

How to prioritise



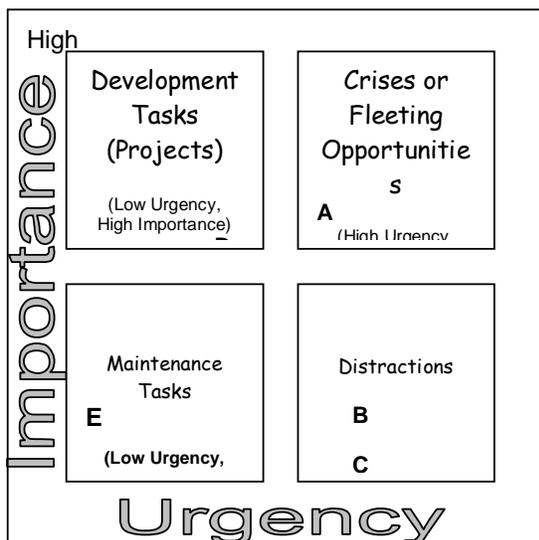
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Everybody has a variety of tasks to perform and goals to achieve, with varying timescales attached to them. It is necessary to focus on what is important, in the face of the demands on your time that inevitably crop up every day.

We tend to face both short-term enquiries that take up our time; and long term developments that are not urgent but will become so if they are put off and left undone.

The grid (shown below) can help you to prioritise tasks and manage your time more efficiently.



HOW TO USE IT

- 1) Draw a grid of four squares with one axis labeled "Urgency" and the other labeled "Importance".
- 2) Place each task in a relevant position on the grid, to indicate the relative importance and urgency of each task.

TIME MANAGEMENT

- Task A, is of high urgency and high importance. It is likely to be either a crisis or a fleeting opportunity, and should be dealt with as a high priority task.
- Task E is of low urgency and low importance, so first you need to determine whether the task actually needs to be done. If it does, then it must be tackled at some point or it may become a crisis.
- If you were compiling a list of tasks to do in order, B, C and D would compete for second place. However, a more efficient way of dealing with your tasks is by managing your time.

Our lives contain elements of all four categories of tasks: Crises & Fleeting Opportunities, Development Tasks (Projects), Distractions and Maintenance Tasks.

The amount of time that you spend on each category will depend on your lifestyle, job, role within Scouting etc. Take time to estimate approximately how much time you should spend on each category in a week and produce a schedule (see illustration below).

- Remember to include time for planning.
- Work with your environment and strengths & weaknesses.
- Crises are likely to hit your desk first thing in the morning, so plan for them at the beginning of your day.

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Morning	WORK					Devel op. Tasks	Churc h
12 : 00	LUNCH						
Afternoon	WORK					FAMILY	
17 : 00	CRISES & FLEETING OPPORTUNITIES						Devel op. Tasks
18 : 00	DINNER						
19 : 00			Scout s				
20 : 00	SMALL TASKS			SMALL TASKS			
21 : 00	MAINTENANCE TASKS & PLANNING						
22 : 00							

- Plan your development tasks for when you are at your most productive.
- Plan distractions and maintenance tasks (which take less concentration) for a time when you are less productive.

Weekly, produce an overview of the next week, with an amount of detail, based on the schedule. Add information including the specific tasks to be done each day, within each category. (This plan will only take about 15 minutes.)

Daily, produce a detailed plan of the next day, including the amount of time each task should take. (This plan should only take about 5 minutes.)

- Small tasks cease to be distractions when you plan time for them in your schedule.
- Resist the temptation to deal with small tasks as they arrive – write them down & leave them until the time you have planned to do them (in this example, after lunch).
- Be flexible. For example, if there are no crises in the morning, move on to working on your development tasks.
- Concentrate on one task at a time. Do not move onto the next planned item until the current one is complete.

Within each category, prioritise the tasks that need to be done, with the most urgent and important first.

You can also produce monthly and annual plans along similar lines to allow you a greater overview of your work, Scouting and home life.

SUMMARY

Prioritise your tasks into four categories:

1. Crises & Fleeting Opportunities
2. Development Tasks (Projects)
3. Distractions (Small Tasks)
4. Maintenance Tasks.

Manage your time more efficiently by producing a schedule with space for each of these categories, and plan each period (annually, monthly, weekly and daily) individually in advance.

Following this pattern will allow you more control over the tasks you have to do. There will always be unexpected situations and small tasks that crop up; but many of the tasks that are anticipated and planned for, can be dealt with before they reach crisis level.

REFERENCES

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