

Date:	August 29, 2008
To:	All
From:	PF
Project:	Getting Things Done
Regarding:	The Six Things Most Important Things I Must Do Tomorrow
Note:	Mary Kay Ash writes in her book "Mary Kay: You Can Have It All : Lifetime Wisdom from America's Foremost Woman Entrepreneur"

Around 100 years ago, Charles Schwab, president of Bethlehem Steel, wanted to increase his own efficiency, and of the management team at the steel company. Ivy Lee, a well-known efficiency expert of the time, approached Mr. Schwab, and made a proposition Charles Schwab could not refuse:

Ivy Lee: "I can increase your people's efficiency – and your sales – if you will allow me to spend fifteen minutes with each of your executives."

Charles Schwab: "How much will it cost me?"

Ivy Lee: "Nothing, unless it works. After three months, you can send me a check for whatever you feel it's worth to you."

Charles Schwab: "It's a deal."

The following day, Ivy Lee met with Charles Schwab's management executives, spending only ten minutes with each in order to tell them:

Ivy Lee: "I want you to promise me that for the next ninety days, before leaving your office at the end of the day, you will make a list of the six most important things you have to do the next day and number them in their order of importance."

Astonished Executives: "That it?"

Ivy Lee: "That's it. Scratch off each item after finishing it, and go on to the next one on your list. If something doesn't get done, put it on the following day's list."

"Each Bethlehem executive consented to follow Lee's instructions. Three months later, Schwab studied the results and was so pleased that he sent Lee a check for US\$35,000. At the time, the average worker in the US was being paid \$2 per day.

If Schwab, one of the smartest businessmen of his day, was willing to pay so much money for this advice, I decided I would follow it, too.

Each night, I put together my list for the following day. If I don't get something on my list accomplished, it goes on the next day's list. I put the hardest or most unappealing task at the top of the list. This way, I tackle the most difficult item first, and once it's out of the way, I feel my day is off to a good start."