

Top 10 Habits For

EFFECTIVE MINISTERIAL OFFICES



1. Establish a weekly rhythm

Control the shape of your diary. An agreed rhythm and predictable deadline for key pieces of advice free your staff to know where they can schedule and provide better advice. Establish key regular meetings: system for invites, week ahead schedule for weekend bag, planning and strategy - rolling tracker, regular department meetings.

2. Reflection

Build an oasis from the day-to-day. When are you most responsive to reassessment? Protect time to sit with a decision or issue. Bring your staff into this process for challenge and alignment. Avoid being boxed in by timeframes, narrow options etc.

3. Spontaneous interactions

You need to retain spontaneous conversations with your colleagues. This could be one evening a week where you walk the backbench halls/occupy the cafe/catch up with other Ministers.

4. Keep it Fun

Filling the tank. Remember what brought you into politics and where you get the most energy from. Schedule it to keep it.

5. Life preservation

Maintain the connection and routines that matter the most to you with family and friends. Think about how you'll stay healthy – sleep, exercise, eating/drinking.

6. Two decision days a week

Pick two days of the week to get through the majority of materials. It gives staff/officials a predictable timetable to work to. Empowers your office to better plan.

7. Set a standard for advice

You need advice not 'reckons' Considered and contested advice that drives to a clear and actionable recommendation. Set the standard and let the office work to maintain that standard. Don't let it default to volume.

8. Pre-meeting with pol staff

Go through the agenda ahead of regular departmental meetings with your office beforehand. Officials need clear and conscious commissioning and directions. This will serve as a net for tacit discussions and drive greater focus and outcomes from meetings.

9. Run a traffic light system for Ministerial consultation

Key intervention point for influence. Ensures you are across key policies and Cabinet Papers of other Ministers that are coming into your office for consultation. Provides your office with an early chance to engage and influence the paper.

10. Plan, plan and plan

Start with a 100 day plan and keep a quarterly planning routine. Track weekly.