

Tick, tick, tick... the hands of a clock turning. Time. As professionals, time is our greatest opportunity AND our greatest liability. How can we capitalize on this opportunity and minimize the liability? By looking at time, not as something to be “managed”, but as a framework to help us find our business rhythm or *flow*.

*Flow* is a guide or structure for your business day.

## **F**inancials and **F**ocus –

Ask yourself: Where is my revenue line? Where do I add value to the company? How close to the revenue line is my daily work?

Ask yourself: What is my focus for today, this week, this month, this year?

- The answers to these two questions become the guidelines for building your schedule.
- When you look at your calendar or schedule, enter the activities, projects and tasks **FIRST** that are closest to the revenue line and your focus.

Now you have ensured that you have time to work on the items that are closest to the revenue and highest priority items. Fill in the other activities around these items.

## **L**ocation – Does everything have a place in your calendar?

- Ask yourself: Do all of my activities/tasks have a place in my calendar?
- As the pace of work continues to speed up, unless projects, meetings and activities – both personal and professional – have a place in your calendar then how can you realistically know how much time you can allot for a task? How can you know that you even have the time to do a task?
- Have you ever packed for a trip and kept adding more and more things to your suitcase? Then your suitcase is so full, you have to sit on it to get it closed. Time is the suitcase. We can only put so many things on our calendar and then we just run out of room. So, does everything have a place in your calendar?

## **O**rganize – Organize your days around your priorities and then structure your environment to support them.

- If your priority is to increase revenue, then how must you organize your days to support your goal?
- How must you organize your physical office space to support your goals?

## **W**ork – Make it work for YOU!

Design a system that allows you to flow through your days.

- When is your energy high?
- When is your energy low?

- How can you structure your schedule around your energy levels?
- Do you want to do all of your intense, focused work in the morning and respond to customers in the afternoon?
- What type of work can you do when your energy is not at its peak?
- What calendar tool works best for you – paper or electronic?
- How do you process information?
- Do you like to receive information electronically, verbally, or printed?
- Is there a day planner or a software program that can help you increase your efficiency?
- Can you download contact management software?
- Can you have your assistant enter all of your appointments?
- Have you allowed enough time for you to respond to an urgent deadline, a personal emergency, or for fun?

Now, how are you going to get in the FLOW?