urgency, the bad urgency. Well, the false urgency, not the okay stuff. And it could be that you want to develop a measure of good urgency and you just follow a similar process to do it. But to get a foundation for this built, I think we can safely stick with what you've got there so far and work with that.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. So congratulations for this past test A, we now have a result.
- Dermot Crowley: Very nice.
- Stacey Barr: About what workplace urgency is. Now the next thing we want to do is look inside that result and just see if there are any words that aren't observable. I call them weasel words, a weasel word is something that if three different people looked at the word, they could draw at least three different interpretations of what it means. Now we may or may not do anything with this, but I'm going to just for... I was going to swear but for fun, you know that phrase, Dermot? For blank and giggles.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah...
- Stacey Barr: yeah, I'm going to pick out a few just so that we can talk a little bit about them and see if talking about them helps us get any extra clarity on the more find better

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CASE STUDY

phrases. So I think busy work might be something worth just giving a meaning to and possibly also outcomes.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah, definitely.

Stacey Barr: Stress and burnout, we probably shouldn't treat them together but we might treat them together and we'll just see. For most people they do know what stress and burnout is, but checking is not a bad idea. So let's start with busy work, Dermot, can you just put in language that a 10 year old might understand what busy work means?

Dermot Crowley: Activity that does not have high value or impact.

Stacey Barr: Okay. High value for who or impact for who?

Dermot Crowley: I guess for the team or the organization.

Stacey Barr: Okay. Good. And when you say high value or impact does that have anything to do with it being meaningful in the context of the organization strategy or the context of the team's current goals or the team's purpose or the organization's purpose or any of those things?

Dermot Crowley: I guess we could look at it at all of those levels, but I suppose if I'm looking at this mainly with a manager as central focus as my avatar, then it would probably be after the individual or team level. It's about how connected what they are doing is to the organization's strategy, ultimately.

Stacey Barr: I'm going to have a play with this, so I'm not writing down your words exactly, but ...

Dermot Crowley: Yeah. I'm very comfortable with that. Yeah. Yeah. The contribution to the... Oh yeah, that's perfect. Yeah.

Stacey Barr: And I also want to change this activity, that doesn't...

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CASE STUDY

- Dermot Crowley: Directly contribute.
- Stacey Barr: Aid or directly is a great word. That doesn't directly... It doesn't directly contribute to the team's contribution to organizational strategy. Add...
- Dermot Crowley: Add value.
- Stacey Barr: Yeah. Add value is another weasely phrase, but if we are comfortable that we understand what it really means in that sentence, I'm happy to leave it. We're you going to suggest something else Dermot?
- Dermot Crowley: I think I just said, directly serve the team's contribution, but I'm very comfortable with add value.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. That's no worries. Also or puts that in, that's cool. All right, cool.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: So we've just made busy work clearer. Tell me more about outcomes.
- Dermot Crowley: I guess the outcomes would be the team's contribution to organizational strategy.
- Stacey Barr: Okay.
- Dermot Crowley: Maybe it's fairer to say in the original statement, required outcomes because everything has an outcome, but are they aligned with what the organization requires?
- Stacey Barr: Yup. Great distinction. Okay. And if that's what a required outcome is, then one of the ways that we can tweak your current... with your current statement up here, it's got redundancy in it now because if we do the translating what that would translate into is, lots of activity that doesn't directly serve the team's contribution to organizational

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CASE STUDY

strategy. That does not achieve the team's contribution to organizational strategy. It's going to be in there twice.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

Stacey Barr: So in a way, based on how you've defined busy work, we could cross out all of that and just say lots of busy work that causes stress and burnout based on how you've defined busy work and we can replace busy work or at least in brackets after it put the meaning that you just created. I'll show you what I mean because it might be a bit weird to follow without the visual.

Stacey Barr: Oh good grace. I don't know why it's highlighting like that. I'm just not in control of my mouse today. So we can get rid of does not achieve required outcomes, we can replace it with busy work, would replace... But I admit, busy word's got a nice buzz to it. So you may want to keep it in there, but just in brackets put in the definition. So it would basically say activity doesn't directly serve the team's contribution to organizational strategy but causes stress and burnout. That's what we're saying.

Dermot Crowley: It's really shaping up nicely. There's an element that I'm realizing now that is missing for me because this is about urgency, you could do busy work in a very proactive way. So busy work is really, it's really talking about the quality of what you're working on, and this is another dynamic. This is about when you're working on it. So, are you working on that stuff proactively or are you doing that at the last minute or at the first minute. So I think we also need to have something in the statement that talks to the urgency and maybe just putting in the word urgency. So lots of urgent busy work. Does that make sense? Or lots of urgent activity?

Stacey Barr: It does. I think we can Dermot. I think we can put the word urgent in there. I just love the way you define urgent as first minute or last minute, that makes it tangible. For a 10 year old, if you say urgent or you say something that you're doing in the first minute right away or you're doing at the very last minute, I think the 10 year old gets the second bit a little bit more tangible.

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CASE STUDY

- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, like that. Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: So that could be lots of first minute or last minute activity that doesn't directly serve the team's contribution to organizational strategy but causes stress and burnout.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: I know it's long, but it says what you mean. Look, this happens a lot, Dermot. When people are first trying to figure out how to make a really broad intangible goal measurable, they often find they need a lot more words than they expected the first go. But later on you can find ways to streamline it. How are you feeling so far?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. Now, it gives you a lot of clarity and I love the way you go into the meaning of the weasel words because that just provides such clarity about what am I really trying to say here. And what is the reader potentially understanding by reading that is very useful.
- Stacey Barr: Oh, I'm glad. That was a revelation to me when I learned about weasel words. It was by Don Watson. I don't know if you remember, he was ex-prime minister of Australia, Paul Keating's, speech-writer.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: And he wrote a book called Death Sentence: The Decay of Public Language where he really talked about the damage of weasel words. It was so inspiring to me.
- Dermot Crowley: Right. Love it.
- Stacey Barr: So I reckon we won't bother defining the meaning of stress and burnout, now. It's something you might want to go back and do, Dermot.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: But we will be here for a very long time if we dive that deeply.
- Dermot Crowley: I know. Yeah. But now get the concept, yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Now the third, so now we've got it passing test B. Which is, are there any weasel words? Well, we're pretty confident we've got rid of at least the most important ones in this statement we have now. So we're going to take it to test C.
- Dermot Crowley: Could I just ask a question...
- Stacey Barr: And test C is really asking... Oh yeah.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah? So, doing this exercise fully, if you nailed that statement, would that be the only statement or might you have several statements that would describe different aspects of the same problem that you see?
- Stacey Barr: Sometimes you can end up with needing to explain the concept in more than one statement. So if you're looking at that and you're going, there's something really important about workplace urgency that, that statement we've currently got here doesn't even hint at.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Then that means you probably would end up with another one. And that's where test C becomes really important because if you decide you want to add that in now and we'll do it just for fun, it causes stress and burnout and or wastes resources on stuff that didn't need to be done.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: If it included something like that, then we'd take it into test C, which is, is it multi focus? Is it talking about more than one thing?

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CASE STUDY

- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: I'd say easily, yes this is. Because we're talking about lots of first minute or last minute activity that doesn't serve the team's contribution to organizational strategy. Potentially, we've got and it causes stress and burnout and it wastes resources on stuff that didn't need to be done because each of these things are probably worth measuring in their own rights.
- Dermot Crowley: Yes, yeah. Correct.
- Stacey Barr: So it would be lots of first minute, last minute activity that doesn't directly serve the organization, that causes stress and burnout, that wastes resources on stuff that didn't need to be done. So that would be a thorough way of expanding the last result statement that you had in the previous step.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Any questions or reactions to that?
- Dermot Crowley: No, that makes sense. It makes a lot of sense to me to be able to describe the issue of urgency, possibly highlighting different issues in different situations. So being able to separate out into three is quite nice in that way.
- Stacey Barr: What you just said, Dermot about in different situations, some may be more important than others. That's exactly what test D helps us do. So test D will have us look at each one of these individually and for each individual client or organization that you have or that reads your book, Dermot, they can do this for themselves and figure out all of these, three or maybe you'll end up with four or five, I don't know.
- Stacey Barr: Hopefully you won't end up with more than that because that really does become a handful. But for each of these, each particular client gets to say, well, should we try and reduce this? And they'll go, yeah, because we want to make sure that everyone's

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CASE STUDY

contributing to organizational strategy. Can we do something about this? Can we reduce the first minute, last minute activity that's not serving the organization? And they'll go, yeah, pretty sure we can. Because you've got a model to help them Dermot.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

Stacey Barr: Will they? And they'll go, yeah, this is something that we're going to give resources to. We're actually going to spend the time to invest in Dermot's model and get his help and have him come on board and stop first minute, last minute activity that's not serving the organization's strategy.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah. So all the rationale needs is a yes or no there, it doesn't need a qualifying statements?

Stacey Barr: Yeah. You should have a qualifying statement there, but it's going to vary depending on the client. So here we could say yes because, we've hired Dermot.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

Stacey Barr: With stress and burnout, there may be an organization or a business that has lots of first minute, last minute activity that isn't serving the organization's strategy, but it isn't causing stress and burnout, at least not yet. They can nip it in the bud before it gets to that point. So they may say, no, not a problem yet.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

Stacey Barr: And that way they get to pick and choose which of the workplace urgency results they're going to target, that they're going to measure, that they're going to improve.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah. And then if you say no to should, you don't really need to go on and do can or will because they're obviously going to be no as well. Is that right?

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: Correct. That's right. And generally Dermot, what I say is, if any one of these results gets a no to any one of should, can and will, then it's not worth trying to measure at the moment. If you shouldn't do it, obviously you shouldn't measure it. If you can't do anything about it, don't bother measuring it. And if you aren't prepared to commit the time and effort to changing it, don't measure it.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. Yeah. All right.
- Stacey Barr: Cool.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, absolutely.
- Stacey Barr: So test E is a way for people to think about, well how does this connect to what's important strategically for us? So you can imagine that if, we'll just take this first one then. You can imagine that if an organization is really struggling to achieve its strategic goals because of this urgency problem, then this first result, lots of first minute, last minute activity that doesn't directly serve the team's contribution to organizational strategy. You'd have to say yes, that has a very strong link to what's important to the organization strategy because they might have a corporate goal to reduce urgency or increase productivity or achieve more strategic targets.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: It could be any one of those things, they're just examples really. So the idea...
- Dermot Crowley: Could they potentially have let's say a strategy that is happening next year where they need to rationalize their workforce so that they know that the 80% of the people that are going to be left are going to have to work more productively to be able to accommodate the amount of work given there's a smaller workforce. Does that make sense there?

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: It totally does, that's a brilliant example. Okay, lovely. So yeah, we've just put in examples here of why improving this result and measuring this result might be important for any particular organization. So it just helps give it context within the client's organization. You've given it context in the whole idea of workplace urgency, but a client's also got to give it context into what's strategically important for them. And yeah, your example here is fantastic.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. So this really needs to be done for every single different client because there's different issues that are important for them. Or could it be done more generically? That would fit most clients...?
- Stacey Barr: I think you'd have a starting point that would be a generic starting point that would fit most clients. But I think each client would have to double check, the should, can and will on each of the results. I think the results can be fairly generic that you would give to them and say these are the most important ones. But then they have to decide the should, can and will for them.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: And they have to decide, well how does that link to what's corporately important for us? And for some, it might be your example where they are rationalizing the workforce, but for others it could be because they've just year after year not achieving their strategic targets because people are too urgent and they need to improve their ability to execute and achieve their strategy.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. Great.
- Stacey Barr: Or something else.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. I can already think of different things that could potentially go there for each of them because it's very, very powerful.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: Super. So they would do test E for all three or if you end up with more than three, all of the results that define workplace urgency. We've just done it for one, in the interest of time and just getting a good starting point. I think now we can say that we will choose that one and we'll take that one into Measure Design unless there was one of the other two that you'd rather play with, Dermot... I'll just scroll... You're okay with that?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Alright, well done.
- Dermot Crowley: Thank you. No, well done to you.
- Stacey Barr: This is why, before we started recording Dermot I said to you that I often get anxious about this, especially when someone's trying to measure something I've got no personal experience with, I get anxious thinking is this going to work? Is this going to work? But I keep telling myself what I tell everybody else which is trust the process and trust the client. Trust you, Dermot, to know what you're really trying to achieve and trust the process just to give you a way to express that.
- Dermot Crowley: That's right. Yeah, absolutely.
- Stacey Barr: But now that we've got a measurable result, it makes sense to measure it. So we're moving across to the Measure Design technique in PuMP, and I'm just going to paste that result in, which is the first step in designing a measure is to put front and center right there so you can focus on it, the results that you're wanting to help measure for.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Lots of first minute or last minute activity that doesn't directly serve the team's contribution to organizational strategy. So what we want to do here Dermot is to get a sense of what would be the evidence of how much first minute or last minute activity

PUMP

CASE STUDY

there is going on, and evidence of whether that activity is serving the team's contribution to organizational strategy or not. So this can be a little bit tricky and it helps just to ponder it for a little bit. But you're basically going to imagine that you're walking into a workplace where this is a problem. This particular result is a problem and you're going to figure out what would I go look for? What would I listen to? What would I touch?

Dermot Crowley: Yeah...

Stacey Barr: What would be the things that could convince me of how much this is happening? So when you're ready, just fire away and I'll type them down.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah. So high volumes of email noise. Lots of interruptions. Large meetings that don't achieve outcomes. When I say large, I mean you have a lot of people in the meetings, and... And yeah. People complaining about being busy a lot. Work being delegated at the last minute. People being unresponsive to emails in their inbox.

Stacey Barr: They're not responding to emails?

Dermot Crowley: Yeah. That they're so overwhelmed by the amount of emails that more complex ones often just get buried in their inbox and then they wait until someone chases them up three times before they... And it becomes urgent before they deal with it, so that's that last minute thing.

Stacey Barr: Yup.

Dermot Crowley: Rework, high volumes of rework.

Stacey Barr: Let's pause there, Dermot.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: Because I've got an idea that may or may not serve us here with what you've already got written there. I think if we can put it into two baskets it may trigger a couple of more important ones or it may be sufficient for us to get traction with it. The buckets I'd like to try and put this into is first minute bucket and last minute bucket.
- Dermot Crowley: Good.
- Stacey Barr: So let me just set up those headings and then we will move them around. Let's see if this works. Okay, tell me where to put what.
- Dermot Crowley: I think high volumes of a email noise, first minute.
- Stacey Barr: Okay.
- Dermot Crowley: Interruptions, first minute. Large meetings that don't achieve outcomes doesn't really fit into either.
- Stacey Barr: okay.
- Dermot Crowley: People complain about being busy a lot, it doesn't really fit into either.
- Stacey Barr: It's a blend.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. It could be either, it could be a both. Work being delegated the last minute is last minute. People being nonresponsive is last minute. High volumes of rework is other.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. Does that help you? Are there any other really critically-
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. We could add in a couple of things... immediately helps me to focus on additional ones, if that's helpful. So first minute people reacting to emails.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: Yup.
- Dermot Crowley: Last minute, would be people using tasklists that are deadline focused. And I know that sounds a bit weird because you could go, isn't that a good thing?
- Dermot Crowley: But one of the principles that I firmly work with is most people manage their tasklist by due date and that sucks them into a situation where they only then do things when they're close to the due date. So the principal I work with is be very aware of your due date, but manage the start date. That's the proactive approach.
- Stacey Barr: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I love it. And thankfully Asana, which is the project and task manager my team and I use now lets us do that. We can set, start and finish dates for things. So I'm glad.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. And that's so important and so many apps out there that are around task management. They've gotten rid of start dates, they just have due dates and unfortunately it just creates this reactive way of working that so many people get sucked into.
- Stacey Barr: Yeah. Yeah. Do you know what Dermot? I realize you could easily add more things to this.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: I think we've got enough to get to potential measures for this. If you're comfortable, that's where I'd suggest we head now.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, perfect. Again, 80% ...
- Stacey Barr: The next step I'm just going to-
- Dermot Crowley: ... Yeah.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: Yeah... I'm just going to jump ahead and show you what the next step's going to be and then come back to this list of sensory evidence. Sensory meaning, it's just observable, somehow...
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Honestly, the only way we can measure anything is if we can observe it in the real world. We can't really measure things in a parallel universe. We can't measure things in our heads. The idea is that it's got to be in the physical world and our nature given five senses are the way we detect these things.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: We're going to figure out potential measures by asking the question of the sensory evidence. How could we quantify this evidence? How could we count it up? How could we figure out how much there is and express it as a measure that way?
- Dermot Crowley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Stacey Barr: There are two ways that we can go about this based on the list we've got here. One is to look at each individual one and go, 'how could we quantify that?' How could we quantify high volumes of email noise? To kick you off with an example, could that be the number of emails coming into people's inbox each day or each week?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, very easily.
- Stacey Barr: All right, so let's put that down. It might be per person. So a team, might have a lot of people so it could be the average number or it could be... actually total's probably not bad. Total number of emails coming into inboxes, because we're focusing on teams here. So into team member inboxes, let's say each day just for fun.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: And that would mean we'd go to the second one and we'd say, how could we quantify lots of interruptions? Do you have a thought about that? Dermot?
- Dermot Crowley: It could be something around amount of uninterrupted focus time for each team member. Per week maybe.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. We might measure that in something like hours or minutes.
- Dermot Crowley: Yes.
- Stacey Barr: It doesn't really matter, but okay, good. Good job. And let's go with the third one, people reacting to emails. Do you have an idea of how to quantify that? Tell me more about what it means. What does it mean if somebody... What would I be doing if I reacted to an email?
- Dermot Crowley: Typically people will have email alerts turned on so every time they receive an email they get an audible or a visual alert and they then get to dealing with the email immediately when it comes in. Rather than taking a more proactive approach to checking their email, I would recommend twice a day you would process emails thoroughly and probably have a quick five minute check about once an hour. But then you turn off your email and then you focus on your work.
- Stacey Barr: This is a bit clunky, but the percentage of only emails that are reacted to as soon as they arrive... I got my grammar wrong...
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: As they arrive in the inbox.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: Okay. So how's this sitting with you, the way that I'm phrasing the measures, how those measures represent ways to quantify that evidence that you listed? Just what are your thoughts and feelings right now about this?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, I'm comfortable with the statements and I know that while I think maybe some of them might not be all that feasible, I know that's probably going to come out in the next step where you looked at the strength and the feasibility so I'm very comfortable.
- Stacey Barr: Which is fine. This is why we start off, usually with a fairly long list of potential measures because we know that some of them aren't going to be feasible. We also know some of them aren't going to have a lot of strengths either. They're not going to be really convincing evidence of the result that we're trying to measure.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Let's go onto last minute, work being delegated at the last minute. How could we quantify that?
- Dermot Crowley: Amount of lead time provided when work is delegated or requested.
- Stacey Barr: Total amount of lead time for work that is delegated or requested. Nice.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: People being unresponsive to emails.
- Dermot Crowley: Or it could be something else-
- Stacey Barr: I guess this is-
- Dermot Crowley: Sorry, say that again?

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: No, were you going back to work being delegated at the last minute?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, I was saying that an alternative could be something around the number of instances where work is requested ASAP. Weasel word, I know.
- Stacey Barr: That's okay. But usually that's exactly the phrase people write in the email asking for it or whatever. So it's fine. I'll put it in quotes just in case there's a... Okay. Good.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: And what you did then was perfect because for one particular piece of evidence, there can be more than one way to quantify it.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. And one might be more feasible than the other, I get that. Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Yeah, absolutely. Let's go to people being unresponsive to emails in their inbox. How could we quantify that?
- Dermot Crowley: Average response time for important emails within the team.
- Stacey Barr: Great.
- Dermot Crowley: I know it's very unfeasible to say that you could change your client's behavior, but you can certainly change your own behaviors within the team and the culture within the team.
- Stacey Barr: Absolutely. Lovely. We can go onto people using tasklists for their deadline focus if you're finished with the previous one.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. Number of people in team who use a date-based task system.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. I'm going to switch that to percentage.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Of team members who use, what did you say? A deadline-based task system.
- Dermot Crowley: No, a date-based rather than a deadline-based, yeah.
- Stacey Barr: ... based task system. Did I get that right?
- Dermot Crowley: Yup. Perfect.
- Stacey Barr: I've just said percentage because different teams can be of different sizes and just number may not give you a sense of... In a team of five is a really bad measure.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: But five in a team of 120 is not a really bad measure. So percentage just helps us out a little bit with that.
- Dermot Crowley: Good. Could I maybe change that slightly and say percentage of team members who routinely schedule their priorities? Maybe because it's less based on they have to use my system, which is a smart work system, as long as they're scheduling their work, it doesn't matter what system they use and they're still exhibiting a good behavior.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. And it's scheduling their priorities. But is it important to mention here based on start date, not just end date?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. Yeah. Very good. Yeah. Excellent stuff, thanks.
- Stacey Barr: Okay.
- Dermot Crowley: Or I would call it routinely, proactively scheduling their priorities, but I worry it's a technical term that might need explanation.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: Yeah. It's a weasel word. So different people, would all have a different understanding of proactive because some people would say, "Yeah, I proactively schedule stuff based on the due date."
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, that's fine.
- Stacey Barr: But you really want them to schedule based on start date, I think if I understood.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: And it's worthwhile making it specific because what we're really writing here, Dermot, is the description of the measure. We're not really writing down measure names. We're writing down the thing that we're trying to quantify and the way we're trying to quantify it. So if a client was to pick up this and go, "Oh, I love that measure, that's the one I want to introduce for my team." They'd need to... Whoops, what have I just dropped? Did you hear that bang?
- Dermot Crowley: I heard something.
- Stacey Barr: Yeah. I don't know what it was...
- Stacey Barr: It's all good. It wasn't glass. And so it landed with a dull thud. Anyway, sorry for the distraction.
- Dermot Crowley: No, it's fine.
- Stacey Barr: Yeah, they'll want to be able to look at that and read the measure and understand it well enough to know what you're really trying to quantify and not quantify the wrong thing. Let's just do one other.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: And then go into, looking at strengths and feasibility and there's another layer to the potential measures that I want to do with you that I don't often do with clients. But it may actually serve us a bit here but we'll find out. Large meetings that don't achieve outcomes with lots of people. What could you quantify? How could you quantify that?
- Dermot Crowley: On the positive side, the number of shorter, smaller and more focused meetings.
- Stacey Barr: So I'm going to do the percentage thing again here.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: ... Say, percentage of total meetings that are shorter, smaller and more focused. We want to see a rise in that?
- Dermot Crowley: Yes. So increase in percentage maybe.
- Stacey Barr: Yeah. We don't need to put the word increase in there. Because the measure is the percentage of, I just wanted to check that what we're wanting is... what we'd like in the real world is to see that percentage get bigger and bigger.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Any other way that you'd like to quantify that one? About large meetings that don't achieve outcomes and have lots of people?
- Dermot Crowley: No, I think that, that's about right.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. So that might do us for now. Again, because it's such a broad topic, it really could take a couple of hours to fully flesh it out. Are you confident Dermot, that you're following what we're doing and you'll be able to build on it later?
- Dermot Crowley: Totally. Yeah. I can easily brainstorm additional, for all of those lists.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: Lovely. The thing to brainstorm would be the evidence.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: These things.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: But then you could end up with a list that's really long and wieldy you may want to go back and look for duplication or things that aren't really that critical and streamline after you've brainstormed.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: When you do the potential measures, Dermot, don't brainstorm. Ask that deliberate question I've asked you each time and that is, how would you focus on one of these? How would you quantify it?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, yeah, all right. Yeah. One drives the other I see that.
- Stacey Barr: Yeah. If we go to brainstorming measures and forget about the list of sensory evidence, we're just going to end up with nothing that's any better than what anyone's used in the past. If no one's used anything good in the past, we end up with nothing that's good.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Strength is how convincing the measure is of the results up here. I wonder if I can split my screen so that we can, because this really can help. Is to make sure that we've got our result right there in front of us and we can keep referring back to it when we look at these measures.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: So I would ask you a question. When you think of lots of first minute and last minute activity that doesn't directly serve the team's contribution to organizational strategy, is the total number of emails coming into a team members' inbox each day, how strong an indicator is that of the result? And you can use a scale of one to seven where one is really not at all and seven is, 'wow, if I had this one measure alone, it would totally tell me about that result.' One to seven.
- Dermot Crowley: Six.
- Stacey Barr: What did you say, Dermot?
- Dermot Crowley: Sorry, six.
- Stacey Barr: Six. There we go. Okay. Feasibility is how easily do you think your clients would be able to gather data for this? And one is, it's absolutely impossible to do it and seven is they've already got the data there. Somewhere in between is, we haven't collected the data yet but it wouldn't be too hard to get it. So it's again on that scale of one to seven.
- Dermot Crowley: Probably five.
- Stacey Barr: Five, okay. Next one, total uninterrupted focus time in hours per team member per week. How strong an indicator is that of your result?
- Dermot Crowley: Five.
- Stacey Barr: Five. How feasible would it be to get the data for that?
- Dermot Crowley: Three.
- Stacey Barr: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And again, this may vary for your clients. Some clients may have systems already that can extract that quite easily or they are feeling so

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CASE STUDY

desperate about this that they're happy to have their staff give the time to logging their hours on focus activity. So therefore the feasibility may be higher for some clients than others.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah, yeah.

Stacey Barr: Percentage of all emails reacted to as soon as they arrive in the inbox, how strong is that one?

Dermot Crowley: Five.

Stacey Barr: And its feasibility?

Dermot Crowley: Three again.

Stacey Barr: Okay. Total amount of lead time for work that is delegated or requested, how strong is that?

Dermot Crowley: I think that's a six.

Stacey Barr: And feasibility?

Dermot Crowley: Look, it would require people to keep a log or something like that for a couple of weeks. But if that activity was backed by management, I think it's doable. I think it could be five.

Stacey Barr: Okay. Good. Then number of instances where work is requested ASAP, how strong an indicator is that of your result up there?

Dermot Crowley: Oh, again six.

Stacey Barr: Six. Feasibility?

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Dermot Crowley: I think that's probably easier to measure in some ways. Maybe a six.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. And then scroll down a little because we've got a few more, average response time for emails within the team. How strong is that?
- Dermot Crowley: Six.
- Stacey Barr: And how feasible is it?
- Dermot Crowley: Four.
- Stacey Barr: Four. Good at this. Next one, percentage of team members who routinely schedule their priorities based on start date, how strong an indicator is that of your result?
- Dermot Crowley: Seven.
- Stacey Barr: Hmm. I was going to guess that... It's feasibility?
- Dermot Crowley: Six.
- Stacey Barr: And the last measure, potential measure that we did, although I imagine your list of potential measures will be longer once I leave this template to you to play with, but the percentage of total meetings that are shorter, smaller and more focused, how strong an indicator is that of your result?
- Dermot Crowley: Six.
- Stacey Barr: And its feasibility?
- Dermot Crowley: Five.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: Five, okay. Well done. So what we do now is use the strength and feasibility ratings to figure out which measures are the best ones to select. The best balance of strengths and feasibility. Strength, Dermot is more important than feasibility. Because, you can't make a measure stronger but you can make it more feasible by going and finding another way to get the data or whatever.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: So the first one that we would select would be the one you gave a strength of seven, two. Because it's feasibility was still pretty good.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: So that's a yes. And then did you have any six, sixes? Yeah, you did. So this would be another one. The number of instances where work is requested ASAP.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: And then I think you had three, six, fives which you could possibly go with. I'm going to say maybe.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: Even though you might be thinking, "Oh I absolutely need them." But, one thing to remember is that it's very hard to bring to life a lot of measures...
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, I agree.
- Stacey Barr: You have to prioritize.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.

PUMP

CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: You'd go with measure seven and measure five.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah.
- Stacey Barr: I'm just going to copy these and bring them down to the bottom of the template so that we can see them. Then I'm going to ask you another question about them. Firstly, when you look at those two, if you had a client that really wanted to reduce the first minute and last minute activity that's not serving the team's contribution and you got them to measure and try and improve, firstly the number of instances where work's requested ASAP, and secondly improve the percentage of team members who routinely schedule their priorities based on start date. If you saw those two measures improving, would you be convinced that that result was reducing. That they were getting less first minute and last minute activity?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, because one of them, the first one directly relates to the first minute and the second one directly relates to the last minute. So, yeah, if there was a decrease in the number of instances where work is requested ASAP and there was an increase in the percentage of team members. For the second one, then there will be a direct correlation to the result.
- Stacey Barr: Lovely. One thing we do with measurement, because there's a famous thing that measures drive behavior, whatever you measure is what you get. And so if you measure the wrong thing, you get the wrong thing. So a good check here is if you measured both those things, could there be any unintended consequences that could happen?
- Dermot Crowley: People are afraid to send things or request things that are truly urgent.
- Stacey Barr: Yup. Good. Could that be mitigated somehow? Could that be managed?
- Dermot Crowley: By teaching people to be more discerning about urgency and to understand that more fully?

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CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: So is that discerning good versus bad urgency or what do you call it? False versus real?
- Dermot Crowley: In different circumstances both, sometimes negative, positive urgency they're all playing on the same.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. That will do... Okay. Any other unintended consequences that you can think of?
- Dermot Crowley: I think with team members who are using a scheduling system for their priorities, there's always the risk that people fall back into bad habits with their systems. And there's a...
- Stacey Barr: Go ahead Dermot.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah. I was going to say there's a very strong risk that the culture will work against what the team is trying to achieve. The wider culture in their organization.
- Stacey Barr: That's a good distinction. So wider organizational culture. Okay. Just coming back to the middle one here, that people might fall back into bad habits. Is there a way to mitigate or manage that?
- Dermot Crowley: To have regular discussions or training interventions.
- Stacey Barr: Okay. And the third one-
- Dermot Crowley: Or maybe it's easier to say make it an ongoing topic for discussion or learning.
- Stacey Barr: Oh, good. I did some work with a global mining company some years ago. When I went to their offices for the first time, I had to have a safety induction and basically every interaction I had with anyone, the very first topic was safety. It was, "Hi, how are you?" As we walked down the stairs, "Please hold the handrail." We come into the meeting and start the meeting and someone goes, "Before we start the meeting, I

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CASE STUDY

have a safety share and just to mention something", and it just got embedded like that. So an ongoing topic for discussion or learning, it works for them. So...

Dermot Crowley: Yeah, absolutely...

Stacey Barr: The wider organizational culture working against the teams trying to achieve, can that be managed or mitigated?

Dermot Crowley: Two things come to mind, create some team agreements.

Stacey Barr: Yeah.

Dermot Crowley: Agreements that shift the culture.

Stacey Barr: Yeah, nice.

Dermot Crowley: And the second thing is if it's a team within a wider culture, the team leaders need to make it a priority to influence the wider organization.

Stacey Barr: Oh, nice. Because it's like with any change. It's the same with introducing good performance measurement in an organization. If you're introducing this new awareness of eradicating the wrong urgency, usually the change starts in a pocket, it starts just somewhere and it's got to ripple out. And it doesn't always start beautifully from the boardroom and filter all the way down.

Dermot Crowley: That's right, yeah. I totally agree.

Stacey Barr: Okay, lovely. So we're now at the very final step of Measure Design. What I've actually put in the measure name column really belongs in the measure description column. What we like to do is give each measure a really unique name that makes it memorable and easy to refer to. Usually a measure name has three at the most five words in it, but it's, it's true name. The description is a sentence that explains how the

PUMP

CASE STUDY

measure is quantified. But the measure name is just a nice way of referring to it. Do you have any ideas for how you'd like to name this first one?

Dermot Crowley: So there's a piece that I talk about, where I talk about the difference between ASAP, as soon as possible. ALAP, as late as possible, which are both project management terms, but in the middle is what I call ASAR, as soon as reasonable. And that's what I'm trying to shift people to. I wonder if that comes into it. Yeah.

Stacey Barr: It could be something like that.

Dermot Crowley: Yeah. Yup.

Stacey Barr: The percentage of team members who routinely schedule their priorities based on start date. What did you call that measure?

Dermot Crowley: Proactive scheduling.

Stacey Barr: Okay. And you don't really need the word 'indicator' on the end of those, you could just keep them as... [inaudible] shift or proactive scheduling. Congratulations Dermot, you've got two measures that you've designed and I know you can come up with better stuff than this because it's your very first time through this process. It's my first time considering how somebody might measure urgency and the collaboration between the two of us has at least created a starting point here.

Dermot Crowley: Absolutely. No, it's fantastic. Created a lot of clarity there and a lot of off stuff to work on. Yeah, really great process. And for me it-

Stacey Barr: I'm going to send these to you. Go ahead.

Dermot Crowley: Sorry. I was going to say for me, it changes the way I might be able to talk to my clients about urgency and about what they need to be thinking about.

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CASE STUDY

- Stacey Barr: Yeah.
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, very useful.
- Stacey Barr: Lovely. Super. So yeah, you'll have the templates and you'll be able to keep working on that and rethinking it if you want to and just using it however serves you. Any final reflections Dermot on measuring urgency?
- Dermot Crowley: Yeah, look, I have to say that it seems like a very nebulous topic and it's prevalent in every workplace. I'm not sure a lot of people have really thought in detail about what it really is, but for me this has given a lot of very concrete detail to how it could be measured. And I think the end result is, it's obviously very measurable.
- Stacey Barr: That's it. I'm glad we got to that point. That's brilliant. Thanks so much for sharing that experience with us Dermot I know it could have just been you and me privately going through it and I just want to express my gratitude for you being prepared to put this out there so that other people at least in my community who are interested in measuring these nebulous things, gets the chance to see how it can work. And yeah, it may be something that some of your clients might find useful too. And if that's the case, they're more than welcome to join in. But thank you so much for being open to doing that.
- Dermot Crowley: Look, and thank you. It's such an opportunity for me and it's going to add so much value to the book and to the methodology. So you as always have my undying gratitude.
- Stacey Barr: You're gorgeous everybody, I recommend Dermot's work. I've known him for a few years and yes, he is a friend. But he's a friend because I've come to really respect and admire and love what he does and how he does it. Dermot, you're the most kind and gentle and generous and clever and thoughtful person and you take concepts that people struggle with and you make them so simple and practical. And they are some

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CASE STUDY

of the reasons why I just adore what you do. So thank you very much, it's been an absolute pleasure doing this with you.

Dermot Crowley: Thank you. Thank you.