

## Quick Guide: Managing Deadlines

Deadlines are a common everyday occurrence in our busy lives. We're either trying to meet them or chasing others to achieve theirs. The following **top ten tips** are to help you meet your deadlines and also for managing others to meet theirs. Some apply to both.

1. As soon as you are given a deadline for a task, **put it in your diary** and then work backwards from that date to ensure that you achieve it on time.
2. If you have a large task to complete by a deadline, **break it into smaller parts and give each small part its own deadline**. That way you don't leave yourself with a large task to do at the last minute. This is particularly good for completing mundane tasks.
3. **Only accept realistic deadlines** and ask for an explanation of the task. You should then explain what you will have to do to complete the task so that the other person sees why the deadline is unrealistic. Then re-negotiate a new one.
4. **Learn to say 'no' assertively**. Offer a brief explanation, apologise if you want to help defuse the situation, and suggest an alternative solution. Do not feel guilty – remember you are refusing the request, not rejecting the person.
5. **Never leave meeting a deadline until the last minute as something else may crop up**. And, if you're not going to meet the deadline, inform the person as soon as possible before the deadline and re-negotiate a new one.
6. **Give others deadlines to complete tasks**. Make a note in your diary of when you've said. Give tighter deadlines to those who are guilty of not meeting them!
7. **Always give a date, and possibly a time, for the deadline** – not asap, at your earliest convenience or in due course. These never seem to happen.
8. **Give a WIIFM** (what's in it for me) to the other person for meeting deadlines. If they can see a benefit or reason for completing the task it will encourage them to do it on time.
9. **Pre-empt deadlines** before it's too late. Chase in advance to ensure you receive what you are expecting.
10. **Use your diary or 'brought forward' system to proactively plan what your boss needs to do**. For example, if they are doing a presentation in two weeks' time remind them to give you the content for the power point presentation that you will have to prepare. Otherwise, you will be staying late and doing it the night before!

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