Helping Visitors Put ‘First Things First’

Presented by Elisa Enriquez

Ombuds Office
OVERVIEW

- Perspectives on Priorities
- First Things First
  - The Evaluation Cycle
  - The Time Management Matrix
- Summary and Review
What are priorities?

What is/are most important and meaningful in your life (activities, values, beliefs, lifestyle, principles, standards, hobbies, integrity, etc.) that you are not willing to compromise or sacrifice in pursuit of something else - a goal.
Why Not Prioritize?

- It takes valuable time to write goals, to develop plans, and/or one may not know how to prioritize effectively.
- One can seem like a ‘hero’ by putting out fires caused through lack of planning around priorities.
- Performance may be evaluated in terms of what one appears to be doing rather than working on priorities.
- Frequent organizational changes lead to frequent changes in priorities and goals. Why bother?
Why Prioritize?

- **Prioritizing skills help one:**
  
  - know which tasks are more important in order to improve productivity.
  
  - understand the difference between urgent and important tasks.
  
  - choose the best option depending on what he/she wants to accomplish.
Effective prioritization can...

...increase an employee’s ability to meet or exceed expectations as well as overall productivity.

...improve relationships among employees and managers by clarifying the mission, tasks and goals in alignment.

...mitigate work-related conflicts, especially time is spent on taking the time to focus on important tasks of morale building, planning, and problem-solving.
Ombuds as Coach

Asks the Visitor

- What do you want?
- How do you get there?
What Do You Want?

What are your priorities?

What are the best options or best ways to attend to your priorities?

Are your priorities aligned with the organization’s priorities?
How do you get there?

Which area of prioritizing is the most difficult?

1. The inability to prioritize (To Evaluate)

2. The inability or desire to organize around priorities (To Organize)

3. The lack of discipline to execute around them (To Act)
FIRST THINGS FIRST

- The Evaluation Cycle
- The Time Management Matrix

“Start with the end in mind.”

- Stephen Covey
The Evaluation Cycle

Evaluate

Organize

Act
Evaluate

- Recognize what is **most important**
- Differentiate between **urgency** and **importance**
- Focus on what is **important** and not just **urgent**

*Help Visitors Identify the ‘Big Rocks’*
The Time Management Matrix

I. Urgent & Important
II. Not Urgent & Important
III. Urgent & Unimportant
IV. Not urgent & Unimportant

From *First Things First* by Stephen Covey

"What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important."

- President Eisenhower
Types of Matrix Activities

I
Crisis(es); Pressing issues; Deadline driven

II
Preparation; Planning; Crisis Prevention; Values Clarification; Relationship building; Recreation/Rest Empowerment

III
Interruptions; Some calls, mail, emails, meetings; Proximate issues; Non-goal related

IV
Time wasters; Some email & calls; trivia; busy work; non-productive meetings

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Results of Matrix Activities

**Urgent**
- Stress
- Burnout
- Crisis management
- Putting out fires

**Not Urgent**
- Vision and Growth
- Balance
- Improvement
- Control
- Empowerment

**Important**
- Short-term focus
- Sees goals and plans as worthless
- Feels victimized, resentful

**Unimportant**
- Irresponsibility
- Fired from jobs
- Dependent on others for basics
Organize

Employ Tools and Skills

“Organizing is what you do before you do something, so that when you do it, it is not all mixed up.”

- A.A. Milne
Use Tools, Improve Skills

- Email reminders/ notifications
- File planners/ To do list
- Cell phones, pagers, etc.
- Coaching
- Self-help Books
- Trainings/ classes

"The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities."

- Stephen Covey
Act

I. MANAGE

II. FOCUS

Manage the urgent and important

Focus on the important

Minimize the urgent non-important

Eliminate everything else

III. MINIMIZE

IV. ELIMINATE

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Focus on...

Delegating
- Delegate to others/train others

Setting Deadlines
- Set or re-schedule deadlines

Planning
- Use personal management tools for organizing and planning (vision)

Taking Breaks
- Take time off to clear the mind, re-energize, and exercise

Building Rapport
- Boost morale; show appreciation; Network; make time for relationships
Manage, Minimize, Eliminate

Procrastination
Indecision
Perfectionism
 Interruption
Excessive paperwork
Poor Communication
Inefficient Meetings
Self-Overload
SUMMARY AND REVIEW

“The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.”
- Stephen Covey

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The Evaluation Cycle

Evaluate: Assess, identify and re-evaluate priorities

Organize: Obtain and use time & personal management tools

Act: Focus, manage, minimize, eliminate
Self-Evaluation

☐ Do you know what your priorities are?

☐ Do you know what the organization’s priorities are? Are they aligned with yours?

☐ Do you strive to use tools and learn new skills that may improve your ability to manage priorities?

☐ Do you know how to balance and integrate work-life priorities with short and long-term goals?
The Time Management Matrix

Put ‘First Things First’

I. Manage
   I. Important & Urgent
   II. Important & not urgent
   III. Urgent & not important
   IV. Not important or urgent

II. FOCUS

III. Minimize

IV. Eliminate
**Evaluate, Organize, Act**

**Priority**
- Focus

**Tools & Skill Building**

- Performance goal setting
- Re-evaluate and clarify mission
- Learn email etiquette
- More productive meetings
- Improve team morale
- Reduce stress

**S.M.A.R.T. Goals Class**
**First Things First (book)**
**Digital Communication Presentation**
**Meeting Management (video)**
**Teaming presentation**
**Stress class/Biofeedback**

**Results**

- Meet or exceed management expectations
- Organizational restructuring or improvement
- Good Handling of email ‘flames’
- Improved productivity
- Better Communication
- Increase life-work balance
“Most people struggle with life balance simply because they haven't paid the price to decide what is really important to them.”

- Stephen Covey
Sources and Web Resources

Books

*First Things First* by Stephen Covey (1994).


*Is coffee break the best part of your day?* by D. Leatherman and J. MacNelly (2011).

*The 7 habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey (1994).

*The 90 Minute Hour: Using time extension to get the most out of every hour* by Jay Conrad Levinson (1991).

Websites

www.prioritymanagement.com
www.effective-time-management-strategies.com
www.managementhelp.org
www.mindtools.com