



The ABCDE Method for Setting Priorities

Efficiency is doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right things. Your ability to plan and organize your work, in advance, **so you are always working on your highest value tasks determines your success as much as any other factor.**

The ABCDE Method for Priorities

The process of **setting short-term priorities** begins with a pad of paper and a pen. Whenever you feel overwhelmed by too many things to do and too little time in which to do them, **sit down, take a deep breath, and list all those tasks you need to accomplish.** **Although there is never enough time to do everything, there is always enough time to do the most important things** and to stay with them until they are done and done right.

Setting Better Priorities

The best method for **setting short term priorities** on your list, (**once you have reaffirmed your top 5 goals or objectives**), is the **A-B-C-D-E method**. You place one of those letters in the margin before each of the tasks on your list before you begin.

"A" stands for **"very important;"** something you must do. **There can be serious negative consequences if you don't do it.**

"B" stands for **"important;"** something you should do. This is not as important as your 'A' tasks. **There are only minor negative consequences if it is not completed.**

"C" stands for things that are **"nice to do;"** but which are not as important as 'A' or 'B,' tasks. **There are no negative consequences for not completing it.**

"D" stands for **"delegate."** You can **assign this task to someone else who can do the job instead of you.**

"E" stands for **"eliminate, whenever possible."** You should **purge every single "E" activity you possibly can, to free up your time.**

When you use the A-B-C-D-E method, **you can easily sort out what is important and unimportant. This then will focus your time and attention on those items on your list that are essential for you to do and in what order to proceed ("A"s, "B"s, "D"s, etc.).**

Just Say No

Once you have determine the one or two things that you should be doing, above all other tasks, **say "NO" to all diversions and distractions and focus single-mindedly on accomplishing those priorities.**

Much stress that you experience in your work life comes from working on low-priority tasks. The amazing discovery is that as soon as you start working on your highest-value activity, all your stress disappears. You feel a continuous stream of energy and enthusiasm. **As you work toward the completion of something that is important (your goals), you feel an increased sense of personal value and inner satisfaction. You experience a sensation of self-mastery and self-control. You feel calm, confident and capable.**

Action Exercises

Here are three ideas that you can use, every day, to help you set short term priorities and to keep you working at your best:

First, take the time to be clear about your goals and objectives so that the short term priorities you set are moving you in the direction of something that is of real value to you.

Second, remember that what counts, **it is not the amount of time that you put in at work; rather, it's the amount of time that you spend working on high-priority tasks.**

Third, understand that the most important factor in setting priorities is **your ability to make wise choices. You are always free to choose to engage in one activity or another.**