



# Too Many Priorities: A Drag on Many Physicians, Managers

October 17, 2014 | Healthcare Careers, Managers Administrators, Performance, Productivity

By [Jeff Davidson](#)

Whether you're talking about daily priorities, weekly priorities, yearly priorities, career priorities, or life-long priorities, here's a working definition of priorities: All the important and urgent things that you want to accomplish.

Most professionals have too many priorities. If you have 15, 17, 22, or some other number way up there, then by definition, they can't all be priorities. How could you offer attention to them all?

## **Reduce the Number**

Suppose you started stacking bricks on a table, higher and higher. What would eventually happen? The table would break because there would be structural limits to what the table can handle.

So, why do we proceed through our careers and lives as if there are no temporal limits to what we can handle? We're left with the gnawing, nagging feeling, as if too much is competing for our time and attention.

The key to managing multiple priorities is to reduce the number of priorities clogging up your calendar. There is no "right" number to have: Maybe it's seven, maybe it's nine; but if you're trying to keep up with dozens of priorities, then few are getting the attention they deserve.

### **Boil it Down**

I find that it's rewarding and even comforting to boil down what's important to me and place it onto one card. Type up your priorities, change the point size of your font to the size you need, and print out your priorities onto one little card. Next time you're waiting in a line, you can whip out your little card and read all those things that are important to you. And you know what, it's amazing, it's as if you're reading those important things for the first time!

In this day and age, so much is competing for our time and attention. Even after a week-long vacation we can return to the office refreshed and then be so deluged by appointments and other matters that we are overwhelmed again, and lose sight of our priorities by 10 in the morning. So, look at the card on a regular basis to remind yourself what's important to you. Can the list on the card change? Of course.