



As we enter the New Year everyone has a variety of tasks to perform and objectives to achieve. It is necessary to focus on what is important in the face of demands on your time. The following method is recommended to help you prioritize actions and manage your time more efficiently.

The starting point for getting organised is to identify your objectives for the next phase.

- Make your to-do list

Start by writing down all matters that you feel need to be done.

Then reflect again on the list you have made. Do any on the original list not make significant contribution towards achieving your objectives?

If so remove them.

- Sort by status

Sort the list according to status. The 'Traffic Light' metaphor is used but it has been adapted to suit the coloured highlighter pens that many individuals use. This allows actions to be labelled with a coloured dot. Individuals who do not use highlighters can simply label each action with its allocated status.

If the action is straightforward and you have all the information that you need to carry it out – allocate GREEN STATUS.

If you are not yet certain how to proceed with an action or need further information – allocate YELLOW STATUS (amber).

Allocate PINK STATUS (red) to those that you know are going to give you a problem.

- Prioritizing

Use ABC analysis to assign the priority of each action.

A – actions critical to achieving your objectives.

B – actions important to achieving objectives but not yet urgent

C – remaining actions on the list.

- Checking

Test again all C rated actions to make sure they are relevant – if not remove them.

Think – have I incorrectly awarded priority to actions just because I enjoy them? If so reassess.

- Scheduling

Concentrate on A priority actions first.

Forecast the time necessary for each. Use experience to help you – e.g. if someone has done a similar task before ask how long it took.

Begin working on those with GREEN STATUS. Next try to progress those with YELLOW STATUS and finally those with PINK STATUS.

Once no further progress can be made with A priority actions on that day start working on B priority actions. Once again estimate time required and try working on GREEN STATUS actions first.

Only work on C priority actions when you can make no further progress with A and B priority actions or when the urgency of a C rated action increases requiring it to be re-rated.

- Updating

Daily examine your to-do list. Extract the subset of actions to complete that day. On at least a weekly basis reassess actions and award status and priority.

- Presenting