



Doing More with Less

Organizational Leadership Briefs for RDO Executive Directors

This brief is part of the seven-part series *On the Road to Success: Organizational Leadership Briefs for Executive Directors*.

These briefs cover a wide range of issues important to RDO senior leadership, including:

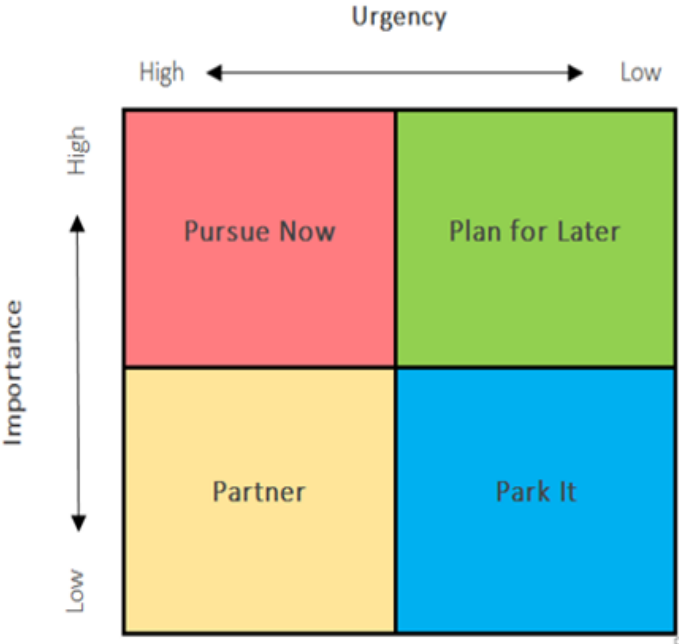
- Creating Relevance in Your Region
- Building and Nurturing Relationships
- Developing Revenue Strategies
- Doing More with Less
- Executive Director Qualifications
- Financial Reporting
- Preparing for Effective Board Meetings

The full set is available online at: www.nado.org/leadershipbriefs

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The current reality is that regional development organizations are constantly challenged to do more with less. As budgets tighten and resources diminish, expectations not only remain constant, but in many cases continue to rise. The challenge for today’s directors is how to navigate this environment and do more with less through creative and strategic planning.

The **Eisenhower Matrix** is a useful tool to guide leaders in all types of organizations to prioritize what is most important and demands attention. This prioritization methodology is attributed to US President Dwight D. Eisenhower who stated: “*What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important.*” The challenge, and the key to doing more with less, is to know how to tell what’s truly urgent or important from what is neither important nor urgent by using the four quadrants of the matrix.



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Using the Eisenhower Matrix

In order to place each issue or task in the quadrant that it really fits best, simply ask two questions about the issue:

- Is it urgent?
- Is it important?

Based on the response to these two questions the issue or task will be assigned to one of the four quadrants in the matrix:

- Highly urgent and highly important
- Highly important and low urgency
- Low urgency and high importance
- Low urgency and low importance

The top part of the matrix is for issues or tasks that you or your organization are going to do because *no one else can do it besides you*.

The bottom part of the matrix belongs to issues or tasks that you are not going to do personally, or at least not going to do now.

High Importance and High Urgency

Pursue now! Issues or tasks that fall into this quadrant require you or your organization to give it immediate attention. These are issues that you should pursue. The importance and urgency require you to do it right now and do it yourself, because you or your organization are *best suited for this task*.

High Importance and Low Urgency

Plan for later. Issues or tasks that fall into this quadrant are for you or your organization to achieve. However, you can set the date for those tasks in the future because they are not as urgent. They are still of high importance and as such require you or your organization to address them, but they can be planned for later. In this quadrant tasks are personally done by you or the organization because *you are the best person or entity for the task*.

Low Importance and High Urgency

Partner. Tasks in this quadrant are less important so it is advisable to assign these tasks or issues to trusted partners. Delegate them so you can focus on the important and urgent tasks you face. Urgent tasks won't wait anyways, even if they are less important than what you're going to do personally. So find partners to delegate these tasks to. *Assign tasks that are not important, in spite of their urgency here.*

Low Importance and Low Urgency

Park this issue. Some activities are not moving you towards your goals. Before starting this activity ask yourself: Is it urgent? Is it important? If the answer is clearly "no" in both cases, park it until it becomes more urgent or important.

The purpose of prioritizing on the level of importance and urgency is to create focus. Focus will help the organization concentrate efforts to produce the greatest impact. Many organizations fail to maximize their impact by being too broad in their scope, thereby diluting their focus and limiting their impact.