urgency
importance requiring swift action; an earnest and persistent quality

CareGivers of America
Home Healthcare Services

An appropriate sense of urgency leads to highly leveraged work, meaningful work that is fulfilling to both the heart and the head, and an organization that continues to be successful in a constantly changing world.

*"You are what you **do**, not what you say you'll do."*
-C.G. Jung

Sometimes we see lots of energetic activity: where people sometimes run from meeting to meeting; where people have agendas containing a long list of activities; where people **seem** to have a great sense of urgency. But more often than not, this flurry of behavior is not driven by any underlying determination to move and win now. It's driven by pressures that create anxiety and anger.

What a sense of urgency in motion *should* look like:

Fast-moving decisions and initiatives that are focused on the *critical* issue.
High levels of *cooperation and teamwork* on initiatives.
A spirit of resilience—pushing to achieve more ambitious goals despite obstacles.
Measurable progress on objectives accomplished every day.

Keep in mind, though, that everything **cannot** be urgent. Work with others to understand the business's (or department's) genuine and urgent issues and then be sure that each person knows *Who has to do What and by When*. Done right, a sense of urgency can give the people in your organization the superhuman energy and focus required to overcome almost any challenge, without creating stress.

HOW TO DEVELOP A PERSONAL SENSE OF URGENCY

Define your purpose A team under a tight deadline will act with urgency, but a team under a tight deadline *and* with a shared purpose will act with conviction. The former will stress people out, the latter will energize them with meaning.

Distinguish *genuine* urgency from a false sense of urgency This means choosing your battles wisely. If you treat *every* task as though it's urgent, your team will realize that nothing is truly urgent.

Take the initiative, even if you don't "own" the project One way to show a sense of urgency is to take the initiative on critical matters—even if it is not in your job description. For example, if you know that improving customer service response times is an urgent matter, then the next time a customer call comes in and none of the support reps are available, answer it yourself.

Keep calm Acting with urgency doesn't mean shouting, condescending or panicking. Think of ways you can show a sense of urgency while also maintaining a sense of calm, and be sure to take into account that some people are Affective Communicators who read a lot into emotions, tone of voice, facial expressions and gestures, while others are Neutral communicators who focus on your word choice.

Set realistic mini-deadlines and honor them Studies have found that tighter deadlines lead to higher completion rates, shorter completion times and less money spent on the task at hand. By making smaller, "mini-deadlines", you can achieve consistent and achievable goals and meet them. This will making honoring your overall deadlines easier.