

**Title:**

Managing Your Time - How To Prioritize Your Tasks

**Word Count:**

734

**Summary:**

The ability to choose and complete tasks in the order of importance highly desirable and more challenging for some business types than others.

**Keywords:**

Management training, Business management, Business, leadership, management, leadership training.

**Article Body:****Prioritizing Tasks:**

The ability to choose and complete tasks in the order of importance highly desirable and more challenging for some business types than others.

In order to choose tasks you must be aware of as many chores and projects as possible. In order to do this, every planning session must have a list.

**You Must Have a List!**

List all your tasks, then rate them, and list them again in order. Then you can schedule them.

When all tasks and projects are rated, use these additional filters to prioritize:

- Imagine the consequences of eliminating the task. - This exercise will often remove some unneeded tasks altogether.
- Decide if each task should be performed in prime time or secondary time.
- Determine who will be affected by the task.

**Now Reduce Your List**

Until we can effectively clone ourselves to be in more than one place at a time, most of us need to reduce our workload.

Before you start prioritizing, consider these task elimination criteria:

**Does This Task or Project Make Sense?**

Every task you do should first have to pass this benchmark.

You have goals, priorities, and objectives. Does every task contribute to your big picture? Estimate how much time each task will take, and then imagine what you would do with the time if the task were cancelled. While not always possible, everything you do should contribute to your objectives.

Why is the Task Urgent?

While urgency should be a mindset of business, urgency should also be questioned - ruthlessly.

Is the urgency only appeasing someone else?

What has caused the urgency? Many urgent situations have been caused by mistakes. Determining the cause of urgency can eliminate or postpone a task and lead to prevention measures of interruptions and mistakes.

Some seemingly imperative tasks are not urgent at all. Customers might be making demands that are unnecessary.

Check with all parties involved.

The Delegation Qualifier

Are you the only person that can handle the task?

Sometimes you might be, but many times someone else can perform for you.

Delegate everything possible to free up your schedule.

How Else Could the Task Be Done?

Are You Utilizing Technology

Could an in person appointment be a phone call?

Conference calling can rule out travel and save an enormous amount of time.

Could you email instead of calling?

Email can be done on your terms when you want. You will have time to articulate better compared to the live telephone conversation. Time can be wasted and sales lost by leaving phone messages for people. Email eliminates phone tag.

Can the Task Be Dissected?

Are there portions of the work that can be delegated, eliminated, or postponed?

What is the Cost of Excluding a Task?

There are many jobs throughout the day that are actually not worth the time to do. Applying the dollar figure when considering cancelling a task is another measure of the task value.

The Measures of Task Value

Money - How much is the task worth?

Time - How much time will it take?

Effect - Completed versus Cancelled

Effectiveness - What is the most effective way to perform the task?

Contribution to Your Objectives

Replacement - (What could be done with the time instead?)

Division- Dividing the Task into Parts

When - Can the task be performed just as well in secondary time?

One great trick for prioritizing is to give every task a deadline.

Give tasks a deadline.

While many SME owners define a start time for projects and tasks when planning, they do not establish a deadline. Having a clear deadline makes tasks easier to prioritize.

Prioritizing while planning is easy. You have time to think. Prioritizing while working is a bit more challenging.

### Prioritizing Interruptions

While most people are familiar with prioritizing tasks, few people prioritize their interruptions.

Hence, few people have defined the types of events that interrupt them.

### Define Interruption Types

In order to take control of your time, you must minimize interruptions. Many SME owners describe their positions as managers, and define management as 'putting out fires,' or solving problems. While having a job definition for yourself is a great start, most owners have not defined or classified these problems. They just catch every ball tossed at them. The tail is often wagging the dog.

Think about how you are interrupted from your OUT or productive work. Make a list of every kind of interruption you have experienced in the last three months.