

# Managing Minions for Better Productivity

When we introduce errors, make mistakes, or deliver "meh" results, it's usually because of a disrupter. Whether you're a leader or a doer, disrupters can come in many forms and from any direction. One way to improve on just about everything is to manage disrupters, but first, you have to identify them. If you can visualize the disrupter, you can cope with it.

I imagine disrupters as minions, just like in the movie – bouncy little yellow blobs. The classic meaning of minion is someone you can tell what to do and make them do it – kind of like a servant – but the disrupter version is a little different. These minions interfere rather than help. They distract and disrupt.

Minions can be external and internal, and they can be introduced by a team leader, management, clients, consultants, family, co-workers or friends. They can be emails that interrupt work, or they can be our own doubt, fear, past mistakes and negative thought patterns that affect our well-being. They can be habitual responses to stress or unhealthy coping mechanisms. They can be difficult individuals. Minions create confusion, change our moods and spin us out of control, all leading to errors, miscommunication, lack of innovation or collaboration and ultimately poor results.

Although many of our minions are similar, we each have a unique set of our own that works in combination with others to create a path of disruption. When the minions of doubt, imposter syndrome, fear or whatever creep into our heads, we need to say, "Not today, minion. I've got this." The goal is to reduce and control the oh-too-many minions that run amuck in our minds.

Here are a few things to consider when identifying, labeling and managing your minions for better productivity.

## Eagerness

This one is two-sided – either your eagerness to do or to have done. Whether you're the doer or the leader, communication is key. If you're eager to help but don't have all the information you need, you're heading for the perfect error storm. If you have bad information, well ... bad data in, bad results out; simple cause and effect.

Be sure you understand the task and the expectation, and then make sure you have everything you need to complete the task. If the team leader isn't providing you with what you need, *do not hesitate* to ask for it.

Also, we can't be too eager to deliver that we get ahead of ourselves. If you are asked to help and you are eager to do so, watch out that the task doesn't overload your workload or dilute your attention to another project. Giving each project only 50% of your focus will ensure poor results. It's okay to say no when you know your results won't be stellar. Instead, suggest when and how you can help in a way that allows you to pay full attention



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to the task.

Team leaders, remember that in your eagerness to delegate or ask for help, we must empower success by sharing all pertinent information and providing clear direction. Eagerness is a positive little minion that means no harm but can introduce many disrupters to the end goal.

## Changing Lanes

It's easy to get distracted and pulled away from what you are doing. Minions want you to post to your social media, call your mom, respond to an attorney and check on a colleague while you are smack in the middle of an important task.

Set your day up in lanes. When you are shifting lanes from one project or channel or team, take time to clear your mind from what you just did. Have a clear break. With the next task, circumstances, minions, personalities and expectations will change, too, so reset your intent and get into that world fully. Try not to straddle lanes and do too many different things at once.

For example, if you are in a social media lane, then maybe do all social media tasks during a block in your day, and then set up a time to consciously and clearly switch out and move into another lane rather than confuse them and introduce errors. Don't let minions divert your attention.

## Task Checklist

Create a checklist for the tasks that you need to perform each day. A checklist will help when we don't have backup and those minions start noodling around in our heads. Checklists can act as a second set of eyes. They create opportunities for us to read and see things differently, allowing errors to be identified and corrected. Checklists are great for controlling the minions associated with eagerness or being forced to change lanes.

Let's use a social media post as an example. List the channels you are using, whether the post is written for that channel, the proper link for that channel, the firm name, attorney name, team leader sign off and whatever else is needed to develop post. Same for all other tasks.

## Pause and Review

Set up clear breaks and pauses between things before you hit Send. Use this time to address the minions. Again, these may be personal minions, not necessarily work-related ones. See them, identify them, and send them packing. Don't give them power or they will pull you down their minion hole. Step away and if possible, review what you are doing differently. It helps me to find errors and edits when I review things in a different format, such as a PDF instead of Word or drafted in the actual channel something will be used in. Basically, switch your brain and eyes to view it differently. If you have Grammarly or something similar, copy and paste content there to let AI assist you. Ask your team leader to review and approve.

## My Minions

Sometimes we need to give in to a few minions. It's never a good idea to just push them away. If you have a personal minion or two that are overwhelming and you don't spend time addressing them, they will only come back. This may mean taking some wellness time. Give yourself what you need so those minions don't become baggage. And as Ted Lasso taught us, sometimes we need to accept, learn, and move on. [Be like a goldfish](#), which has a very limited memory – don't dwell on errors, missteps, and minions.

Need help controlling your minions? Reach out to me, Terry M. Isner, at [tmisner@jaffepr.com](mailto:tmisner@jaffepr.com).