

CHAPTER 1 • MARGIN MOVE

The Demand Census

One ordinary hour, counted.

Before anything can be managed it has to be counted. The Demand Census does one job: it makes the invisible visible. It does not solve anything, and it is not designed to.

How to run it

Pick one ordinary hour in the next day or two. Not a quiet Sunday, not an emergency Tuesday — a typical workaday hour. Set a timer. Then make a mark in the correct column every time one of the following happens.

- **Decisions made.** Any point at which you chose among options: respond or not, yes or no, this or that, now or later. Include the small ones. *Especially* the small ones.
- **Inputs processed.** Any piece of information that entered your awareness — email, text, message, notification, overheard comment, headline, request. Not just the ones you acted on. All of them.
- **Switches made.** Any point at which you shifted from one task, topic, or focus to another. Include the times you interrupted yourself, which will be a surprising fraction of the total.

Don't aim for perfect accuracy. Aim for a rough count that surprises you.

The hour I counted (day and time): _____

	DECISIONS MADE	INPUTS PROCESSED	SWITCHES MADE
Tally marks			
Total			

Now do the multiplication

The numbers matter less than the volume they reveal. This was one hour. Scale it.

	Decisions	Inputs	Switches
× one working day (8 hrs)			
× one working week			
× one working year			

The number that surprised me most: _____

Because: _____

This is your hour. Add the hours you are technically off the clock but still triaging your phone. Then every day since the world became the world it now is.

Keep this page. Chapter 4 gives these rough numbers a framework and a number of their own. The census will mean more once you have your Scorecard profile beside it.

What I noticed

One or two lines, written now while it is fresh. Reflection is a deposit — Chapter 7 — and this is the cheapest place in the book to make one.

Photocopy-friendly. From Thought Margin: Reclaiming the Capacity to Think in the Age of AI by Rachael-Renée Rychling. Free to print for personal use.