

# Prioritization of Task: 7 Methods to Become a Pro

While it may look simple, prioritization of tasks goes beyond a simple exercise. These 7 methods can help you to become better at prioritizing things.

Prioritization of tasks has been one of the biggest challenges for business owners, corporate executives, and employees. However, with a lot of tasks on your to-do list, you only need to master some time-tested techniques to become a pro at prioritizing tasks.

Figuring out your priorities can eliminate stress, enhance your focus, and improve your productivity in your work.

While it may look simple to figure out which tasks need your urgent attention, prioritization of tasks goes beyond a simple exercise. If your tasks are piling up, these seven methods can empower you to become better at prioritizing things.

## 1. Capture Your Priorities on a Master List

You cannot be effective at prioritizing the tasks that you only keep in your head. The best way to start is by creating a MASTER LIST. You can create it in doc or use a project management tool that you can easily access or update.

Your Master List will enable you to figure out what tasks you need to complete in a month, week, or day. It also helps you figure out the priorities that align with your long-term goals.

According to Brian Tracy,

'Your monthly Master list is an extract of your Master List. Your Weekly Project List pulls from your Monthly To-Do List; while your Most Important List pulls from your weekly To-Do List'.<sup>[1]</sup>

One notable benefit of this prioritization technique is that you get to focus on completing bigger and difficult tasks instead of smaller ones. Pulling your MIT from your bigger list gives you a sense of focusing on something meaningful-not just the most urgent.

## 2. Use Eisenhower Matrix to Differentiate the Urgent From the Important Tasks

While your Master List enables you to figure out how to prioritize every task, you might still be confused about what you need to do now or later. There are techniques you can leverage to do this.

We have the 80/20 rule, also known as the Pareto Principle. According to this technique, *'20% of your efforts tend to produce 80% of the result'*. Therefore, identify those tasks that generate the results on your lists.

The limitation of the Pareto principle, however, is that it only relies on experience. If you are working on a new task, or you are uncertain about which task to prioritize, Eisenhower Matrix is a more effective technique.

Urgent tasks are tasks that require your immediate attention, such as your texts, phone calls, emails, and project reviews. Important tasks, on the other hand, are those activities that impact your long-term goals, values, and mission.

How do you figure out urgent tasks from important tasks?

1. Complete tasks that are urgent and important immediately.
2. Figure out when you will do the tasks that are important but not urgent and schedule them.
3. Delegate or outsource the urgent but not important task to someone competent.
4. Eliminate tasks from your list that are neither urgent nor important immediately.

One of the most challenging aspects here is getting tasks that are urgent but not important off your list. That's why I recommend finding someone capable.

Delegation entails finding the most capable person for the task and explaining its requirements. It also incorporates giving the person sufficient time and guidance to get the tasks off your list and mind completely.

### **3. Leverage the Ivy Lee Technique to Rank Your Daily Tasks Based on Their True Priority**

Have you ever found yourself ending up with an overwhelming list of tasks that are both urgent and important?

Here's the solution!

Find a means of digging deeper to know the true importance of those tasks.

Ivy Lee, a productivity consultant, developed one of the most effective approaches to do this over 100 years ago. The Ivy Lee technique guides you on how to prioritize your day by adhering to some set of rules:

Here are the rules:<sup>[2]</sup>

1. Highlight the six most significant tasks you need to do the next day at the end of each day.
2. Rank those six activities in order of their real significance.
3. Focus on the first task first thing the next day. Work until you have completed the task before taking out the next item.
4. Apply the same strategy to take out the next task. Move uncompleted items to a fresh list for the next day.
5. Repeat this procedure each day.

This strategy of single-tasking enables you to stay focused and prioritize your tasks properly.

## **4. Use the ABCDE Technique to Separate Tasks With Similar Priorities**

While using the Ivy Lee technique can help you to prioritize your daily activities, one question that you still need to ask is this:

How do I determine the true priority of a task?

You may sometimes come in contact with tasks that feel they share the same level of significance. If you are busy with difficult or more demanding tasks, the Pareto principle, as well as the Eisenhower Matrix, may not completely cut it.

That is why Brian Tracy recommended the ABCDE technique for the effective prioritization of tasks. This method establishes two or more levels for each task instead of maintaining them on the same level of significance.

How does the ABCDE method work?[3]

1. Go through your list and label every item from A to E, with A being the most significant.
2. For every task, assign a number that shows the order you will complete it.
3. Repeat this process until you have assigned letters and numbers to all tasks.

The real priority of each task becomes more obvious as you create multiple layers of prioritization for each task.

## **5. 'Eat The Frog' to Establish a Productive Tone for Your Day**

Now that you have prioritized your task, it is time to devise the best strategy to attack your day. The effective prioritization of tasks also requires effective strategizing.

How you start establishes the tone for the rest of your day. And taking out the biggest, and of course, important task first provides you with the energy, inspiration, and stamina to keep pushing through the day.

A lot of productivity coaches recommend working on your Most Important Tasks (MIT) as soon as possible.

Here's how Mark Twain puts it:

'If you have a live frog to eat, it makes no sense to look at it for a very long time!'<sup>[4]</sup>

Frogs are those tasks that are most challenging and important. When devising the means of prioritizing your day, it is advisable to place some of your frogs on top of your MIT list. This approach helps you take out difficult tasks and also keeps you motivated all through the day.<sup>[5]</sup>

## **6. Deploy Warren Buffet's 2-List Method to Extract the 'Good Enough' Goals**

Your efficiency will not produce meaningful results if you are pursuing the wrong goals. That is the reason why you have to evaluate your goals as well as priorities to ensure they are in line with your life missions.

Warren Buffett provided us with a 3-steps Productivity method that he employed in improving the productivity of his employee. This method is called the 2-List Technique.<sup>[6]</sup>

Here's how it works.

Highlight your top 25 goals. It could be your career goals, business goals, education goals, life goals, or anything you want to commit your time to. The next step is to circle out five most important goals from the list (if you have written your top 25 goals, you can circle your top 5 goals out before you read on).

Then, move any goal that you did not circle out to the 'avoid by all means' list. Only focus on the significant tasks and in line with your long-term priorities.

## **7. Boost Your 24 Hours With Time Multiplier**

Prioritization of tasks is also about time. Performing the right tasks can create more time for you in the future or take a toll on your time. The best means of becoming more aware of how your choices impact your future obligations is to use time multipliers in maximizing your time.

Rory Vaden recommended that you figure out things you can do today that can impact your tomorrow positively. In other words, think about the best means of maximizing your time today to free up some hours tomorrow.<sup>[7]</sup>

## **Bonus: Do the Most Important Tasks in Your Peak Productive Period**

The prioritization of tasks does not always have to be planned. You can improve your productivity by aligning your task and time priorities.

Fluctuations in energy and focus are bound to happen. We refer to this high and lows as the productivity curve. It means you are more productive at some specific period. You only need to figure out those times and plan your top priorities around that time.

The best approach to be productive all through the day is to discern your peak productive moments.

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