

# Do Your Time Management Techniques Still Fit The Bill?

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**Pam Vaccaro, MA, CSP**

Internet literate constituents reach you seven days a week. They want quick responses to their informed requests. Invitations to civic events parade across your computer screen or keep your phone ringing during your “personal time.” You know the answer to this riddle—“What is the only place we take minutes, but lose hours?” Yes, meetings! What about time for your family responsibilities, your profession, or yourself?

Traditional time management offers the same *simplistic* remedies for a more complex world. Who do you know who can “*handle a piece of paper only once?*” Try these suggestions for 21<sup>st</sup> century legislators wanting to have a balanced and productive life.

## **Be a planner first.**

Carrying a leather-bound planner through the houses of the capitol might make a good impression on some, but it means little or nothing if you’re not a planner inside your head first. Smart legislators think 80/20 —20% of your activities produce 80% of the results. Your challenge? **Know your 20%.**

- 20% of your advocates produce 80% of your support—take good care of them.
- 20% of your daily tasks produce 80% of the results to make you feel productive—plan your day. Avoid hitting the pavement running.
- 20% of your personal activities produce 80% of satisfaction in your personal life—know what you must drop.

## **“Just say ‘no’” does not win you votes.**

But, to always say ‘yes’ strips you of any personal life. Try these forms of “no:”

- “I can’t make ‘Beautify Jackson Day,’ but I’ll send some snacks over for your group.”
- Paying for the snacks and putting your name on the bags **buys** more personal and honors their request.
- “I can’t be at ‘Beautify Day,’ but, count me in for an afternoon at the Jackson County Fair this summer.”

People want to know; what are you going to do, when are you going to do it, and do you care? This kind of “no” assures them of all three and helps you keep personal and professional balance.

**Buy time.**

- Consider hiring a personal assistant to do errands and menial tasks you wait to do during a “block of time.” They’ll pick up your dry-cleaning or the dog from the groomer.
- Talk to yourself with a digital voice recorder. They are pocketsize and buy you a lot of time trying to remember a name, task, or creative idea for a legislative bill.

The demands on your time are too quick-paced to be listing A, B, and C priorities. The C’s never get done anyway. Try these ideas to accomplish time management @ the speed of thought!

*Pam Vaccaro, CSP is a professional speaker whose expertise in managing time and attention brings her before audiences internationally. She is a Certified Speaking Professional, the highest earned designation by the National Speakers Association. Her company Designs on Time challenges companies and associations to rethink traditional time management. She is most known for tailored programs and innovative ideas.*

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