

The 24-Hour Diary

Your task in this exercise is to make an accurate record of your activities—what you do. You are to keep a 24-hour diary, a log of your comings and goings and doings, on at least two different days: a weekday and a weekend day. If you would like to monitor more than two days, feel free to do so, but be sure you get at least two days' worth as a minimum.

Do not wait until the end of the 24-hour period to make your diary; make your entries as the day progresses. This will alter your activities a little, but that's okay. You decide how often you will make an entry, but do not wait more than three hours before going back to make your notes.

Make your entries as complete as you can, and fill in the details and events that were significant to you.

When you have completed the diaries, insert them in your notebook and go on to the note on interpretation.

Interpreting The 24-Hour Diary

NOTE:
DO NOT READ THIS UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE
24-HOUR DIARY ASSESSMENT

As social scientists have discovered over the years, one useful way to learn about a person or a group

of people is to obtain information regarding what they actually do on a daily basis. What type of activities do they engage in? How do they allocate their time among job, family, entertainment, sleep, and other activities? With whom do they interact, in what ways, and how often?

Even in situations that are highly structured by others (such as the army), or on the most "atypical" days, the way in which an individual adapts and behaves says something about him or her. Regardless of the setting, we are always faced with choices regarding what to do, how to do it, and when. Patterns in those choices can tell us something about ourselves.

There are a number of different ways one can collect information about an individual's daily activities, but most are not useful for our purposes. An anthropological methodology, for example, in which a second "observer" follows the individual throughout the day, is impractical. Simply asking a person what he or she does on a daily basis is practical, but research has shown it to be not very reliable. People's impressions of what they normally do are often quite inaccurate.

A method we have found to be both feasible and reasonably reliable is to ask an individual to keep a log or diary of his or her activities throughout the day. It is not very difficult or time-consuming to pause every hour or so and to make a few notes regarding what you have been doing. (The entries do not have to be particularly lengthy.) Most people can remember in some detail what they have been doing for the past hour or two. While this method loses

the “objectivity” of a second-person observer, it gains an additional type of useful information. One cannot record everything. Consequently, what a person chooses to record and how it is recorded become potentially useful information in itself.

Interpreting a 24-Hour Diary

Taking into account how and why it was created, you can examine a 24-hour diary for patterns and draw inferences from those patterns. For example, some diaries have all their entries recorded at regular intervals (perhaps every 30 minutes); others do not. Sometimes entries are given very specific times (5:47, 8:54, 10:01), sometimes not (10:00, 10:15, 11:40). Some diaries will be full of human interaction. Others will not. A few might describe each person mentioned in the diary in great detail. Some will not mention any names. Some diaries are recorded in short, cryptic phrases; others read like a novel. Some describe an incredibly fast-moving, active person. Others do not. Some describe people who sleep exactly eight hours a night (invariably 11:30 P.M. to 7:30 A.M.). Some describe people who jump from one activity to another, others describe people who concentrate on one thing until the task is completed. And so on.

To help you develop some skill in using 24-hour diaries, we have included two people’s diaries. Study each of them carefully. What might those people be like? What kind of work might they like?

By identifying patterns in a diary and drawing careful inferences from those patterns, you can corroborate or contradict themes that have emerged in other sources, as well as identify new themes. All that is needed is some time, patience, and a modicum of skill.

Steven Taylor's 24-Hour Diary

TUESDAY

- 9:00 a.m. Woke up and ate breakfast.
- 9:30 a.m. Showered and shaved.
- 9:45 a.m. Began organizing class notes from this term to date. Reviewed Business Policy (BP) case for write-up (missed class last Friday). Called Sandi to thank her for note she left me this morning. Called garbage company to arrange weekly pickup for new house.

- 10:05 a.m. Got dressed, back to organizing.
- 10:30 a.m. Finished organizing the term to come. Made list of things to do today:
 - Kinko's—100 resumes, envelopes & letterhead, 100 blanks. Copies of Interpersonal Style Inventory.
 - BP write-up.
 - Take Mark's keys—pick up clothes.
 - Pick up Sponsor's check.
 - Buy three-ring dividers.
 - Get fellowship info for thank you letter!
- 10:45 a.m. Began Management of International Business (MIB) case for today's class (4:00 class).
- 12:10 p.m. Finished MIB prep.
- 12:20 p.m. Talked with roommate about recruiting strategies.
- 12:45 p.m. Drove to train station to pick up car and returned to Darden.
- 1:15 p.m. Lunch at Cafe Death (a local student eatery), read two chapters for Starting New Ventures (read quickly).
- 2:00 p.m. Usual program of notes for classmates, talked to a faculty member, meeting with staff.
- 2:25 p.m. Called Mark to arrange key exchange tonight.
- 2:30 p.m. Starting New Ventures class.
- 4:05 p.m. Managing International Business class.
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner with Joe Mason, Venture Capitalist, and Carla Baker, Entrepreneur's club.
- 8:30 p.m. Left for Mark's house to return keys, pick up clothes.
- 9:30 p.m. Returned home, played with dog, talked to Sue.
- 9:55 p.m. Began BP case (again)
- 11:10 p.m. Knocked off.
- 7:00 a.m. Woke up, quick breakfast and shower.
- 7:30 a.m. Back to BP.
- 9:35 a.m. Finished BP make-up. At last!!

SATURDAY

- 8:00 a.m. Got up, played with dog, made breakfast—my usual one grapefruit (always), cereal with bananas and milk, toast with jam—read paper while I ate.
- 8:20 a.m. Sue got up and made coffee; I had some while we talked and played with dog. I hardly ever make coffee for myself, but I'll usually have a bit if someone else makes it up.
- 8:40 a.m. Shower and a shave and a . . . Feel great! Sat down to work on written interview about 9:10.

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- 9:10 a.m. Intense six-page session on question #1. Almost finished! How long are the rest of the questions?
- 11:35 a.m. Daydreamed about 5 minutes: Am I going to work out before I go to D.C. this afternoon? Wondered why I'm inside working on a written interview when I could go for a bike ride. Debated personal priorities for a moment.
- 11:45 a.m. Back to the grindstone.
- 12:35 p.m. Andy is making lunch, think I'll have some. Downstairs. . . .
- 1:30 p.m. Back to work. Wonder what time I should leave house to run errands and make D.C. by 5 p.m. or so.
- 2:45 p.m. I gotta get outa here. Packed for overnight, headed out. Patted dog on way.
- 5:15 p.m. Arrived at Sandi's, not bad time! Had a couple beers, watched Olympics, debated plans for evening. We decided to take a nap (wink, wink) before heading out.
- 9:00 p.m. Struggled out to Chinese dinner. Food was great, but Sandi too tired to go to late show of "A Fish Called Wanda." I still want to see this movie.
- 11:00 p.m. We took a long walk home through Cleveland Park, checking out a group of old houses on Newark Avenue. They looked like houses at a beach resort, big porches, bright colors. Wondered if this was a place for country houses when Washington was built?
- 11:45 p.m. Went home and had some Ben and Jerry's before bed (in bed).
- 7:30 a.m. Woke up briefly, glass of water—back to sleep. . . .
- 10:30 a.m. Got out of bed—THE END.

Carrie Baugh's 24-Hour Diary

Week Day

- 9:05 a.m. Last night I had set my alarm for 7:00; I'm trying to keep on a morning schedule as though I have an 8:00 class every day, in order to have a full day to prepare for classes and work on other activities. This morning, I was lazy; I finally got out of bed at 8:00 and took my shower. I spent some time straightening up the apartment (one goal for this year is to keep the place somewhat tidy), doing the dishes, and listening to the news.
- I looked at my calendar and noted today's "To Do's"—call Larry for chips

for first years, make some calls for Supervised Business Study (SBS) and research at library, finish up Management of International Business case for 2:30, and write thank you cards for late wedding gifts.

- 11:35 a.m. Just got back from Alderman Library. Might have found some leads regarding the SBS project. I wish I had more time to devote in a single sitting. I couldn't believe I found parking on campus—but it was a 30-minute meter, so I had to keep running outside to put dimes in the meter.

I'm eating a quick breakfast/lunch so I can get to Darden. I'm gonna start tomorrow's cases and get started on a survey for my SBS project . . . assuming I can be really productive before class starts at 2:30.

- 2:10 a.m. Well, I was fairly productive. I got a rough draft composed on the Macintosh for my SBS survey. I'm not satisfied with the wording, but I think I included all the important concepts I was trying to get across. Hopefully, my partner Susan can help me improve it—she's good at that sort of thing. I tried to read ahead for Business Policy (BP) class, but I ran into too many people! That always happens when I go to Darden to study—so many distractions. But I got half-way through the case.

- 6:00 p.m. Finally out of class for the day! Whew! The New Ventures discussion was interesting—a guest speaker on venture capital. There is a lot more to that field than I had believed. An interesting, intense line of work. On the way to class, I bumped into Mr. Tuffle, who is also a venture capitalist, who spoke to our class yesterday. He's from Palo Alto, California, so we had some things in common. An interesting person; very bright and personable. He asked about my background, etc. He gets a lot of financial backing from Stanford.

My International Business class, however, was disappointing, as usual. It is so hard to get called on in that class! I swear he looks right at me but calls on someone else. But I don't want to be paranoid about it—it's a very aggressive, full class. I'll wait and see how it goes. I wish the pace of class was not so slow and deliberate. I walked home with Susan and Laura. We talked about the day's events and the upcoming weekend possibilities.

9:12 p.m. Boy, am I sleepy! It's been a long day. Right when I got home, I began cooking a real dinner for myself—raviolis and a salad. Not bad, if I say so myself. I do hate spending the time to cook an entire meal—it just means I stay up later. And I need a full six to seven hours of sleep to stay attentive. But dinner tasted great! Then, to the books! As usual, I first read both cases, then took a twenty-minute nap, then began writing them up. Both cases are interesting. I've already resigned myself that I'll have to do Career Management tomorrow before class. Just too little time.

Mark, my husband, just called. We talked about New York and the case he's working on. He's had some calls from headhunters. I think he's mildly interested. He sounds up tonight. We discussed our plans for the weekend . . . golf times, dinner, stuff like that! I really miss him.

11:45 p.m. Time for bed. I finished up my two cases as best I could. I'll polish them up tomorrow morning. I'm exhausted. Time for bed. I ended up talking with Susan on the phone for half an hour. We also talked about the BPE [Business and the Political Economy] cases and how it relates to our past retailing experience. Well, good night.

Weekend Day

10:50 a.m. Mark and I finally got ourselves out of bed, and took showers. We had fun last night. Getting caught up in what each of us had done the past week. This morning, we lounged around, planning our day and just being silly, as we do every weekend morning.

Our plans for today include golf at around noon, a block of time for me to do some work, visiting with my old study group this evening, and then just being together afterwards. Mark left a few minutes ago to do some errands, which gives me a chance to "wake up" a bit and begin working. We made pancakes for breakfast.

5:20 p.m. Well, Mark and I played sixteen holes of golf; it started pouring about half-way through, and we stuck it out until we were drenched. Bill played with us; it was really enjoyable. I played OK. I'm getting there, slowly. Plus, I only lost one ball. Pretty soon, I think I'll start keeping score. Mark played fairly well; he's never satisfied, of course.

We got back (4:30), I cooked tortellini and made a salad, and we had dinner. Mark cleaned our clubs for us while I

made the meal. It was yummy. Now we're getting ready to go to see my old study group—just a little get-together.

9:00 p.m. Mark and I just got back from the study group get-together. It was actually a lot of fun, more than I thought. A fun group. I think Mark had a very good time also. We talked about all sorts of things: weddings, school, golf, and different people's summers.

The guys and girls ended up in different areas of the apartment, talking about the silliest things. I loved it. Mark and I got tired about the same time, so we left. Now, we're watching "Tin Men" on TV and reading.

11:30 p.m. Mark and I are watching the Olympics! AWESOME. We did great in women's platform diving. USA won second and third. The basketball team beat Spain. Unfortunately, the men's gymnastics team is not doing so well.

We called Jen and Paul, our friends in San Francisco, to find out how life is going. They are a lot of fun, and we really enjoy finding out how things are going back home. We haven't seen them since we vacationed together this summer. Mark and Paul discussed their jobs (they work for the same company) and different people at work. I love hearing them talk, since I worked with them before coming to business school.

1:00 a.m. Mark and I are going to bed! We're exhausted! It's been a good, full day.

NOTES:

1. Mentioned goals in 7 out of 11 entries (64%).
2. Scheduled day in morning entry both days.
3. Mentioned two Darden people on weekday entry.
4. Weekend filled with golf, small get-together with old study group, watching movie and the Olympics, and calling San Francisco friends.
5. Described both days as good, and full of activity.
6. Mentioned being exhausted at end of day in both accounts.

INFERENCES:

Carrie is a person who:

1. Finds it useful to plan her day's activities.
2. Likes to set goals to accomplish during the day.
3. Might be achievement oriented.
4. Enjoys weekend sports activities.
5. Likes weekend interaction with people.
6. Focuses on school during the weekday.
7. Enjoys a lot of activity during the day.
8. Exerts a lot of energy during the day.