# Transcript: IT Podcast - Ep 121 - Timeboxing-Swimlanes-Tony Godfrey

*The following transcript is a verbatim account of the video or audio file accompanying this transcript.*

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

WGU's IT Audio Series. Flexible, portable, profound.

Speaker #2 (Tony Godfrey):

Welcome to the IT Audio Series. I'm Tony, I'm a Faculty Manager for the undergrad cybersecurity program here. Today I'd like to talk about timeboxing and swimlanes. Melissa Chew writes about creating great work and establishing successful habits. She believes that there are three routines that we should focus on. The first is calendar management which I've done three other podcast on the IT Audio Series, tasks and projects, and establishing a solid work-life balance. Now there are three assets that each one of us brings to being productive. The first one is our time, the second is our priorities, and the third is our energy. We know that it's easy to overload or overcommit during our workday. There was a recent study I read that almost half of those that attend meetings have felt overwhelmed by the volume of meetings on our calendars. Let's take a look at a couple of techniques that may help us in this regard. The first is timeboxing, which helps us group tasks, and the other is swimlanes, which will help us establish good daily routines. Timeboxing or time blocking, hold me accountable to complete a specific task or tasks on a specific day. For instance, you may have a weekly meeting that you need to gather data for. Do you set aside time to prepare for this, and is it consistent each week? Many folks have stated it has helped them be more productive because it is the process of accounting for all of our tasks on each calendar day by allowing a specific chunk of time for each one. Timeboxing can also help us estimate the level of work that is involved in doing the task. If we specify two hours to gather data for our weekly meeting, did it actually take that long? After a while, we may have determined that this time allotted is either too much or not enough. We can then update the time duration fitting the needs of what exactly needs to be done for our weekly meeting. The idea of a swimlane is to create a consistent but flexible daily routine for myself. You may have just asked yourself, "Did he say consistent but flexible?" These swimlanes can be used to reserve specific times for team meetings, focused time or even breaks. Yes, you do need to step away from the computer from time to time. For example, do you believe your focus time is beneficial to you from, let's say, 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM or 3:30 PM to four o'clock every day or most days? Do you have a set time at the end of each day to verify where you're at and what's on the calendar for tomorrow? These swimlanes add flexibility in your day with these consistent events while you are still in control of your time. I'm sure we all use Microsoft products in our daily work such as Outlook, Teams, and Excel. Did you know that researchers at Microsoft have reported that information workers switch windows around 370 times per day? This average is close to once every 40 seconds. Melissa Chew recommends categorizing your task with a limited dataset. My team and I schedule our weekly one-on-ones very closely together. That way we only review a very focused dataset. Also, we do not have to constantly open or close various windows or applications to have a meaningful conversation. In conclusion, thank you very much for your time and listening to this podcast on timeboxing and swimlanes. Remember timeboxing or time blocking helps us group our tasks and swimlanes allow us to set consistent, but flexible durations to help us establish good daily routines. I hope this has given you some insights on how to better utilize your calendar in your day and not let it on you. Take care.

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

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