



Net-Temps

Fe

0

Jobseekers: Sign In | Sign Up

Home

Find Jobs

Post Resume

Career Tools

Recruiters

Business Opp

INFOCUS recruiter news

THIS WEEK'S ARTICLES

Turn-Around Phrases That Work
 5 Steps to Eliminating Time Bandits
 Fifty Behavior Based Interview Questions
Do Your Priorities Reflect What You Really Want?
 Herding Cats
 Don't Let Your Best Employees Jump Ship

0



Do Your Priorities Reflect What You Really Want?

If I were to name the one action that has the greatest impact on the likelihood of success in any endeavor, it would be the careful identification of priorities. In fact, it can be argued that productivity in your work life and fulfillment in your personal life both have their foundation in the effective selection and use of priorities.

But what exactly are these things called "priorities," and how do you know which ones should be at the top of a very long list of things-that-should-be-done?

Priorities Aren't Things

First, it's important to understand that priorities aren't really "things" in terms of something you can see, touch, or measure. Priorities are concepts or values that we place on an imaginary scale in order of their importance to us, such as the value of closing a deal. The relative "importance" of any given priority depends on a specific set of criteria that varies from person to person.

Priorities also aren't actions, but they can provide the motivation to act. Once you form an intention to act, your priorities determine

which tasks should be performed first. The higher the priority behind a given task, the greater the likelihood that it will get your attention and result in action.

Priorities and Stress

Tasks that grab your attention produce action and, thus, results. If the results you get create the lifestyle you want, you will feel productive and content. If not, you'll experience the stress that comes from holding onto goals and dreams that never seem to be fulfilled. That kind of long-term, low-level stress can eventually lead to a dampened immune system, inadequate sleep, digestive problems, depression, anxiety, and a host of other stress-induced maladies that can prevent you from succeeding.

You Can't Do It All

[Subscribe to InFocus](#)

Net-Temps **blog**
NEW!

FREE NEWSLETTER SIGN UP

Email address

Confirm email

Preferred Format

HTML Text

ARTICLE LINKS

This week's news
 View article archives
 Email this article
 Article suggestion
 Printable version

FOLLOW US

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

SPONSORS



[Start Here](#)

Sometimes stress comes from trying to accomplish too many things in too short a time frame. You can't do it all, so you have to make choices. Priority ranking reflects those choices. Ideally, your top priorities are the result of careful consideration and conscious choice. Then, when you plan your day, you can confidently place the most "important" tasks at the top of your to-do list and act on them as planned. If, however, your top priorities seem to be dictated by circumstances instead of being carefully selected, your actions aren't driven by priorities but by urgencies.

Urgencies Aren't Always Important

But isn't that the way it's supposed to work? Aren't urgent tasks the most important? Not necessarily. Consider the word "urgent." It implies the existence of an emergency. If an urgent task isn't done immediately, we expect dire consequences to result. True emergencies do occur, and those certainly require immediate attention. But most of what we consider urgent isn't an emergency. For example, answering the call from a candidate who just wants to check in may not be all that important in light of your highest priority.

An important task is one that has intrinsic value; it has meaning for you apart from any timeline. An important task can become urgent, however, if you allow other priorities to push it to the bottom of the list until the deadline is imminent.

Putting Out Brush Fires

Perhaps the top tasks on your list are not only urgencies, but someone else's urgencies. Some people have a knack for handing off their urgent tasks to others. If you find yourself putting out a lot of brush fires, find out who's setting them. If it's someone else, hand her the fire hose or find a way to collaborate so that you can both focus on what's truly important. If you're the firestarter, figure out why you're sabotaging your productivity and well-being by ignoring your priorities in favor of urgency management.

Focus On The Important

Letting urgencies gain the top positions on your priority scale is a sure way to increase stress and distract you from accomplishing your goals. Productivity and well-being come not from handling urgent tasks quickly, but from focusing your attention on the important tasks first. Only by acting on your most important priorities -- consistently and persistently -- will you create the life you want.

Make Sure Your Priorities Reflect What You Really Want

Determining which priorities are the most important can be a tricky business. You have to understand what it is you truly want in your life. What do you value most: prestige, money, accomplishment, family, friends, solitude, nature, independence? What brings you the most satisfaction: contemplation, competition, relationships, power, philanthropy? What kind of lifestyle best suits you: busy, adventurous, simple, varied?

As you consider the options, pay attention to your gut level reaction. If you react to something with a deep sense of joy, excitement, or happiness, it's closely aligned with the "real" you and what you truly want. Any activities that consistently create feelings of frustration or dread, even if they SEEM to be related to your goals in life, probably don't qualify as valid priorities. There are exceptions, of course. Life can't always be fun and exciting. However, it makes sense to maximize the good stuff and minimize the bad whenever possible.

The priorities that represent what you truly want are the ones that offer you the most joy and satisfaction. Those priorities are, by virtue of their intrinsic value to you, the most important. Honoring those priorities will help you create a productive professional life and give you a profound sense of personal fulfillment.

- Sandra Corbitt Sears,

StaffingU Director of Communication

Sandi Corbitt-Sears is Director of Communication for StaffingU, the leader in providing relationship-building techniques guaranteed to grow your business. For information on StaffingU's programs and services, including TeleClasses (live telephone-based classes), Virtual StaffingU (web-based courses), individual and group coaching, on-site training and speaking, and consulting visit www.StaffingU.net or call 866-SU-WORKS (789-6757).

[top of page](#)

[Home](#) | [Find Jobs](#) | [Post Resume](#) | [Career Tools](#) | [Recruiters](#)

[About Net-Temps](#) | [Blog](#) | [Privacy Statement](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Site Map](#)

© Copyright 1995-2012, Net-Temps, Inc. All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Net-Temps ® is a registered trademark.