

Effectiveness or efficiency?

Effectiveness or efficiency, which term describes you? Understanding the difference between those words is a key to the management of that critical resource, time. Efficiency is doing things right, while effectiveness is doing the right things. In the course of a day, we may efficiently accomplish many tasks, but are they the right tasks? A recent survey found that most people focus energy on what is urgent and may miss what is important. In our society, the urgent task is completed and the important may be put off.

Time use falls into four categories, Important and Urgent, Important, but not Urgent, Urgent, but not Important and Not Urgent and Not Important.

1. Important and Urgent - These tasks are usually not a problem, taxes by April 15, the report your boss demands by Monday or labor pains five minutes apart. No procrastination here, we take care of these ASAP.

2. Important but not Urgent - This is what separates the truly effective from the less effective. These things we tend to put off because they lack urgency. That mini proposal you have been meaning to do, upgrading your computer skills, the visit to the dentist, retirement planning, your investments, etc. You get the picture. Unless you do something, they become those "One of these days" projects. Regardless of the importance, unless you make it a major priority in your life, they simply do not happen. Remember, "One of these days is none of these days."

3. Urgent, but not Important - These items demand attention, but if looked at objectively, we would assign them a lower priority. You are asked to attend a meeting, because the person conducting the meeting does not want you to feel left out. There they are waiting for an answer and you agree. It was the time limit and not the importance of the task that prompted the response. These items are accomplished and category two items are put on hold.

4. Not Urgent, Not Important - Most of us have little trouble with this category, we see that items in this category are clearly a waste of time.

The secret to effectiveness is getting those category two items off the back burner. This week, accomplish at least one of your category two items. Let me know how you do.

"Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time; for that's the stuff life is made of."
Benjamin Franklin