



Supervisor NEWSLETTER

Employee Assistance Program
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Getting a Grip on Multitasking

A job that requires you to multitask has many facets—and you're responsible for keeping all of them functioning at a high level. Being responsible for a range of activities and projects keeps your job interesting but it also can make you feel overwhelmed.

It takes skill to be successful at a job with many priorities. You must be organized, good at managing time and proficient in setting priorities. The following recommendations can help you increase your chance of being successful at every aspect of your job.

Analyze

The first step is to analyze your job. You need to know which tasks are required, and how to set priorities in getting them done. You also need to allot the appropriate amount of time to each task.

To begin, take two lined pieces of paper and title them Urgent Tasks and Plan-Ahead Tasks.

Urgent Tasks are those that must be done immediately, such as answering the phone, taking care of customers and dealing with the daily crises that are inevitable. List all of these on one sheet of paper.

Plan-Ahead Tasks are anything you can schedule in advance, such as writing a report, attending a meeting or planning for a new product or service. List all of these on a second paper.

Prioritize

Next, rate the tasks on each page as A, B or C, with A being the most important ones. This takes some thought, and you may want to get your supervisor's input.

Plan-Ahead tasks that are important for your company's future success also should rate an A. These are tasks such as developing a new product or doing market research.

The problem is, these important tasks can easily be set aside to take care of the more pressing ones. But it's essential to find time to do them, or your company's future may be at risk.

Schedule

The next step is to schedule these tasks on your calendar. To make it easier to organize your tasks, use four different colors to highlight them on your two lists, based on their frequencies:

- Daily Tasks = Yellow
- Weekly Tasks = Green
- Monthly Tasks = Blue
- Yearly Tasks = Pink

With your calendar and your two pages of tasks, set aside blocks of time for performing each task. Use the same color you used on your lists to highlight on your calendar the block of time for each task. That way, you'll be able to see at a glance if it's a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly task.

First schedule all of your A tasks, then the B's, followed by the C's.

Using your calendar enables you to see if you have enough time to do all the tasks assigned to you. More than likely, you'll discover you don't have enough time to do everything, so here are some options:

- Armed with your task lists and your calendar, go to your supervisor and together work out a doable plan.
- Search for ways to do some tasks more efficiently.
- Look for unnecessary tasks that can be eliminated. Look at those you rate as C and determine if they're necessary.

The more tasks you have, the more essential it is to plan. Set aside time each week to plan the next week. Look at your calendar and make any necessary adjustments.

Ensure success

Even after your plan has been put in place, it has to be managed. To do so, check your task list each week for items that can be eliminated or time frames that need to be expanded or shortened. If you do a little fine-tuning, your multiple priorities will cease to be a source of stress or frustration.

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