

# PRODUCTIVITY OF A SUBMARINER

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# WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?

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- Software developer at WebAssign.



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- Software developer at WebAssign.
- Operate a small dot-com retail business with my wife, Robin.

# WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?

- Software developer at WebAssign.
- Operate a small dot-com retail business with my wife, Robin.
- Amateur photographer

# AGENDA

- Why I am speaking
- Defining the problem
- A helpful metaphor
- Putting the metaphor to use
- Hazards and Problems
- Enemies
- Getting ship-shape
- Staying on-mission
- Resources & Influences
- Questions



# WHY AM I SPEAKING?

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- I get sidetracked.
- I've changed my approach to my projects and found I accomplish more.
- I want to share what I find is helping me.

# DEFINING THE PROBLEM



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- The infrequent reward problem of Twitter, Flickr comments, email and the like.
  - Hey look! I have new email!
  - Hey look, I have new tweets!

# ACCOMPLISHMENT OVER ACTIVITY

- Performing an activity does not necessarily mean achieving a goal.
- Finishing is hard work and success can be stressful.

# A HELPFUL METAPHOR. THE SUBMARINE



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- Then lower it, get work done.
- Give yourself the opportunity to focus.

# COMMUNICATE AT SET INTERVALS

- Turn off distractions.
- Raise the periscope and look around. Then lower it.
- Get work done.



# DELIBERATELY DISCONNECT

- No email
- No Twitter
- No instant messaging
- No IRC
- No “web-snacking”
- No meetings

# ESTABLISH EXPECTATIONS FOR COMMUNICATION

- Morning
- After-lunch
- Late-afternoon

# GET WORK DONE

- Do the job you were hired to do.
- Research
- Development



# OBJECTIONS & CONCERNS

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- What about this essential report/meeting/phone call?



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- I'll miss stuff

# OBJECTIONS & CONCERNS

- What if there's a fire?
- What about this essential report/meeting/phone call?
- I'll miss stuff
- BUT WHAT IF THERE *\*IS\** A FIRE?

# FAIL-SAFE



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- Have a plan to go forward when you don't have quality information.

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- Have a plan to go forward when you don't have quality information.
- Your company, boss, dept. should all know how to operate without your constant presence and input
- If they do not, train them



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# THE BALANCING ACT

- You want to be autonomous.
- You have to check-in. You have to be available to get orders and communicate.
- There is going to be tension between these two extremes.

# MINES AND OTHER HAZARDS TO NAVIGATION

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- Things that will screw up your productivity



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# MINES AND OTHER HAZARDS TO NAVIGATION

- Things that will screw up your productivity
  - Coffee shops with wifi.
  - Meetings
  - Coworkers
  - Most importantly, yourself.

# MORE DANGER

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- Malcolm Events



# MORE DANGER

- Malcolm Events
- Sub-hunters

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- Malcolm Events
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  - Bosses

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# MORE DANGER

- Malcolm Events
- Sub-hunters
  - Bosses
  - Coworkers
  - Clients

# MORE DANGER

- Malcolm Events
- Sub-hunters
  - Bosses
  - Coworkers
  - Clients
- Not communicating

# GETTING SHIP-SHAPE



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- Places to look for distractions

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  - Instant Messaging

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  - Email



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  - Email
  - Forums

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  - Email
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  - Social media sites

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- Places to look for distractions
  - Instant Messaging
  - Email
  - Forums
  - Social media sites
  - Meetings
  - Your desk and it's clutter.

# STAYING ON-MISSION

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- Know your orders and make a plan



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- Self-edit

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- Drill

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- Know your orders and make a plan
- Self-edit
- Drill
- Make command decisions



# RESOURCES AND INFLUENCES

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- 43Folders, Merlin Mann



# QUESTIONS?

# THANK YOU!

- This presentation and resources links are available at:

<http://wallscorp.us/presentations/submariner/>