

QUICK TIPS – “To Do” Lists

A “To Do” List is an easy, straight-forward tool to help you prioritize and organize your workload. As the name implies, a “To Do” List is a list of tasks, assignments or projects that you need to do.

The items on a “To Do” List often are small, discreet activities or tasks. When dealing with something larger, like a project for example, break it down into its component parts and each of these separate elements then becomes a task on the “To Do” List.

Simple “To Do” Lists are great for keeping track of things that have to be done in the short-term. As various tasks emerge on a daily basis, write them down on the “To Do” List. As tasks are completed, you can stroke them off the list – a simple, but very effective methodology. The key is to write down the tasks, as soon as you identify them. The operative expression is, *“If you think it, then ink it”*.

Benefits of a “To Do” List

- ◆ Keeps things from falling through the cracks (you can’t remember everything)
- ◆ Dummy-proofs your busy day
- ◆ Common place to itemize everything that needs to be done (post-it notes don’t work well)
- ◆ Visual presentation of pending activities
- ◆ Helps you set priorities and stay organized
- ◆ Documents what you set out to do and what you have accomplished

Once you’ve established your “To Do” List, against each task identify its due date and its relative level of importance. Taken together, you now can determine the priority sequencing of all tasks comprising your “To Do” List.

To effectively manage the “To Do” List, all tasks needs to be scheduled into your weekly work-plan. Populate your weekly schedule with the individual tasks from the “To Do” List. For each task, you now will know the day and time you have committed for dealing with it. This is especially helpful if the task requires input from or co-ordination with others.

There is an array of approaches for maintaining your “To Do” List, including sheets of paper, time management systems, organizers, computer applications, etc. Try different systems until you find the one that works best for you and then stick to it. “To Do” Lists will help you sort through all the tasks for which you are responsible, as well as providing a framework for staying organized. It really is a simple, but effective management tool.

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