

Covey's Time Management Tips:

We seem to live in a time pressured world where it is common to have multiple overlapping commitments that all require immediate attention now. Urgency is no longer reserved for special occasions they are an everyday occurrence.

When setting priorities it can be very useful to think about that is important versus what is urgent.

Begin with your 'to do' list, be very clear of all that needs to be done. Then alone and in consultation with your boss, team and or colleagues decide the objective levels of urgency and importance.

The grid below, designed by Steven Covey is an excellent resource for this process.

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Urgent and important | Important and not urgent |
| Urgent and not important | Not important and not urgent |

- 1. Urgent and important** is for the immediate and important deadlines.
- 2. Important and not urgent** is for long-term strategizing and development.
- 3. Urgent and not important** is for time-pressured distractions. They are not really important, but someone wants it now. You may consider how these can be shared or delegated.
- 4. Not important and not urgent** is for those activities that yield little or any value. These are activities that are often used for taking a break from time pressured and important activities.

Many people find that most of their activities fall into **Urgent and important, or Urgent and not important. As a result they don't focus on the Important and not urgent.** Yet this work is exceptionally important because one must work both tactically and strategically at the same time.

References:

Covey, S., Merrill, A.R., & Merrill R.R. (1996) *First Things First*.
<https://www2.usgs.gov/humancapital/documents/TimeManagementGrid.pdf>