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#### COLUMN

#### Thriving in Tough Times

## Keeping the Right Things Right in Front of Your Eyes

**By Holly G. Green**

"Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Sometimes the answers are right in front of our eyes and we still miss them! How can that be? Perhaps we've overlooked, underappreciated or incorrectly assessed the situation. Whatever the case, there has never been a more important time to consider the factors that will ultimately determine success in your business.

We are all incredibly visual creatures and largely driven by that which is directly in front of us. Think about the things that capture your attention during the course of a typical day. Whether it is the distraction of your PDA or the hundreds of daily emails—now is the time to reevaluate what will be important a year from now and start putting the right things in front of you.

The power of suggestion is real, so make sure your clear goals or objectives are visible to you most of your day. Put them on your computer screen, carry them in your notebook, set up task reminders to ping you, write them on your whiteboard, post them in the lobby of your office or on a mirror at home... Do whatever works for you to stage your field of vision and set yourself up for success.

This does not mean that you can or should ignore email or reports, but rather that you begin to balance your time based on the significance of the task at hand. We are constantly getting pulled away from the valuable, vital and important tasks that may require a few moments of quiet to think or ponder possibilities by all the chatter going on around us. And everyone knows there is more chatter today than ever before.

It is easier to get the right things in front of you if you have taken the time to clarify your destination—where you want to be in a specific timeframe. So do it. Close your eyes and imagine what it will look like when you have gotten to where you want to go. Now write it down. Then consider what big steps you have to take to get there. Write down the big steps organized by time (the next three months, three

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to nine months, etc.) and use this list to determine how well you are making progress toward your ultimate goals.

Especially as we continue through tough economic times, pause for a few seconds every day and ask yourself: "Of all the things you do today, what will have an impact a year from now? Have I let the things that matter less stop me from doing what matters most?"

Now, more than ever, it is critical to carve out time to focus on the right things. Tough times tend to divert our energies even more than good times. We begin considering more possibilities out of fear, but this is exactly the opposite of what will serve you well! Focus your energies. Make real progress on key activities or initiatives. Deepen your client relationships. Surround yourself visually with what is important. You'll be amazed at how much of the chatter requires none of your attention if you just leave it alone and focus.



**Holly G. Green** is a consultant, author and speaker.

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