



Techniques
and Strategies
for prioritising
and diary-planning.

PRIORITISE!

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- ▶ establishing key business objectives
- ▶ identifying urgent and important tasks
- ▶ diary planning in line with priorities
- ▶ focusing on one task at a time
- ▶ setting start & finish times

PARTICIPANTS

Up to 24 participants. Suitable for all (from those new to management through to senior staff).
Ideal for assessment.

TIMING

One hour, but allow added time for brief presentations and a debrief

COST

£295 plus carriage (£t VAT in UK)

While people are aware that time is a valuable, primary resource, very few have the good fortune to be naturally endowed with the skills needed to exercise effective time management. Without these personal and organisational benefits in the workplace, even the most capable staff can under-achieve, and become demoralised and stressed.

Prioritise! provides dynamic, practical training in two key aspects of time management. By placing participants in an up-to-date, work-like situation but where the emphasis is totally on effective **PRIORITISING** and **DIARY PLANNING**, they are able to address these two fundamental skills. In actually taking part participants learn much more effectively - they establish for themselves a pattern of behaviour that can be taken back to the real office. In addition, *managers will gain confidence and job satisfaction from knowing they are making the best use of their time.*

The Scenario

This structured learning activity reproduces a management situation, in which groups, or individuals, are faced with an accumulation of tasks. Their role is first to understand and evaluate the 25 tasks in relation to the main business objectives and to their own diary. They must then *select the dozen or so absolutely key tasks* that should be done in the coming week (holding the others for the following weeks). They must then schedule them into their own, "one-week" diary to produce the most *efficient* plan possible.

In the Debrief stage, decisions are evaluated and discussed in terms of the techniques and strategies for effective prioritisation and diary-planning within the delegates OWN roles.

KEY ISSUES

- planning your time is crucial to good management
- spend an hour planning at the start of each week
- list all your tasks - then prioritise them
- use the A,B,C system or similar
- mark tasks that have a specific time deadline
- select critical and important tasks (to match your key business objectives)
- give each task an estimated start and finish time
- schedule critical tasks into your diary
- schedule other tasks around the critical ones
- remember 15%-20% of work comes in 'on the day'

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HOW IT WORKS

- 1 Arrange in small groups of three to five participants. You can have up to four groups or up to four people working individually.
- 2 Issue each group a **Team Briefing Sheet**. Each group represents Chris Williams who is planning for the week ahead by deciding which 10-12 tasks must be done out of a total of 25. The Brief gives them the history of the "organisation", their five key business objectives and details of their immediate task.
- 3 Now issue each group with the A5, illustrated **Task Cards**. There are 25 each describing an issue that 'Chris' has to address. They relate to suppliers, customers, the website, new product, staff etc - to mirror the tasks of a typical manager.
- 4 They now spend 45 minutes deciding which tasks are urgent, which are important and which are or urgent and important. They should identify 10-12 tasks that must be done this week.
- 5 Issue the **Priorities Handout** to each group to record its choices.
- 6 Issue the **Diary Planner Handout** to schedule the chosen tasks into the one-week diaries.
- 7 After 60 minutes ask each group to prepare their presentation.
- 8 Listen to each group's decisions, ideally, listing the issues and ideas on a flipchart. Use **The Right Answer Handout** to show how the priority tasks can best be scheduled into the diary. Teams may have different ideas - which may be valid as long as deadlines are met. It is the discussion and justification that is important.
- 9 Follow up with discussion and agreement about the most important techniques and strategies to take back to the workplace. Use the **Key Lessons Handout**, listing 10 key rules, to complete the activity.

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