

prioritization



the action or process of deciding the relative importance or urgency of a thing or things

One of the most common frustrations we hear from individuals who don't have self-management routines in place is a feeling of constant *firefighting*, leaving them unable to complete projects on time (or within budget).

Firefighting is a natural human response to a chaotic workload as a effort towards "getting more done". But it's not an effective way of getting the right things done at the right time.

5 TIPS FOR PRIORITIZING YOUR TIME WHEN YOU'RE BEING PULLED IN EVERY DIRECTION

- **Understand *urgency versus importance*** This may sound obvious, but there is a clear difference between an urgent task and an important task – a distinction that should not merely be measured by how long it might take or who may be shouting the loudest.

What is not so obvious, however, is that many of us are failing to make that conscious assessment, which hinders our ability to prioritize effectively, and leaves us feeling drained yet unproductive, day after day.

- **Put priorities into practice** Once you've applied the 'urgent vs. important' test to your to-do list, you can then implement your strategy for completing each project throughout the day.

A strong strategy for prioritizing time is to make a list of all the tasks to be completed and then organize them according to importance. This works so well because it helps to visualize how much work needs to be done and broken down into manageable chunks.

- **Set *realistic goals and deadlines*** If you're continually missing deadlines, it could be for the simple reason that you're putting too much pressure yourself, either to impress a client or perhaps demonstrate efficiency to others, when in fact, the *opposite* is happening.

By setting *realistic* deadlines, you can manage client and/or manager expectations from the outset, giving everyone a reason to celebrate – should you complete the project ahead of schedule.

- **Eat the frog** Mark Twain once said that if the first thing you do each morning is to eat a live frog, you can go through the day with the satisfaction of knowing that it is probably the worst thing that is going to happen to you all day long.

In reality, your "frog" is your biggest, most important task. It is the one you are most likely to procrastinate on if you don't do something about it. So, "eat the frog," is another way of saying that if you have two important tasks before you, start with the biggest, hardest, and most important task first.

- **Finish one task before starting another** Discipline yourself to begin immediately and then to persist until the task is complete before you go on to something else.