

Managing Multiple Priorities

This is a generic outline. It is normally adapted to meet the specific requirements of each organisation.

Overview

This is a course about being successful. Successful in managing multiple priorities by:

- hitting targets
- meeting deadlines
- working efficiently and eliminating mistakes, procrastination and perfectionism
- gaining the trust and confidence

in **ALL** areas of your job by

- having an integrated, systematic approach that encompasses and prioritizes **everything** you do - appropriately
- developing effective habits
- communicating assertively and persuasively
- utilising all sources of power
- overcoming resistance, conflict and obstacles
- coping with the unexpected, change and crises
- recognising one's own strengths and weaknesses
- avoiding pressure and stress

Topics Outline

- **Understanding Your Preferences**

You are unique. You have different strengths, weaknesses and drivers from your colleagues. So it would be foolish to believe that there is a single approach to managing multiple priorities that works for everyone. The foundation of success in any area is understanding ourselves and finding an approach that is comfortable – because experience suggests that if a system is hard work, then, no matter how much sense it makes, we simply won't use it.

- questionnaires to identify your thinking styles and your internal drivers
- understanding the implications – what approach will work best for you

- **Planning for Success**

The pace and urgency of modern business often means that managers jump from one task to another, reacting to whatever pressure is greatest at the time. The result is a vicious circle where one crisis follows another. To break free of this circle, you need to take a broad view of what you are trying to achieve, identify your key result areas and then create a plan. Easy! Yet so many plans fail. Our

workshop will show you foolproof approaches for developing practical plans that identify goals, actions, priorities, risks and the resources that you will need.

- understanding the big picture
- identifying key result areas
- targets – hard (numbers) and soft or qualitative – difficult to measure but often more important than the things you can attach a number to
- visible mapping – the most practical tool in getting control of your objectives
- systems thinking – understanding the links between your priorities and how your actions have implications and often unintended consequences. Indispensable if you want to achieve synergy (2+2=5) and avoid one step forward in project A causing two steps backward in project B
- essential project management techniques – dependencies, milestones, timelines

- **Managing Multiple Priorities Systematically**

There are hundreds of tips for being more effective. Each is good in its own right but they operate in isolation. It's too easy for things to slip through the net. Success – and peace of mind – depends on you being able to encompass everything; to be sure that nothing is missing and that you are doing precisely what you should be doing at any time. At the core of our system is the Getting Things Done (GTD) approach.

- Urgent / Important Matrix – Covey; how to ensure that Quadrant 2 activities get done
- Freeing your mind – letting the system take strain
- Collecting – getting things into the system
- Processing – the 5D approach – taking control of everything, from strategic imperatives through to simple filing tasks
- Review and Evaluation – learning
- Running the system – how to integrate it so that it becomes part of your every day life
- Technology – integrating without Outlook and other software
- Online resources – useful websites to help keep you on-track

- **Developing an Effective Personal Approach**

A system can only go so far. It needs to be supported by attitudes, beliefs and habits. In this session you will explore your personal preferences (based on the questionnaires completed at the beginning) and the principles that underpin the success of effective people.

- how your internal state can impact on your performance
- Covey's 7 Habits, especially
 - pro-action and the circle of influence
 - beginning with the end in mind – prioritising priorities
 - how to put first things first
 - how to increase the size of your comfort zone
- overcoming procrastination and perfectionism

- deciding between multiple priorities – 7 approaches
- techniques for making tough decisions

- **Achieving With and Through Others**

Your priorities are linked to, dependent on or the same as the priorities of others. In the modern organisation, your success in managing multiple priorities depends on your how well you persuade, negotiate, delegate, assert, manage conflict and use every type of power available to you.

- assertiveness – how to set expectations and say “No”
- understanding others’ *real* requirements – achieving empathy
- recognising how others see us affects the way they treat us – how to create the right perception
- sources of power – hierarchy is the last resort
- establishing credibility and gaining trust
- influencing and persuading others
 - Cialdini’s 6 principles
 - winning hearts and minds
 - questionnaire to identify your preferred approach to influencing
- negotiation tactics
- delegating – downwards, sideways and upwards (!)
- how to manage multiple bosses

- **Overcoming Resistance and Obstacles**

The complexity of most organisations means that there will inevitably be people working with conflicting objectives and priorities. This session will show you how to manage and overcome the resistance and obstacles that you will face.

- why people resist and leading them to acceptance
- managing difficult people – aggressive, passive, inefficient, know-it-alls etc
- how to give feedback without creating offence
- general efficiency: meetings, email, dealing with interruptions
- creative thinking to overcome obstacles
- handling the unexpected – how will your system cope
- overcoming barriers within yourself
 - negative thoughts
 - locus of control; developing resilience and a “hardy” personality

- **Coping with Pressure and Avoiding Stress**

Pressure and stress appear to go hand-in-hand with multiple priorities. But that needn’t be the case if you understand the causes and recognise the symptoms of success – and how to relax.

- what is stress
- are you at risk and recognising the symptoms
- Yerkes-Dodson curve
- NLP techniques
 - reframing
 - the mind-body link
 - self-talk
 - metapatterns

- **Your Personal Action Plan**

Creating a practical implementation plan, tailored to your personality, abilities and priorities.

Approach

Participatory and involving with an emphasis on the practical application of skills and knowledge. Workshops, combining group discussion, case studies, video, what-if scenarios, the application of models and tools and presentations, can be supported with online learning and coaching to ensure the transfer of insights and skills to the workplace.

More information: www.commercial-awareness.com.