

**Be Clear
on
Prioritisation**

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**The D-I-S-E Method - A Repeatable
Framework to Cut Noise and Focus on
What Matters**

PUBLISHED BY Dean Constantine

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This book contains fictional examples, scenarios, and characters created solely for illustrative and educational purposes. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or real-life projects, brands, or organisations is purely coincidental.

The productivity frameworks, metaphors, and routines described herein are designed to spark ideas and encourage experimentation. They are not intended as definitive prescriptions. Readers are encouraged to adapt concepts to suit their own needs, and to approach all advice with critical thinking and personal discretion.

Foreword

For more than 20 years, I've worked in financial services, business analysis, change management, and project management, navigating the fast-moving demands of high-stakes environments. The nature of these roles meant constant pulls on my attention - tight deadlines, competing priorities, and the never-ending expectation to keep everything moving.

Like many professionals, I once believed that success meant handling everything myself. If a problem arose, I took ownership. If deadlines clashed, I found a way to fit them all in. Delegation? That felt like something other people did, I assumed that if I wanted something to progress, I had to do it myself.

But that mindset came at a cost.

At one point, a senior manager referred to me as a “master plate spinner” - juggling tasks with speed and efficiency while making it look effortless. At the time, I took it as a compliment. Now, I see it differently. Plate spinning is unsustainable, and the longer we try to keep everything balanced, the greater the risk of something crashing down.

In 2013, I suffered from burnout. Something had to change. Over time, I learned a better way to work, not by doing more, but by focusing on the right things and strategically utilising my skillset rather than stretching myself too thin.

Down the years, I noted that this struggle wasn't limited to high-pressure corporate roles. I saw colleagues at all levels dealing with the same overwhelm - new graduates, seasoned executives, and everyone in between. Beyond the office, I witnessed friends and family grappling with similar challenges - struggling to prioritise

and feeling overwhelmed. At home, the impact of mental overload became even more tangible. Supporting my wife through her ADHD diagnosis revealed how racing thoughts and competing priorities can make focus a daily battle. Meanwhile, helping my son navigate the pressure of academic performance brought home just how high the stakes can feel - especially when grades seem to be everything.

The truth is, no matter our profession, background, or personal circumstances, we all experience overwhelm at some stage. The key isn't to work harder - it's to work smarter, to understand how to prioritise properly, and to break free from the mindset that everything needs to be done, done now, and by us alone.

This book and its associated journals are the result of that realisation. Inspired in part by *Who Moved My Cheese?* (Johnson, 1998), I wanted to create something similarly succinct and practical - a resource that helps individuals prioritise effectively and adapt with clarity. Just as *Who Moved My Cheese?* reshaped the way people approach change, this book offers a **structured prioritisation system**, blending methods like the Eisenhower Matrix, T-Shirt Estimation, plus Deadlines and task Information into an adaptable framework for managing workloads efficiently.

Whether you're navigating professional tasks or personal responsibilities, this system helps cut through the noise, focus on what truly matters, and make better decisions with confidence. My hope is that, by using this framework, you'll stop spinning plates and start making purposeful, strategic choices. You will be able to move forward with **control**, produce **quality outputs**, hit **major goals**, and avoid the burnout I once experienced.

Introduction

Life is full of decisions. Every day, we balance urgent demands, important commitments, and tasks that seem small but accumulate over time. Without a clear system, the weight of these choices can lead to **decision fatigue** (Kahneman, 2011), procrastination, and a feeling of being overwhelmed. This can impact everyone, from students navigating study and exam pressures, right through to seasoned business professionals with seemingly never-ending workloads.

I have developed the D-I-S-E method to provide a structured yet adaptable framework for **prioritising effectively**, one that goes beyond traditional time management by **combining Deadlines and task Information factors, with T-Shirt Estimation (Sizing), and the Eisenhower Matrix**. This hybrid approach ensures that every task is sorted, sized, understood, and scheduled based on its real impact and effort, helping you make smarter priority choices.

When designing the associated journals, I deliberately chose a **written format** rather than an app or online tool. In a world increasingly dominated by digital solutions, I believe there is something uniquely powerful about putting pen to paper. Writing by hand fosters **deliberate thought**, helping to slow down the mental clutter and bring clarity to priorities. Unlike apps, which can encourage endless tweaking and distractions, a physical journal provides a focused space, a tangible record of progress without the temptation of notifications or unnecessary complexity.

Keeping **reasonable, achievable to-do lists** is key to gaining control over habits (Oakley, 2014). A brief to-do list, whether daily or weekly, allows you to step back, see the bigger picture, and set priorities with intention. Paper has a way of making thoughts feel more concrete, helping to process ideas and refine them naturally. There's no delete button, just a space to work through thoughts, cross out tasks, and physically track progress. The journals that work alongside this book are designed to be a tool for clarity, not just productivity. They're a place where structure meets reflection, helping you build habits that truly serve you.

Why Prioritisation Matters

It's not just about doing more; it's about doing **the right things at the right time**. Prioritisation isn't about filling every hour with endless activity, it's about **working smarter, not harder**, focusing energy where it truly matters.

The journal I have created equip you with a **clear, repeatable system** for evaluating tasks so that you can:

- **Avoid distractions** and stay focused on high-impact work.
- **Assess the information** you have, to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- **Break down complex tasks** into manageable steps.
- **Stay ahead of deadlines** without last-minute stress.
- **Regularly review progress** and adjust priorities as needed.

How The Journal Works

This prioritisation method builds upon the **Eisenhower Matrix**, a classic decision-making framework, but enhances it by assessing **Deadlines** (for scheduling), the **Information** available to you (ensuring you are clear on the end-product), and using **T-Shirt Estimation** (for task sizing). Together, these components create a system that balances **time-constraints, understanding, effort size, and importance**, ensuring that prioritisation becomes intuitive and actionable. I call this the D-I-S-E method, **Deadlines, Information, Sizing**, and the **Eisenhower Matrix**.

Here's how you will use the journal:

1. **Define your tasks** – List out everything that needs attention.
2. **Factor in deadlines** – Schedule realistically to prevent last-minute rushes.
3. **Assess the information** – Do you know what you must deliver.
4. **Estimate the effort** – Use T-Shirt Sizing (XS to XXL) to outline complexity.
5. **Apply the Eisenhower Matrix** – Categorise tasks based on importance and urgency.
6. **Create your plan** – Schedule your tasks in priority order using the 'Deadlines, Information, Sizing, and the Eisenhower Matrix' (D-I-S-E) method.
7. **Execute with confidence** – Work through tasks systematically, adjusting as needed.
8. **Do it again** – Priorities change. Build the habit of working through this process regularly.

The Outcome: A System That Works for You

By integrating the D-I-S-E method into your regular planning, you will transform **uncertainty into clarity**. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by an ever-growing to-do list, you'll make informed decisions. You will prioritise efficiently, tackle tasks methodically, and maximise productivity.

Whether you're managing personal projects, work responsibilities, or long-term goals, the D-I-S-E method journals will become your trusted tool for **staying organised, focused, and in control**.

It's time to **Be Clear and move forward with your priorities** - let's get started!



“A roll of the dice is chance. D-I-S-E is precision. Don’t gamble with your productivity - roll sixes every time”.

1. Why Common Sense Isn't Always Common Practice

At first glance, the D-I-S-E method - Deadlines, Information, Sizing, and the Eisenhower Matrix - might seem like pure common sense. After all, who doesn't know the importance of setting deadlines, gathering information, considering scope and size, and prioritising tasks? The problem is that **knowing** these principles isn't the same as **using** them.

Think about the last time you rushed into a task without confirming a deadline or having complete clarity on the requirements. Maybe it was a work assignment, a personal project, or even a simple task like booking an appointment. At first, it seemed straightforward. But as you progressed, gaps appeared. A missed deadline. Miscommunication. An unrealistic scope. A misplaced priority. Suddenly, what should have been **smooth and efficient** became **frustrating and reactive**.

This isn't just an occasional oversight, it's a widespread issue in workplaces, businesses, and everyday decision-making. Even seasoned professionals fall into the trap of **acting before analysing**, mistaking confidence for competence. The D-I-S-E method exists to **formalise** common sense, turning loose concepts into an actionable framework that prevents avoidable mistakes.

Why Structure Beats Instinct

Relying on instinct alone leaves productivity vulnerable to bias and distraction. The D-I-S-E method ensures structured thinking by breaking tasks into essential pillars:

- **Deadlines:** Not just setting them but confirming them. Many projects and tasks fail because people work toward assumed deadlines instead of actual ones.
- **Information:** Ensuring clarity before diving in. A missing detail at the start can cost double the time later.
- **Sizing:** Understanding scope prevents unrealistic commitments and last-minute scrambles.
- **The Eisenhower Matrix:** Ensuring work is prioritised effectively, not based on urgency alone, but also importance.

By using D-I-S-E, you won't just rely on gut feeling; you will **audit** your decision-making in real time.

The Hidden Danger of Assumed Clarity

One of the biggest pitfalls in productivity isn't lack of intelligence, it's lack of **verification**. People assume they **know** the deadline. Assume they **understand** the details. Assume they **have time** to complete the work. This is where projects and tasks unravel.

Think of a plate spinner, someone expertly twirling plates on sticks in perfect balance. Each plate represents a factor: deadlines, details, priorities, workload. At first, everything runs smoothly. But if one plate starts wobbling, perhaps a missed piece of information or an overlooked deadline, the entire system collapses.

D-I-S-E can prevent this collapse. It forces you to **check each plate deliberately**, ensuring the system holds before momentum builds.



“Without preparation, even the best plate-spinners can wobble”.

Turning Awareness into Action

To truly integrate D-I-S-E, one must transition from passive understanding to **active implementation**:

- When taking on a task, confirm the deadline **explicitly**, rather than assuming it.
- Seek out enough information **before** starting, rather than piecing it together midstream.
- Evaluate the realistic scope **upfront** to prevent overcommitment and effectively estimate effort.
- Prioritise based on **long-term impact**, not immediate panic.

By embedding these principles into regular task management and prioritisation, the D-I-S-E method transforms productivity from reactive problem-solving into **proactive mastery**.

About The Author

With over 20 years of experience in financial services, business analysis, project and change management, and staff leadership, Dean Constantine has built a career focused on structured problem-solving, strategic execution, leadership development, and coaching others. He has led teams through complex projects, balancing efficiency with adaptability, and has developed a deep understanding of Agile methodologies to drive progress in dynamic environments.

As a seasoned Business Analyst, Dean Constantine honed his ability to evaluate systems, identify opportunities, and refine processes for maximum efficiency. His expertise in prioritisation, data-driven decision-making, and stakeholder management ensures that businesses and individuals alike can navigate challenges with clarity and confidence.

Through the journals, he aims to share a structured and actionable system to help others take control of their priorities, eliminate uncertainty, and work smarter every day.

Born and raised in Essex, UK, Dean Constantine continues to call it home while working in London. Outside of professional life, he enjoys time with his wife, Katy, their grown-up son, and two cats, balancing ambition with family and personal fulfilment.

Beyond work, he has a deep passion for travel, particularly exploring the United States. He is an avid sports fan, with interests spanning football (soccer), cricket, and cycling. He also finds great enjoyment in watching his family play field hockey for Thurrock

Hockey Club, and cricket for Upminster Cricket Club, supporting them as they compete across Essex and East London.

Call to Action

If you are looking for more information on the author or processes discussed in this book, how and where to order the journals, or have any questions, comments, or constructive feedback, please visit my website: beclearpro.co.uk or use the QR code found below. It would be great to hear from you!

You can also order the book, eBook and journals from Amazon online stores in your region.

If you are interested in complementary items to help with your pursuit of improving prioritisation and efficiency, I will regularly update the website with tips and recommendations.



Find my handle, **@beclearpro**, across social media platforms.