

# Establish Your Priorities

**“Decide what you want, decide what you are willing to exchange for it. Establish your priorities and go to work.” – H.L. Hunt**

**PRE-REQUISITE ARTICLE:** A101. BECOME A LIST MAKER

Now that you have your lists close at hand, it's time to begin prioritizing the items on those lists. And the best way to establish your priorities is one at a time.

“Easier said than done,” you say? I agree.

Establishing your priorities is not always easy; especially given the day-to-day “balancing act” many of us have to manage. To plan effectively, however, it's important to know exactly what your priorities are. That was the purpose of learning to become list makers.

Unfortunately, the average person procrastinates on the most important priority items, and spends unnecessary energy on the less important ones.

The result? Less productivity and idleness. We end up burning our wheels only to move a few inches.

Have you ever seen a person who seemed really busy, but when all was said and done, he didn't have much accomplished?

What about you? Are you ready to identify your high-producing tasks, prioritize them and then get working on them?

The most rewarding things we can do each day are often the most difficult ones. Here are a few helpful hints to encourage you in your efforts to get more done:

- Tackle the hardest and most important tasks first.
- Review your lists and use the **Prioritizing Key** (at top) to help you categorize them.
- Review your list in a quiet, comfortable spot to avoid distractions.
- Get into the habit of working from your "A" list first.
- Carry your list with you at all times.

## PRIORITIZING KEY

**A – Adamant:** These are items that are top priority. Consider this an item that must get done or you will be faced with adverse consequences.

**B – Better get to it:** Not as crucial as an “A” priority, but still significant enough to get moving on it. The consequences of not completing this item will not be as serious as an “A” list task, but nonetheless, it needs to get done.

**C – Comfort zone:** These items are nice-to-haves. No real negative consequences go with the “C” list, and you can decide whether or not these activities will add or detract from your current level of productivity.

**D – Delegate:** Think of how much more time you will have if you can delegate some of your tasks to someone else. Identify those tasks, and start delegating!

**E – Eliminate:** Have you ever revisited an item after sitting on it for a couple of weeks and it didn't seem to have the same importance that it once did? It's amazing what time can do to your perspective and priorities. Identify the items and activities that no longer seem relevant. It may have at one time

**“In all planning, you make a list and you set priorities.” – Alan Lakein**

Remember, your priorities will be based on your values and goals, which will be influenced by such things as family, career, personal goals, relationships, and finances.

Begin your prioritizing from your personal goals and then work your way out to adjust them based on the previously mentioned areas of influence.

Leave room for flexibility and for life. As life changes around us, so do our priorities. Keep your list with you so that you can make adjustments to it on a regular basis.

Review your progress each day and re-prioritize as often as needed. This is a lifelong process that helps us more effectively reach our short-term and long-term goals.



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### **About the author**

Donna M. Murphy is an editorial specialist, a veteran writer and a published author who has written, edited, and designed extensive collateral and key solutions products for print and the web. Training manuals, operating procedures, business documents and content quality assurance encompass a large portion of her assignments. Donna is the creative force behind Summit Publication Design, LLC, and has specialized in content organization, quality assurance and publication design since 1997. Visit Donna's website at <http://www.summitpubdesign.com> for information on her comprehensive services, helpful resources, more articles like this one, and strategies to help you improve the quality and effectiveness of your publications.

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