

## Priorities that Produce

*... consist of 4 steps – understand the need for priorities, establish priorities, keep priorities in balance and protect your priorities. Once you have control of your priorities, you and your business will thrive!*

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If someone were to give you a check for \$86,400, how would you spend it? Would you cash it immediately and foolishly spend it all in one day? Probably not. More than likely you would sit down and make a list of how to put this unexpected gift to best use. If you're like most people, your list would include both needs and wants—and you would probably prioritize so that you could enjoy both. In other words, if someone were to give you \$86,400, you would probably give some careful thought to how to spend it.

***Why is it then that so few of us put the same careful thought into how we spend the 86,400 we get daily— not 86,400 dollars, but 86,400 seconds we get each day?***

Yet we know, especially for a busy, multi-tasking direct seller, time is more precious than money! How we spend our time in this business is more important than how we spend our money.

It has been my experience in over 23 years in this industry that **more direct sellers fail because of poor use of time than any other reason.** If you want to increase your chances of succeeding (and that of your team members), daily prioritizing and effective time management must become a lifestyle. All of the prospecting, product knowledge, and

presentation tips in the world will do you no good if you do not prioritize your time.

Let me share four steps to help you implement priorities that produce:

- 1. Understand the need for priorities***
- 2. Establish priorities and plans***
- 3. Keep priorities in balance***
- 4. Protect your priorities***

### **1. Understand the need for priorities**

I hope the example of the \$86,400 versus 86,400 daily seconds got you thinking about how you currently spend your time. To understand the need to prioritize, just think back to a day recently where you *didn't* prioritize your time.

How many prospects did you contact?

How many new shows did you book?

How many new recruits did you train?

How did your laundry, housework, errands get done?

How did you feel at the end of the day?

You get the picture— that day did not produce the business nor personal benefits it could have. It probably felt more chaotic than controlled; a day of missed appointments and missed opportunities.

***Not a good way to run a business.  
Not a good way to run a family. Not  
a good way to run your life.***

We all have the need to prioritize, especially if we expect our businesses to be productive and profitable.

### **2. Establish priorities and plans**

Let's look at six steps to establish order (instead of chaos!) in your day. I refer to them as the six "gets" of goal setting.

**1. Get focused**— to establish productive priorities and goals, take some time to look back over the past several months of your business. On a sheet of paper, list five-10 successes— areas you want to continue, expand, and grow. Then list five-10 lessons learned— areas you want to adjust, develop, and change. Doing this will help your bigger picture priorities become clearer.

**2. Get specific**— refer to your successes and lessons learned to establish a specific goal for each one. Be sure each goal answers the questions what (objective), why (your reasons), when (start and end dates) and how (action steps to accomplish).

**3. Get smart**— review each goal you established to assure it is a smart goal:

***S – specific, written***  
***M – measurable, quantifiable***  
***A – action steps***  
***R – realistic for you***  
***T – time sensitive, deadline***

**4. Get started**— Even a small step is a step in the right direction. Small steps add up. Practice the process of continuous improvement to track each goal— small, steady, consistent steps each day.

**5. Get up**— Once you see progress, raise the bar. Challenge yourself to strive for higher levels, better quality within each goal.

**6. Get passionate**— Working on your goals daily will keep your passion for your business growing— and passion plus hard work will give you mental toughness that will keep you going even through the trying times in your business.

**3. Keep priorities in balance**

Once you have established your priorities and turned them into goals, then it's time to consider how to plug those priorities into your daily schedule and keep everything in balance. Following are some steps to help you maintain balance:

***The principle of balance— to understand where to focus your time and attention, remember the following:***

80% of your sales come from 20% of your customers.

80% of your team's growth comes 20% of your team members.

80% of your time spent on people, 20% of your time spent on projects.

***The balance test— to help balance your decision-making process ask:***

Will this matter a year from now?

Will this simplify or complicate my life/business?

Will this move me closer to or further from my goals?

Use the above to help you balance your priorities daily.

**4. Protect your priorities**

Once you have your goals prioritized and balanced, then you'll want to establish steps for protecting your priorities in your daily schedule.

**Fast phone tips**— make telephone time productive with the following:

Use notes, agenda, script

Use a timer

Schedule blocks of time to make/return calls

Use conference calls for team

**Effective email**— make email time productive with the following:

Schedule time blocks to check/send emails— three times daily  
Use the subject line for quick message  
Be brief— use bullet points  
Include all reference information in signature area

**Livable Limits**— learn how to say no with the following:

Honor your priorities— say no to non-priority situations  
Check your calendar/schedule to avoid the overload of saying yes.  
Be brief and gracious— “Thank you for asking; I’m going to say no this time; my volunteering time has been spoken for.”

**Put away procrastination**— get busy and get to it to maximize productivity.

Schedule it – block out time to complete projects/tasks.  
Break it into bite-size steps  
Set a deadline, then tell someone who will hold you accountable.

Priorities that produce consist of four steps— understand the need for priorities, establish priorities, keep priorities in balance and protect your priorities. Once you have control of your priorities, you and your business will thrive!



**Beth Jones-Schall** has been in teaching and training since 1979. She has a BA degree in elementary education from Muskingum College as well as Masters work from the University of Akron and the College of Mount St. Joseph's.

Beth is founder and president of Spirit of Success, Inc., a professional training company headquartered near Tampa, Florida. Beth's clients include Fortune 500 companies such as Verizon, Ryder Truck and Westinghouse as well as leading direct sales companies, such as the Pampered Chef, Princess House, Tupperware, HENN, Tastefully Simple, Stanley Home Products, Carol Anderson by Invitation and many others.

Beth has over 23 years' experience in the Direct Selling profession. She has been a consultant and also held the position of Director of Training and Sales Director where she was responsible more than 1,000 consultants. During a two-year period, the company's sales volume increased by 40 percent to more than \$10 million.

Beth is a great choice for your convention keynote address or leadership training event. She is a powerful, proven speaker who knows how to motivate and equip others for success. Beth is also an expert at consulting with your sales and marketing department to help you design direct sales programs that work. Beth is also a favorite for Christian Women's events and Christian leadership training.

To learn more about Beth, Tele-coaching sessions for individuals or teams, her *Priorities that Produce* CD set and workbook, the annual "Spirit of Success Retreat" 4-day conference for direct sellers in Orlando, Florida (March 2-5, 2006) and subscribe to *The Eagle*, Beth's free monthly e-newsletter, go here: [SpiritOfSuccess.com](http://SpiritOfSuccess.com).