

prioritization

the action or process of deciding the relative importance or urgency of things or tasks



One of the oldest workplace struggles is knowing **how** to prioritize your work. With more tasks to do, non-stop emails, and higher expectations, deciding what deserves your attention can quickly become overwhelming.

How to Prioritize When *Everything* Seems Important

Prioritization involves taking a good look at what you have on your plate **each** day and figuring out which tasks you'll do first, and which you'll leave for the end. This is a skill that takes a good amount of analysis and clear-headed thinking, but once you've got the hang of it, it will make your life easier and more seamless.

In theory, prioritization is pretty simple: write down what you need to do and then start doing it. Here's the thing about prioritization though — it's always changing. Every project manager knows that things come up, fall through, and get moved around. How we adapt to those changes can determine the success or failure of our effectiveness in completing that ever-growing to-do list.

Write down all of your tasks (big, small, immediate, long-term)

Compile a literal list of action items that you need to take care of, sorting them based on:

Daily tasks: Including day-to-day duties such as meetings, check-ins, and responding to communication.

Weekly tasks: Including action items related to client deadlines, presentations, or project milestones.

Month-plus tasks: Focusing on tasks related to longer-term projects and goals.

So much of how to prioritize tasks revolves around knowing what's actually on your plate.

Know your deadlines and key factors

Not all tasks are equally important. Deadlines tell you the **WHEN** and key factors tell you the **WHY**:

“Who does this impact?” Is a task only going to impact you? Your clients? Your department or company?

“What is the reward or outcome of completing this task?” A new client contract? More revenue?

“What is the risk of not completing the task?” Lost clients or revenue? Lost progress on a project?

Stick to a schedule that reflects your priority tasks

Maybe you're freaking out at your workload right now and want to avoid burnout in the future. For the sake of improving your performance long-term, it's crucial to put together an **actual schedule**.

If you've laid out your tasks and prioritize them accordingly, you've already done the bulk of the work.