

ALASBO  
Power Lunch  
Time Management aka Work-Life Balance  
March 10, 2015  
Presented by Melody Douglas, SFO

**Introduction**

I am going to take a bit of a different approach to what I have presented in past; because what I believe we all need is a reality check on time management in **all** areas of our lives.

My work career encompassed at least 55 to 60 hours per week for DECADES! In looking back on my life, I wish I had made some different choices.

Today's information is from my experience supplemented by several articles from the January 2015 School Business Affairs that focused on Work-Life Balance.

We all know that more and more comes our way at work when folks come to understand that we will get things done; we seem to just get more and more to do. And eventually in order to accomplish whatever, work ends up encroaching on our home life.

My personal philosophy is likely the same as yours.....**family comes first**. How many times does our family take a back seat throughout our careers? Often I believe.....however, it really comes down to an issue of

time management. You need to include time in your life for all the roles you have; employee, father or mother, husband or wife, son or daughter, etc. We are a mix of all the roles we have in life.....and this may sound trite..... we all have to decide that we WILL get control of our life!

“Work intensification – working longer and doing more with less” = that dog don’t hunt. Paradoxically, working long hours reduces productivity, attendance, and commitment at work and life expectancy.” *January SBA – Karen Starr, Ph.D. member of ASBO Editorial Advisory Committee*

We must invest in family because at the end of our days that is all we have left – family.

### **Specific Time Management Suggestions**

Here are some ideas that may help you gain some control over your work life:

1. Annual Business Manager Calendar – Alasbo Website. Post it to your desktop and note the dates on your electronic calendar
2. Electronic Calendar – I found it useful to have only one calendar where I used color coding for various projects. Personal life plans had its own color.

3. Periodically close your door and put your phone on record – set times weekly for quality work time and do the same for subordinates. Be reasonable....set one afternoon a week – soon everyone will know that Thursday afternoons you aren't available. It is amazing what you can get done in 4 hours of uninterrupted time!
4. Check your email and cell phone periodically – at least once day. These tools don't own you....you own them.
5. Use auto reply on your email to let people know you are not immediately available – and list someone else for them to contact (development of subordinates) – cruise example; calling in on vacations example
6. Use two monitors or 1 large monitor = Paperless – .....but you have to decide you are going to do this and follow through

Electronic Filing – grants, payroll, etc.

Manuals – electronically stored on website

Electronic Forms Folder

7. Implement eFax – saves time and money
8. Networked copiers

9. To Do List – lets you park tasks in a list instead of in your brain. Create lists on your computer desk top. Once you put something on a list then it doesn't take up quite so much space in your gray matter. Begin a main to-do list noting the various tasks you are responsible for and then create short-term and long-term steps. Set aside time periodically (daily or weekly) to review the list. Don't delete items from your list.....just move them to a Tasks Completed list (don't forget to note the date). Sometimes it helps to look at such a list when you are so far down in the trench that you can't see the top because the walls are so high. ☺

10. Learn how to say “No” – if you say yes – you may need to eliminate or delegate something already planned or ask if timelines can be altered. Have a stock phrase in your tool box such as “Thank you for asking me to participate; let me think about this and get back with you by XX date.”

Don't let others move the monkey from their back to yours. ☺

11. Innovate – determine if you can retool or redesign a process to create efficiency....what we tend to do is keep doing what we do because we know the process. Stream-lining a process takes deliberate planning. Example budget document –

you have to make time for such changes to occur.  
Example; review what your software can do to help

12. Delegate and empower subordinates – develop your right-hand person whenever possible; you don't have to do everything. 😊 You can even do this at home - a certain amount of monitoring and review is necessary. Your kids can do their own laundry and they can even cook dinner once in a while.....just sayin'.
13. Focus on you: eating well and exercising is simply finding time to recharge your batteries. Take your lunch every day.....don't work through it at your desk.
14. Unplug– you have to decide to unplug; put your cell phone on silent and check it periodically as opposed to be interrupted by it when it goes off (of course there are times when you can't do this 😊 ) we need to apply reasonableness in all things that we do.

You need to be a role model honoring your family to those you work with and those who live with you Try not to take work home with you.....let your home be your sanctuary and your family be your focus when you are home.

15. Squeeze something into 10 minutes of unexpected time – 5 or 10 minutes to refocus can do wonders

5 minute planning tool

## **Conclusion**

In closing, there are some additional suggestions from a couple of our colleagues that I captured from the ASBO Digest that are included in my talking points handout Amy will be sending to you.

Be Realistic - “We must let go of the idea that we can be perfect employees, parents or spouses.

Perfectionism rarely achievable, and it is never sustainable.” *January 2015, SBA - Tim Peraino and Stephanie Weese, Kent Intermediate School, Grand Rapids Michigan*

“The only rock I know that stays steady, the only institution I know that works, is the family.” *Lee Iacocca who led the revival of the Chrysler Corporation in the 1980’s.*

It is up to you to make sure you don’t have a crazy making life, my Friends!

Time management suggestions compiled by Claire Hertz for ASBO Digest, former member of the ASBO Board:

- Create a to do list and review daily - keeping important items on the top of the list - these will help you reach your goals for the year
- Remember urgent is not always important - if all I worked on was urgent, I would never get to the more strategic work of the financial leader of the district
- Ignore email for blocks of time to get high level thinking work done - it's easy to be distracted
- Email and urgent tasks - touch it only once - delegate or get it done as received
- Save everything you do electronically - most likely you will do it again in the future
- Document with notes for tasks to be repeated in the future (use cell notes in Excel)
- Schedule weekly meetings with direct reports - give quality time, so they can get their work done
- Empower staff with the ability to make decisions - ask staff what they think we should do when they bring an issue to your attention, most times they already know the answer
- Be consistent - staff appreciate knowing how you're going to respond to an issue based on previous actions
- Block out time on your calendar to complete a project
- Use the end of the day or the end of the day as your quiet time to clear large projects
- Set your office clock 5-10 minutes fast so are on time to meetings
- Remember the [80/20 rule](#)

Time management suggestions compiled by David Janek for the ASBO Digest, Business Manager for the Rapid City Area Schools, South Dakota

Managing priorities is not unique to the School Business Official. Every executive in either the private or public sector at some time in their career will be challenged by more work to do than hours in the day. I think there are some keys to successful planning that I have used over my 30 years in the private and public sectors.

1. No matter what system you use make it your system; it can be paper, electronic, off the shelf or a formal planning product. There is no one size fits all, use what you are confident and comfortable with or it won't get used and your day will become more frustrating not less.
2. Use the touch once theory. When going through paperwork, or mail or the volume of paper that has to cross our desks daily make a habit to touch it once. Either solve it, file it, delegate it, throw it, or set it to follow up at a later date. Not constantly reviewing the same material makes the piles manageable.
3. Use timelines, a crisis is a crisis and has to be dealt with now, but those are rare. Most tasks can and should be scheduled out on a realistic, yet aggressive timeline for completion or follow-up. Remember we have 5 days in a week not everything will or should get done today.
4. Get away from your desk for at least 30 minutes each



day. You may ask ‘how this will help me manage my day’? The answer is simple; we all need a break go to lunch, or walk around the building, but get away from your desk for some time. The brief break allows your mind to regroup and gain some perspective about what has been accomplished so far. When you get back you can reassess and reprioritize the remainder of your day to maximize what can get done.

5. Eat the frog first. We all have things we like to do and things we don't enjoy so much. When those things that we find less enjoyable or more challenging appear on the ‘to do list’, take them on first when you are fresh and rested. Putting them off till the last when you are tired only makes the work more challenging; consequently, the quality of our results are not as good.