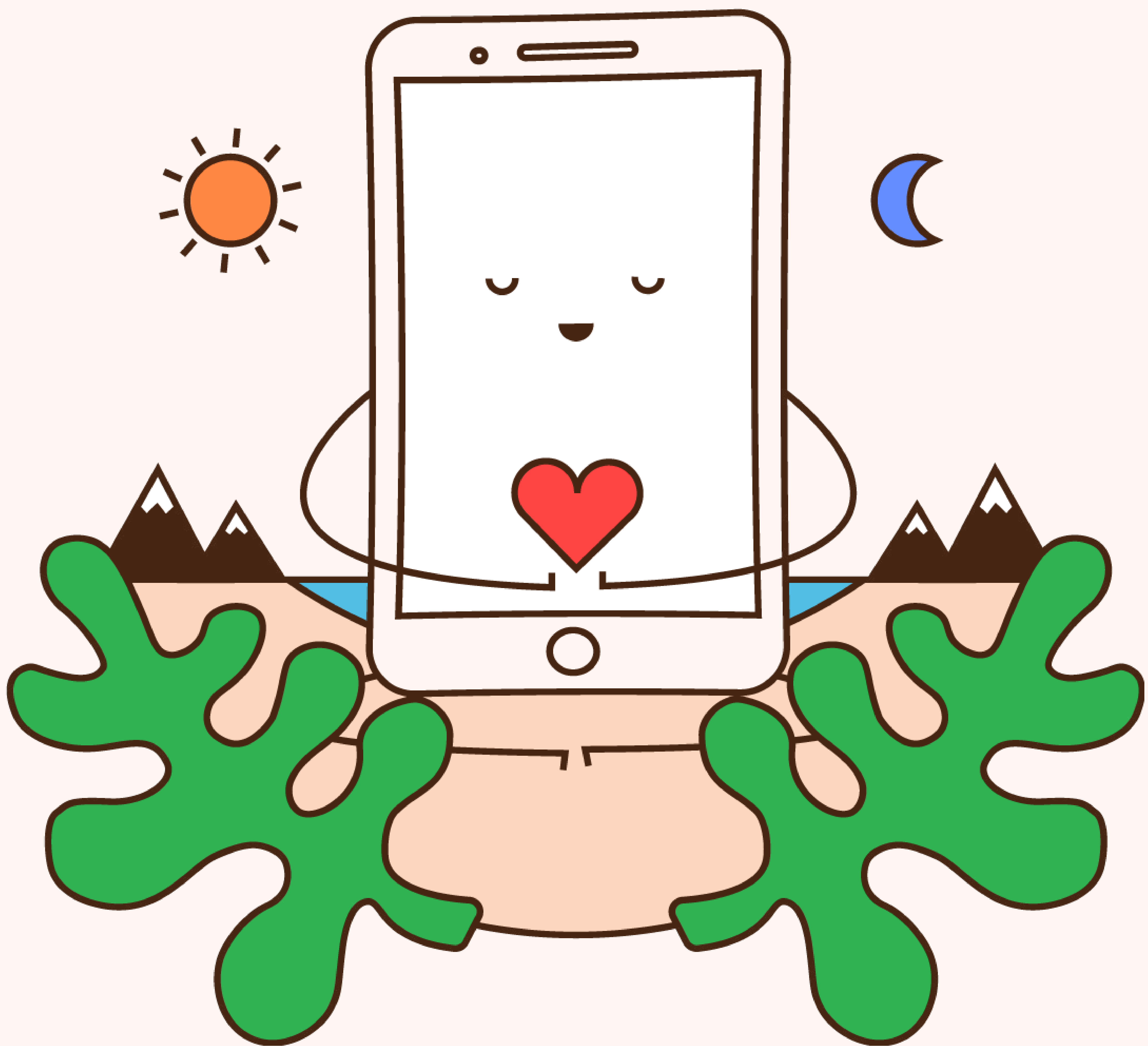


# Mastering Attention

Your guide for digital well-being at work



Taming Digital Distractions



Reducing Digital Stress



Unloading Of Information

## Introduction

# From distraction to focus

In today's world of constant digital connectivity and information overload, the art of **attention management** has become invaluable. This e-book will serve as **your guide to strengthen the focus and cultivate the digital wellbeing of your team** in today's dynamic work environment.

In the next chapters we will **investigate challenges** which co-workers of organisations get confronted with, learn to **understand the impact** and share **practical strategies** to efficiently manage attention.

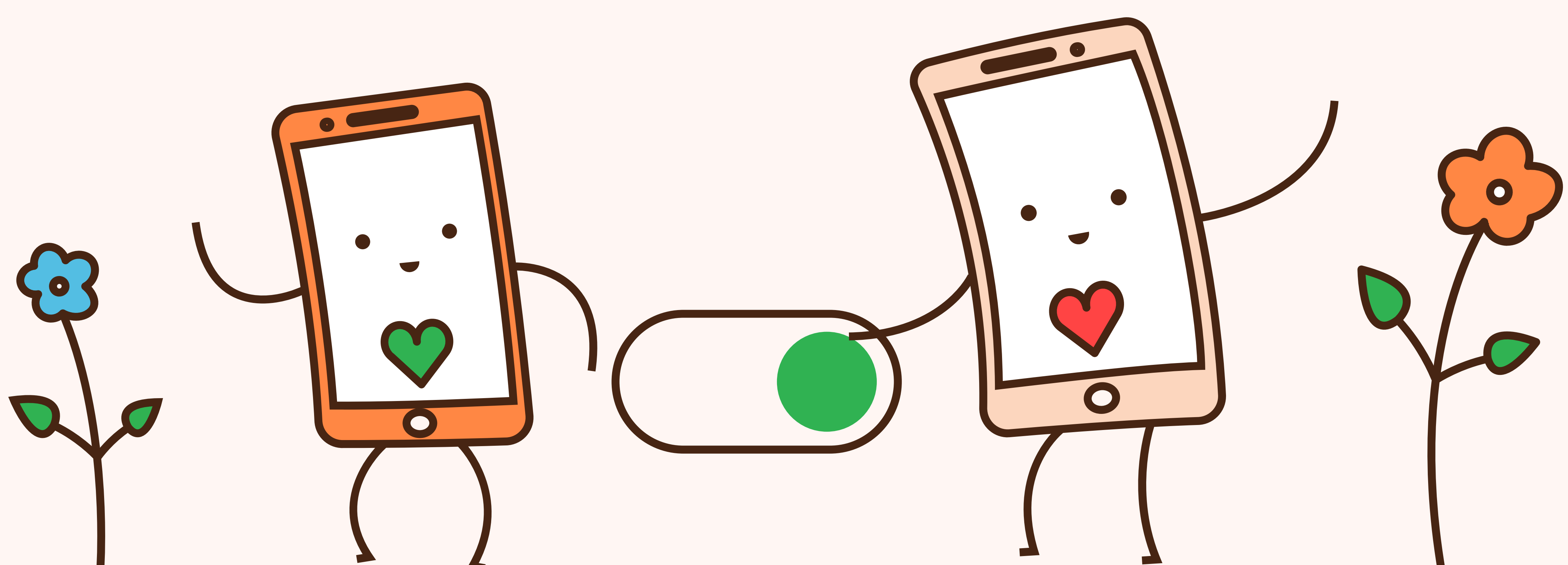
Are you ready to **increase focus, improve productivity** and create a **work environment** where employees experience **more motivation, autonomy and engagement**? Let's start this journey together and explore the art of **attention management**.

# Three challenges for digital well-being

 [Taming Digital Distractions](#)

 [Reducing Digital Stress](#)

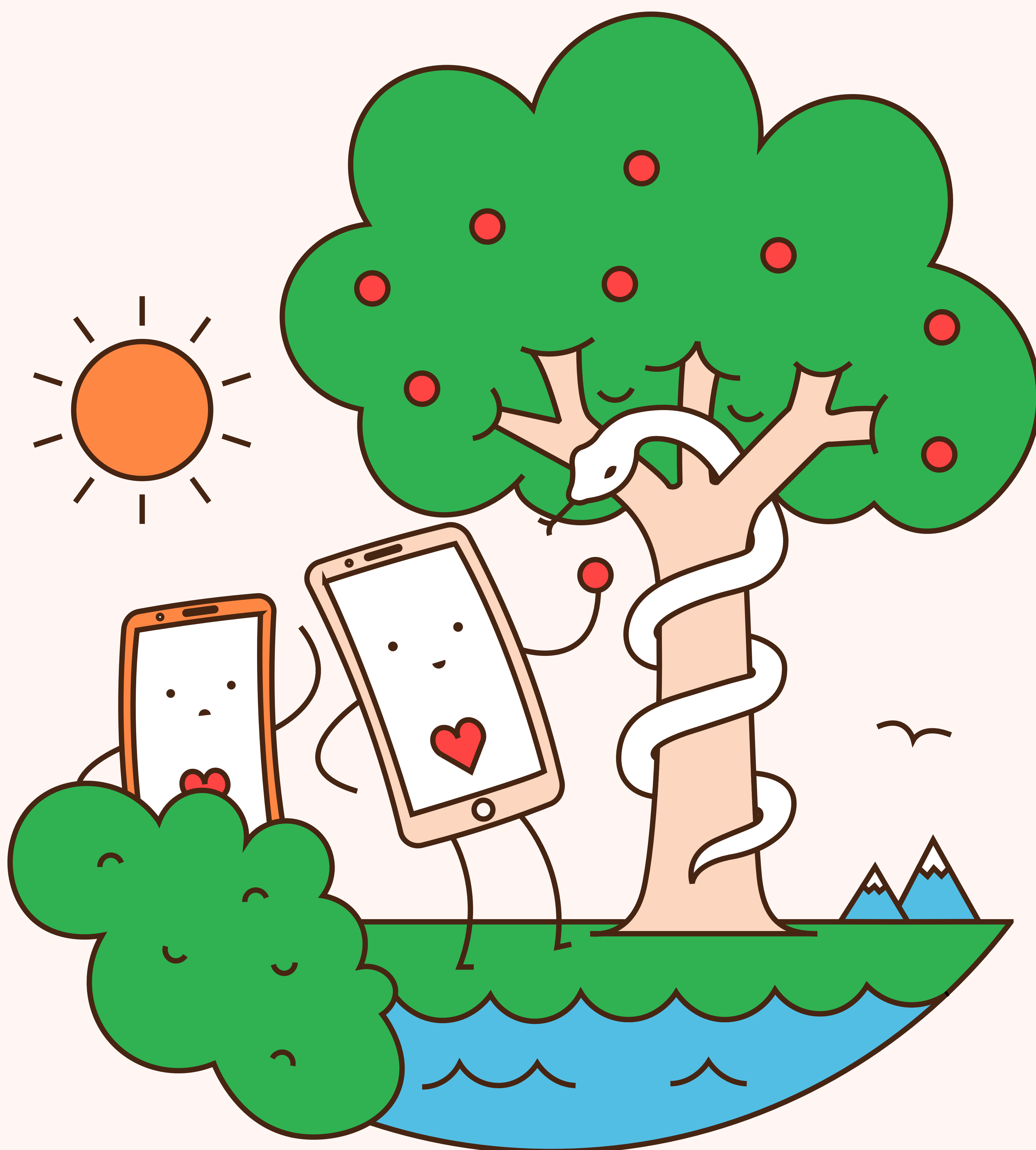
 [Unloading Of Information](#)



## Chapter 1

# Taming Digital Distractions

In the busy digital landscape of today's workplace, **distraction** is an obstacle that not only hinders productivity, but also **gnaws at a team's ability to stay focused** on essential tasks. In this first chapter, we dive into the intriguing world of distraction and equip you with a select number of strategies to give employees back control of their attention.



# **The Web of Digital Distraction**

Distraction is not just a minor nuisance; it has a significant impact on both individual team members and the team as a whole. (Rozgonjuk et al. 2020)

**Distraction leads to reduced productivity, more errors, higher stress levels and a collective sense of frustration.** Understanding the profound effects of distraction is the first step in overcoming this common challenge.

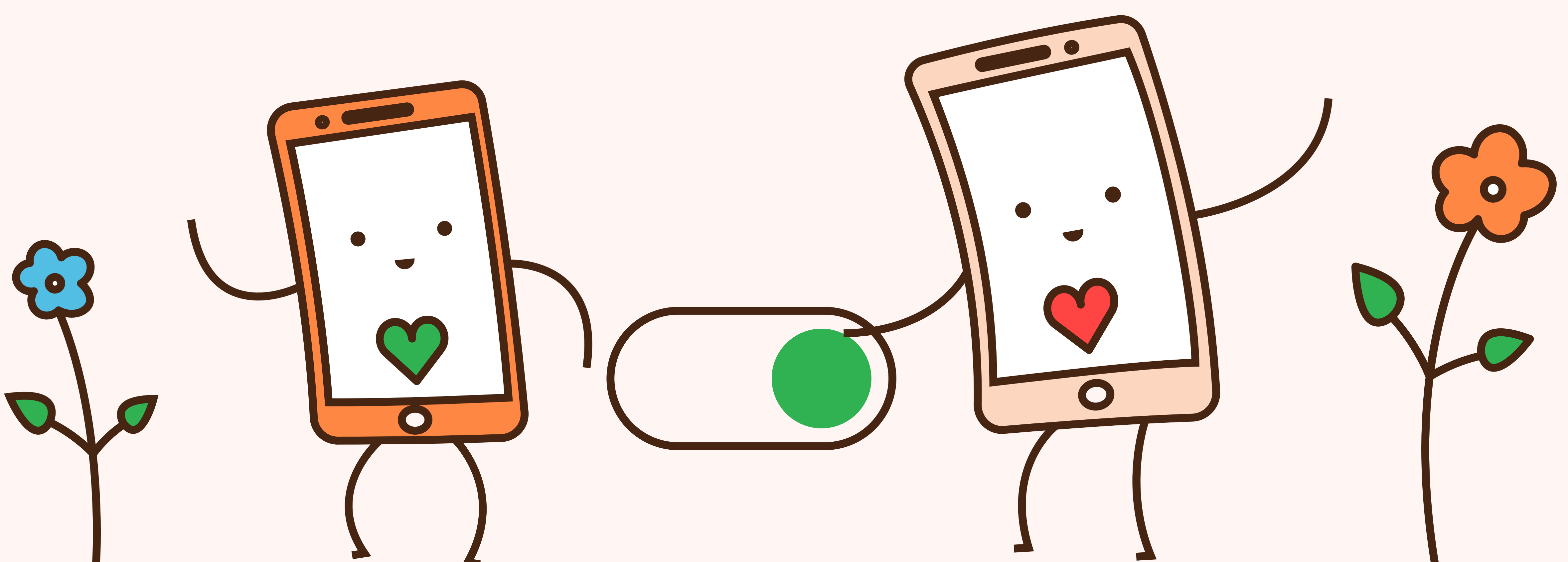
Distractions come in all shapes and sizes, from the innocent ping of a social media notification to the allure of juggling multiple tasks at once. These distractions pose a huge challenge to maintaining uninterrupted concentration.

**‘Novelty bias’** is a mechanism by which our brains get a dopamine hit when we experience something new. This happens, for example, when we eat something or check our Instagram feed. Our brain rewards us when seeking and finding

distractions, making us crave more distractions. (Bailey, 2019)

Our capacity for cognitive processing is finite. We can only process small amounts of information at a time. When performing tasks, we need to concentrate and therefore use our cognitive capacity to do so. When a smartphone is visibly near us, part of our cognition is occupied with the phone and we are therefore already less focused. (Ward et al, 2017)

**Let's make digital well-being the default setting in all our devices!**



# How to Reduce Digital Distractions

## 1. The Pomodoro Technique

### The Basics

The Pomodoro Technique, a trusted ally in the fight against distraction, suggests a simple but ingenious approach. It recommends dividing work into **25-minute focused intervals followed by short breaks.** (Scroggs, *no date*)

### How It Helps

By breaking down the work into manageable chunks, this technique acts as a shield against distractions, encouraging intense and uninterrupted effort.

### Some Tips

Encourage employees to plan their Pomodoros in advance, stress the **importance of screen-free breaks** to recharge and suggest experimenting with the length of these focused intervals.

## **2. App blockers**

### **Why app blockers?**

App blockers are like digital sentinels, ready to protect yourself and your colleagues from the tempting lure of distracting websites and apps during working hours.

### **How It Helps**

App blockers act as gatekeepers that reduce the temptation to view distracting apps.

### **Choose the Right Settings**

Explore the different settings available and choose what best suits your specific needs.

On Android you have the settings “Digital Well-Being & Parental Controls”, where you can easily set a focus time. Also on iPhone, from IOS 15 onwards, you have “Focus” in the settings.



## 3. Distraction Free Zones

### The Idea

Imagine creating special corners or rooms in your workspace where you won't be distracted.

### How It Helps

These dedicated areas provide a serene physical environment, perfect for concentrated and uninterrupted work.

### Shaping Distraction Free Zones

**Design:** Use colours that promote calm, such as blue or green.

**Furniture:** Comfortable chairs and ergonomic desks.

**Lighting:** Natural light or soft, warm lighting.

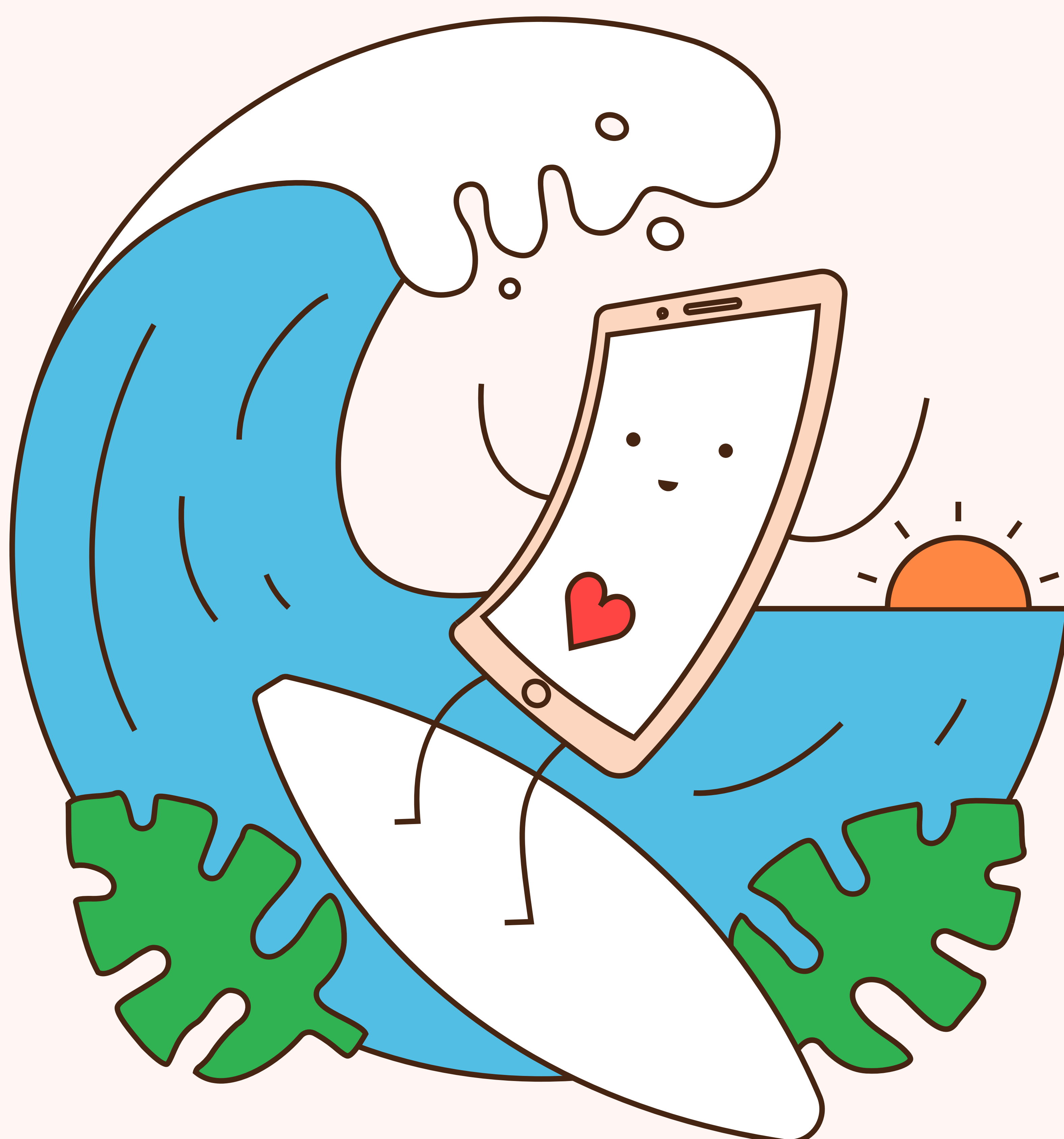
**Sound:** Consider headphones with noise-cancelling or soothing background music.

**Rules:** Set clear rules within these zones (such as smartphone on silent).

## Chapter 2

# Reducing Digital Stress

In today's work environment, where the demands never seem to end, excessive stress has become an all too familiar challenge for many workers. In this chapter, we dive into the complicated world of digital stress, also known as technostress. We reveal the far-reaching consequences of excessive digital communication and equip you with effective strategies to help yourself and others overcome it.



## **Digital stressors**

Technostress, also called digital stress, is the result of the tension and anxiety caused by the use of modern technologies, especially digital devices and online communication tools. It can manifest in different forms and sources:

### **Excessive use of digital devices**

People may feel they always have to be reachable and constantly online. Too many different platforms for communication also increases the workload.

### **Information overload**

People can become stressed by the constant flow of e-mails, social media updates and news items ([see Chapter 3](#)).

### **Technological changes**

The constant evolution of digital technology and the need to constantly acquire new skills can cause stress for some people.

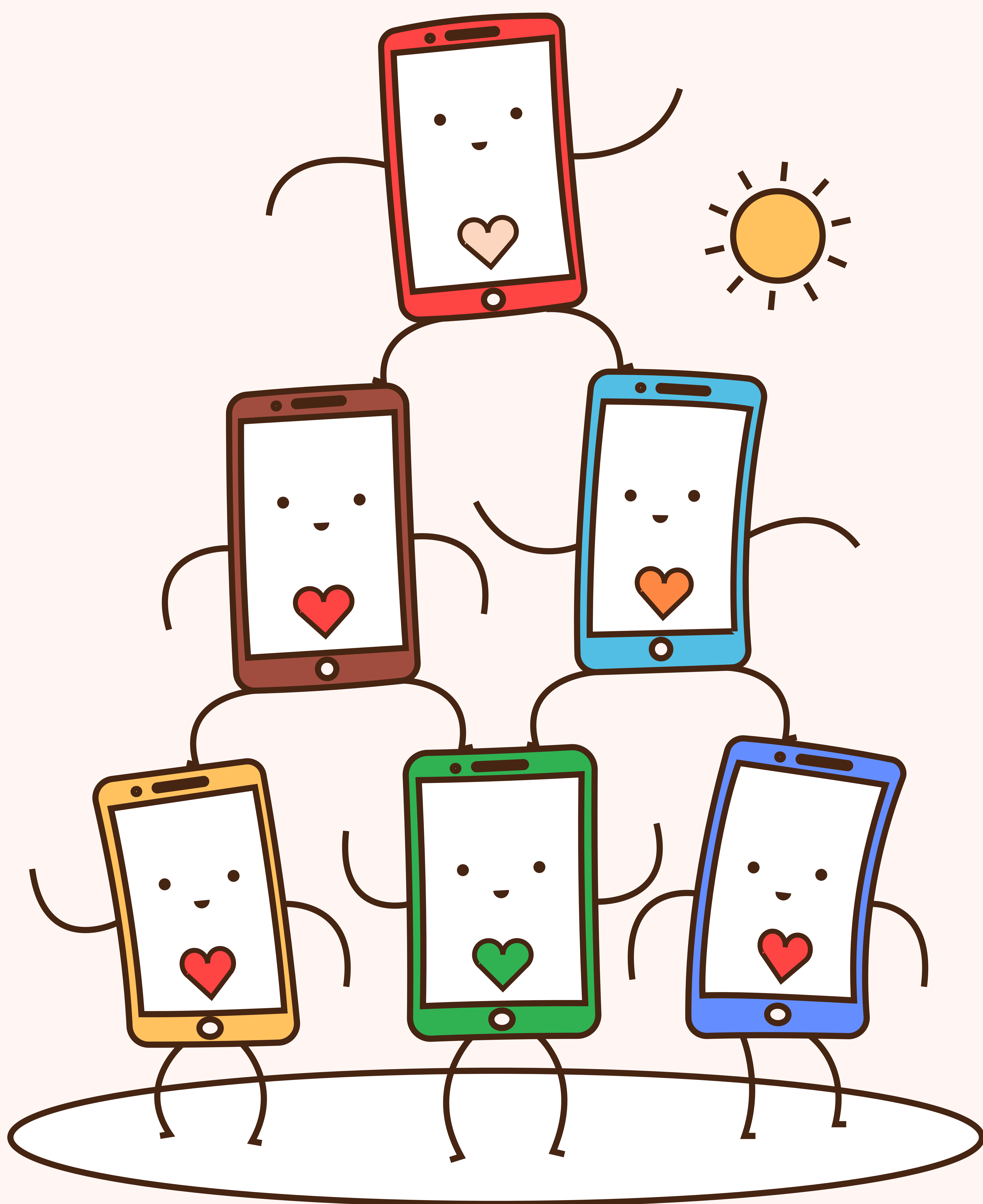
Technostress, or digital stress, has significant effects on workers' well-being and ability to concentrate. This form of stress can lead to physical and mental health problems, including headaches, sleep disorders, anxiety and depression.

The constant presence and rapid evolution of digital applications reduce productivity and make it difficult for workers to concentrate on tasks. The ability to come up with creative solutions can also be suppressed, which is detrimental to workplace innovation.

Moreover, technostress disrupts work-life balance, creating stress and conflict between work and personal life. It also affects relationships, both at work and at home, and can lead to tension and problems in collaboration.

Furthermore, overuse of digital devices can promote superficial information processing and reduce focus, hindering deep work and problem-solving skills.

To reduce this impact, it is important to be mindful of technology, take time for digital-free moments, manage your time, develop digital skills and seek workplace support to promote a healthy work-life balance and increase productivity.



# Here's how to reduce digital stress!

## 1. Mindfulness

### Less Digital Stress, More Mindfulness

Introducing mindfulness and stress reduction programmes can enable people to manage stress better and prevent burnout. (Ioannou, 2023)

### How It Helps

Mindfulness programmes teach people to manage stress, stay grounded in the present moment and strengthen their emotional resilience.

### Starting a Mindfulness Programme

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction is usually presented as an 8-week programme. [Daan](#), the author of this e-book, is a certified mindfulness coach and can tailor a programme for your team.

## **2. Digital-free moments**

### **Pushing the Pause Button**

Regularly disconnecting from our digital devices helps reduce stress. Put the phone on silent and notifications off. Schedule moments during the day when employees can completely disconnect from digital technology.

### **How It Helps**

These digital-free moments help relax your body and mind, reduce the constant flow of information and improve your ability to concentrate.

### **Some Tips**

A digital-free moment is not necessarily a break from working on tasks. Use whiteboards, paper and post-its during these periods to work offline. A 'dedicated space' where you won't be distracted can help here.

## **3. Developing Digital Skills**

### **Why develop digital skills?**

Good digital skills gives you and your colleagues more self-confidence about your competences and helps with completing tasks more smoothly. People with digital skills are also better able to adapt to technological changes, which results in less stress.

### **How It Works**

Digital skills development includes assessment of existing skills, training and education, practice and application, as well as support and help with digital challenges.

### **Some Tips**

- Tailor training to individual needs.
- Provide regular updates of digital training.
- Use positive reinforcement to encourage motivation.

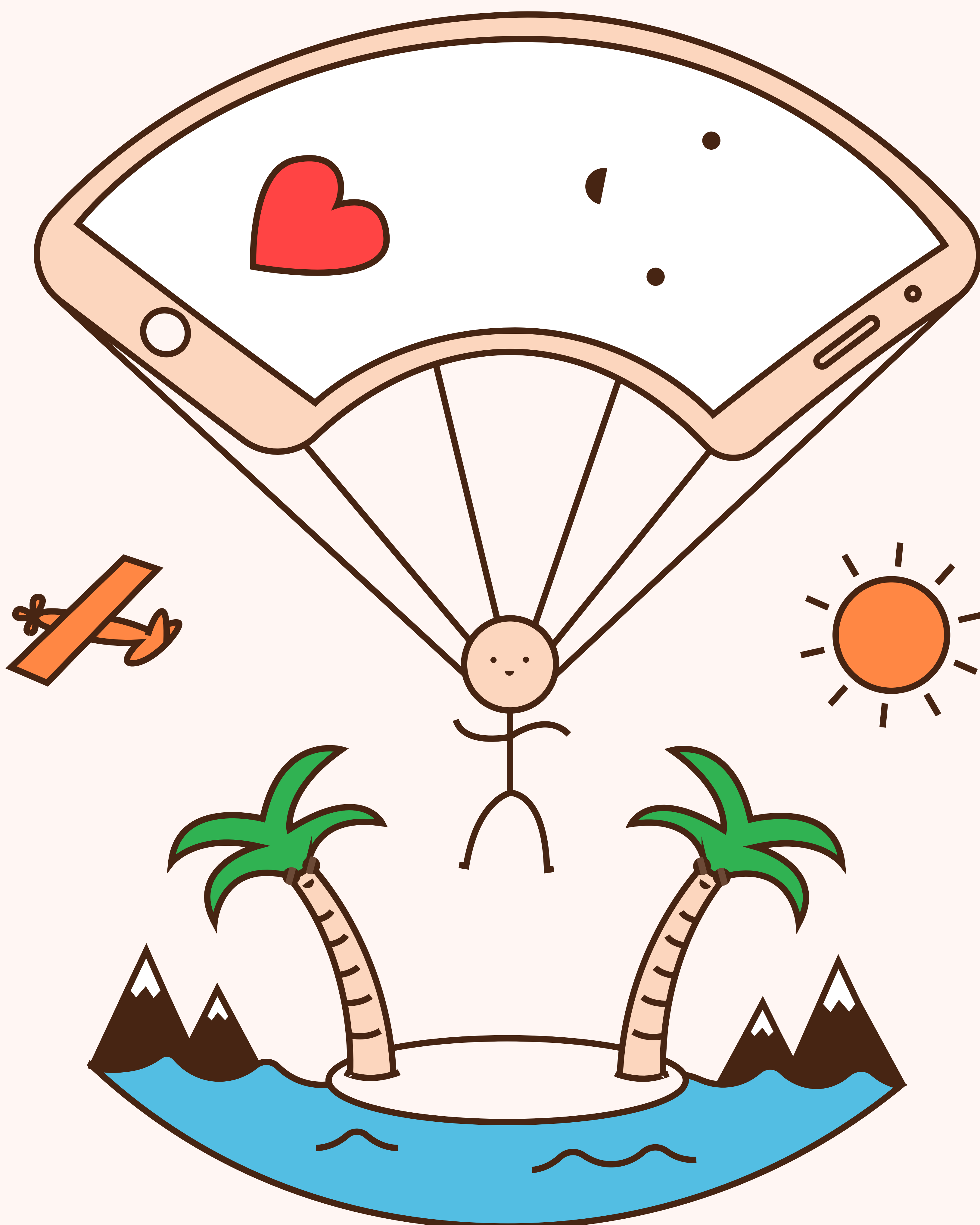


## Chapter 3

# Unloading of information

In our information-driven age, organisations are immersed in a sea of data, e-mails, messages and a constant flow of information.

The ability to manage this overload of data efficiently is critical to maintaining focus and productivity.



## **Overloaded by information**

These days, we are flooded with information like never before. **Our brains get overloaded**, and every decision requires a piece of the energy they need for optimal performance. Moreover, the **quality of information** varies enormously, from useless to crucial, whereas we used to receive more important communication.

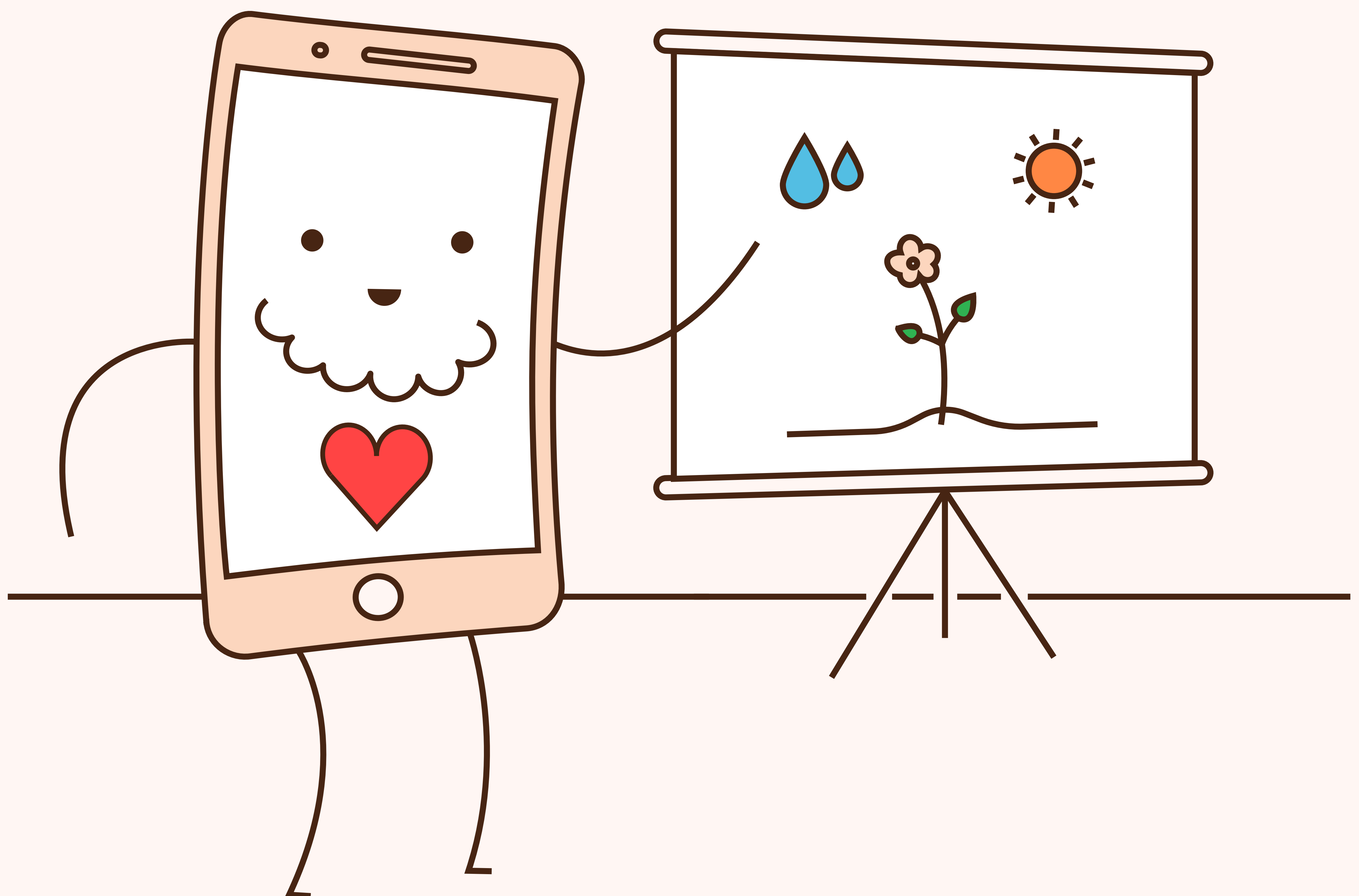
Every time we check our e-mail or access our Instagram feeds, we are **rewarded with hormones**, which used to be much rarer. **Our brains are struggling to keep up** in today's fast-changing digital society. (Levitin, 2017)

Information overload occurs when the amount of information exceeds our ability to process it effectively. This can lead to **cognitive fatigue, reduced quality of decision-making and less productivity.**

**Recognising this challenge is the first step towards overcoming it.**

In this chapter, we will elaborate on strategies and techniques to control the overwhelming flow of information.

This will ensure that one can harness the power of information without becoming overwhelmed.



# Here's how to manage information overload!

## 1. The Eisenhower Matrix

### Setting priorities

The Eisenhower Matrix helps prioritise tasks based on urgency and importance. By categorising tasks into four quadrants, individuals can focus on what is truly a priority and defer or delegate less important issues, allowing them to manage their attention and energy more efficiently.

### How It Helps

The Eisenhower Matrix helps reduce stress and overwhelm caused by information overload by using attention and energy more efficiently.

### In Practice

To apply the Eisenhower Matrix in practice at work, follow these steps:

- 1) [Download the Eisenhower Matrix](#) and print it out

## **2) Make a List**

Start by making a list of all the tasks and responsibilities you have on any given day or week.

## **3) Applying Quadrants**

Quadrant 1 (Urgent and Important)

Quadrant 2 (Not Urgent but Important)

Quadrant 3 (Urgent but Not Important)

Quadrant 4 (Not Urgent and Not Important)

## **4) Manage Calendar**

Plan your day or week based on your priorities. Block out time for important tasks.

## **5) Delegate**

If you can, delegate tasks in Quadrant 3 to others to relieve yourself.

## **6) Regular Review**

Review your Eisenhower Matrix regularly, as priorities can change.

## **2. Streamlining Communication**

### **The Art of Efficient Communication**

Streamlining communication practices is a cornerstone in overcoming information overload in the workplace.

### **How It Helps**

Effective communication practices can minimise noise and ensure that information is conveyed clearly and concisely.

### **Three Tips for Implementation**

#### **1) Establish Communication Guidelines**

These guidelines could cover topics such as the use of subject lines, response times and the appropriate channels for different types of messages. Make sure everyone in the organisation understands and adheres to these guidelines.

#### **2) Offering Training and Resources**

Offer training sessions and provide tools to help team members optimise their

use of communication tools. Make sure everyone is proficient in the tools they rely on and educate them on best practices for effective communication. Training can include tips on email etiquette, using chat apps and proficiency in project management tools.

[Contact Daan](#) for a tailored workshop

### **3) Regular Review and Adaptation**

Regularly review your organisation's communication practices to identify bottlenecks or areas for improvement. Be prepared to adjust your approach based on feedback and changing needs. Encourage employees to provide input on how communication can be further streamlined and made more efficient.

## **3. Knowledge Management Systems**

### **The Power of Knowledge Management**

Knowledge management systems help you and your team organise and access information in a structured way.

### **How It Helps**

These systems simplify the storage, retrieval and sharing of knowledge, making it easier to find relevant information amidst the flow of data.

Some of the benefits include:

- **Centralised Information Storage**
- **Easy Access and Retrieval**
- **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing**

### **Choosing The Right System**

Make sure the system suits your specific needs and is adaptable to the requirements of your team and company culture. To do this, do a thorough analysis. You can find a lot of systems online.



## Conclusion

# Daily Digital Well-Being

Digital distraction, stress, and information overload cause decreased focus and productivity. This guide to digital wellbeing at work covered nine different strategies. Of course, every organisation and individual is unique. So above all, choose the right strategy that suits you.

It certainly doesn't stop with the tips in this e-book either. To streamline digital well-being and attention management in your organisation, you can make additional use of workshops and coaching, where tailor-made solutions are sought for your situation.

## About the author

# Daan Annemans

Daan is founder of Altruïs. His mission is to help people find a healthy balance with technology. Less digital distraction and stress, more mindfulness!

Daan is a digital designer and master of philosophy. He has been doing extensive research on digital wellbeing since 2020 and maintains good relationships with academic circles approaching this topic from different disciplines.



**Contact Daan for more information!**

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## About Altruis

# Less digital stress, more awareness.

From technostress to digital distractions... Digital technology brings fresh daily challenges to well-being at work. That's why Altruis is committed to boosting your team's digital well-being with expert guidance and practical solutions.

Book a meeting with Daan, and see what you can do to support your team's digital wellbeing.

## How we help

**Coaching** for digital well-being

**Keynote** about digital well-being at work

**Workshops** tailored to your needs

Explore our services at:

<https://www.altruis.be/nl/services>

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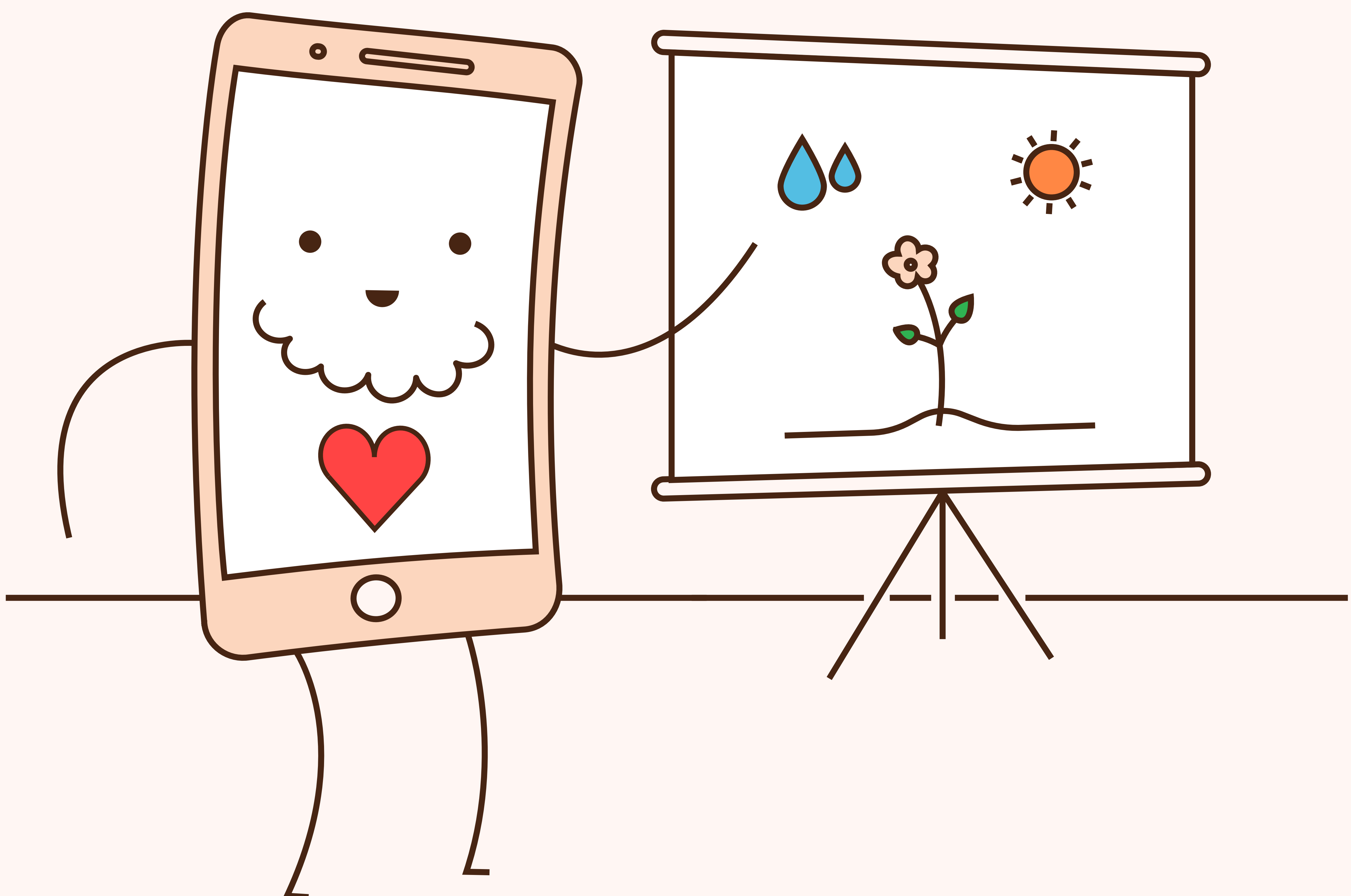
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# Thank you

Thank you for your attention and good luck!



Want to know more about  
digital well-being?

Visit [altruis.be](https://altruis.be)

Or contact Daan to book a meeting

[daan@altruis.be](mailto:daan@altruis.be)