



Tip 2

DMA's: Difference-Making Actions



Have you ever had a day in which you worked really hard but felt like you didn't get anything done? Many people look at their to-do list and get so overwhelmed that they end up doing nothing! The DMA strategy gives powerful clarity. It works beautifully especially once you have your 90-Day Quick Plan. It was inspired by a strategy successfully used by Charles Schwab of Bethlehem Steel Company, the first American to earn a million-dollar annual salary.

DMA stands for Difference-Making Actions. **DMA's simply give focus and intentionality to do the most important things every day.** This simple strategy will increase results like nothing else. Make a habit of doing DMA's on a daily basis and your impact will multiply.

Here's how it works:

The DMA Strategy:

1. First thing every morning, take a sticky note.
2. At the top, write your most important current goal.
3. Then write the numbers 1-5 down the page.
4. Next to the 1, write the most important thing you could do today to accomplish that goal. Then write the next most important thing under 2, and so on.
5. You now have a list of the 5 most important things you could do today that would make the biggest difference in accomplishing your goal and ultimately fulfilling your organization's mission.

When you write your DMA's, make sure they are FUN:

F = First priority first. List your tasks in order of priority and then do them in order. Don't start working on the second task until you have finished the first one or you have come to a roadblock that requires someone else's help. Your DMA's are the most important actions for the day! Don't attempt more than five, or you might get overwhelmed and do nothing. If you can't boil them down to a few simply stated tasks, then you probably need to restate your goal.

U = Under the main vision and current major objective. DMA's are the five most important actions you can specifically take today to move your organization forward. They must come under your main vision and help accomplish your most important and current priorities!

N = Number attached. It is not a DMA unless there is a specific number attached. In other words "Calling more prospects" is not a DMA, but "Making 10 sales calls" is. "Organizing your office" is not a DMA, but "Organizing for 20 minutes" or "Cleaning out 2 drawers" are DMA's. Difference Making Actions must be quantifiable.

It is important to note that *DMA's are based solely on what you can do*, not what others need to do. In other words, "Calling three people" is a DMA as that does not rely on whether anyone answers or not. However, "Selling 5 gadgets" is not a DMA as it relies on what others must do. If you consistently do your DMA's, great outcomes will follow.

Each time you complete a Difference-Making Action, put a line through it. Believe it or not there is great satisfaction in seeing that sticky note at the end of the day with five lines crossed through your most important tasks. I once had an intern fresh out of college who was invaluable to our organization. Every day he accomplished his DMA's and then left that sticky note on his cubicle wall. Each day he added his next sticky note with lines through his accomplishments. Do you think he needed to be micromanaged? No way! There was proof on the wall he was doing Difference-Making Actions that moved our mission forward every single day.

Helpful DMA Hints

Be focused. When you write your DMA's, make sure that they are focused. Your DMA's are the most important actions for the day—you shouldn't have any more than three. If you can't boil them down to a few simply-stated tasks, then you probably need to restate your goal.

Be clear. Your DMA's should be clear and quantifiable. The focus here is on activities, not outcomes, so be sure you know exactly what you are going to do. "Make ten sales calls," or "spend one hour on the website" is much better than "sell more," or "work on the proposal."

Be realistic. Your DMA's will not be effective if you can't actually do them. Don't write down that you would like to write five proposals every day, if you know realistically you can't finish more than two.

Be committed. Lastly, build your day around them. Now that you have them, make sure you prioritize them over all other things, meetings, emails, and less important tasks. I often have my DMA's done by 11 a.m. because I do them first. The rest of my day can be structured as needed, but I first did something important that will make a significant impact on my organization and the lives of those we serve.

***Example:** A salesperson who wants to make \$10,000 in commission every month might know from experience that he will need to find four new clients. And to find those four new clients, he needs to set one appointment each day, which he should be able to do by making 20 sales calls. He now has a strong DMA: Make 20 sales calls each morning. By making this the most important part of his day, he can learn to focus on that goal without being distracted by incoming phone calls, meetings, and other items that are urgent, but less important.*

Never mistake motion for action.

—Ernest Hemingway



To watch David teach the DMA strategy, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCuxFKaTmls

Simplicity
boils down to *two steps*:
Identify the
essential.
Eliminate the rest.

—Leo Babauta