

Setting Priorities

When opportunities exceed resources, decisions must be made. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the use of time. Since time cannot be manufactured, you must decide what to do and what not to do.

Setting priorities in the use of time is a two-step process:

1. listing things that need to be done
2. prioritizing items on the list

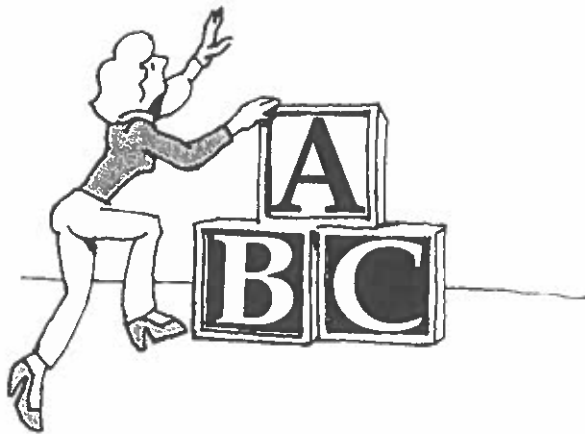
The ABC Method

Use the *ABC Method* to determine your priorities by placing each item on your list into one of the following categories:

- **PRIORITY A** “Must Do”—these are the critical items. Some may fall into this category because of management directives, important customer requirements, significant deadlines, or opportunities for success or advancement.
- **PRIORITY B** “Should Do”—these are items of medium value. Items in this category may contribute to improved performance but are not essential or do not have critical deadlines.
- **PRIORITY C** “Nice to Do”—this is the lowest-value category. While interesting or fun, they could be eliminated, postponed, or scheduled for slack periods.

Your A's, B's, and C's are flexible, depending on the date your list is prepared. Priorities change over time. Today's B may become tomorrow's A as an important deadline approaches. Likewise, today's A may become tomorrow's C if it does not get accomplished in time or circumstances change.

Obviously, it is not worthwhile to spend considerable time on a task of modest value. On the other hand, a project of high value is worth the time invested. Only good planning will allow you to reap the benefits of time wisely invested. Use the form on page 21 to practice setting priorities.



**MY PRIORITIES
FOR THE WEEK OF: _____**

PRIORITY A—MUST DO

PRIORITY B—SHOULD DO

PRIORITY C—NICE TO DO
