

Ratings on Use of Planning Guidelines and Time Lines

Ratings (1 = poor; 10 = excellent)

1st Try

2nd Try

Before Developing the Time Line

- _____ 1. Set clear and measurable goals (and measure success).
_____ 2. Develop alternative strategies (more than one reasonable strategy per goal).

Developing the Time Line

- _____ 3. The plan should be explicit and operational. That is, it should provide you with written instructions on how to proceed. These instructions should be clear enough so that someone else could read them and carry them out.
_____ 4. List all tasks to be accomplished. Be sure to include all important demands on your life (e.g., from other courses, job search, or personal).
_____ 5. Identify relationships among tasks. Certain tasks must be completed before other tasks are started.
_____ 6. When estimating the time for each task, estimate on the high side.
_____ 7. Provide slack resources. That is, save time or money to be used to solve the unexpected.
_____ 8. Allow a lot of calendar time for tasks requiring creativity. Start early with such problems; then put them aside so that your subconscious can work on the problem.
_____ 9. Defer routine tasks. Start the tasks that require creativity early and put off the routine tasks. If you do the routine tasks first, you will spend too long on them and then get worn out when it comes to doing any creative tasks.
_____ 10. Allow slack time between tasks. This is done for three reasons:
 a. Crises usually occur. Therefore, schedule the completion of a task for some time well in advance of the latest of the latest possible time. The, when the crisis does occur, you still have time to do an adequate job.
 b. All time for that "second solution." The first solution often does not age well; let it "sit" and then come back for a second try.
 c. There are only six creative working hours in a day
_____ 11. Provide contingency plans. Develop some programs that you will use if your main program fails in some way. (This is especially important in working with other people. You can't always count on other people to fulfill their promises, therefore, have contingency plans.)

Using the Time Line

- _____ 12. Develop a plan that you are willing to live with. The basic idea behind planning is to "create the future." You will make things happen. But where this involves important changes (either for your organization or for someone else or for yourself) you will find the going rather discouraging at first. Therefore, have confidence in your plan – suspend evaluation until you complete what you set out to do.
_____ 13. Monitor progress against the plan.
_____ 14. Revise the Time Line if need be.