

Month 2: Efficiency – Prioritization & Managing the "Toil"

- **Skill Type:** Power Skill / Operational
- **The Focus:** Shifting from reactive firefighting (tickets, outages) to proactive project work, and understanding how to manage time in a university setting where everything often feels like a priority.
- **Why it cascades:** Now that they know how to communicate, they need to carve out the mental bandwidth to implement better technical practices.
- **Step 1: The Calendar Dive (5 mins)**
 - Everyone opens their ticketing queue, calendar, or sent emails from the last two weeks. On a notepad, write down the top 3–5 tasks that consumed the most time.
- **Step 2: The Categorization Loop (20 mins)**
 - Take turns reading your lists out loud. For every task, the group must collectively agree to categorize it as one of the following:
 - **Firefighting:** Unplanned, urgent disruptions.
 - **Toil:** Repetitive, manual tasks that keep the lights on but don't add long-term value.
 - **Future-Building:** Strategic projects that improve things for the long haul.
- **Step 3: The Elimination Strategy (10 mins)**
 - Go around the group one last time. Every person must pick **one** item categorized as "Toil" or "Firefighting." The group has 2 minutes to brainstorm a way that person might reduce, automate, or delegate that specific task next month.
- **Step 4: Personal Improvement (Post-Meeting)**
 - What is the biggest 'time-sink' or repetitive task in your current role? How can you work on distinguishing between what is urgent and what is actually important in your department this month?

