

BY JEFF DAVIDSON

# GETTING MORE DONE

Ways to leverage resources more efficiently

**A**s another calendar year approaches, in the face of shrinking government budgets, better use of the resources you already have available represents a tremendous productivity initiative and time management technique.

When, for example, is the last time you reviewed the resumes of staff members? Going further, when is the last time you reviewed their original employment applications, which provide information on their background, education, training, and expertise? It pays to tap into staff background information to leverage their strengths.

## Resource Roster

A variety of resource areas that you might not have recently considered, which might be at your immediate disposal, are listed here and grouped by categories.

Tap the skills of current and prospective staff:

- Find experts among your staff.
- Research staff backgrounds, including software skills and other key capabilities.
- Empower administrative staff.
- Hire interns, especially tech-savvy recent grads.
- Consult other departments and committees.
- Recruit members of other departments.
- Retrain managers and staff.
- Hire retirees.
- Recall former employees (not just retirees).
- Retain temporary workers.

Consult with specialists:

- Involve people who know your agency.

- Network with colleagues inside and outside of your organization.

Work with volunteers:

- Find volunteers in your community with skills new to your office.
- Bring in peers and networking groups.
- Seek mentors.
- Involve friends and family.
- Tap online networks.

Capitalize on relations with vendors and customers:

- Pose questions to vendors.
- Review the skills of business customers.
- Establish partnerships.

Draw upon the services of professional and other governmental agencies:

- Scout programs offered by state and federal agencies.
- Research all other government agencies with applicable programs.
- Become more involved in professional networks and organizations.
- Explore the services of professional and industry associations.
- Learn about local university partnership with business.

Harness leadership tools:

- Recognize your own responsibility and accountability.
- Enhance your own leadership skills.
- Develop and consult frequently asked questions.
- Use virtual and informal networks.
- Make better use of data you've already gathered.
- Take better advantage of Internet and library resources.
- Use the most appropriate tools and technologies

Employ technology wisely:

- Employ a variety of e-mail signatures, letters, and reusable templates.
- Enact flexi-place (virtual office) policies.
- Communicate by teleconferencing and Skype-type meetings.
- Acquire better and faster technology.
- Use the full version of key software.
- Maintain a simple and short list of goals.
- Undertake more comprehensive online searches.
- Automate with available equipment.

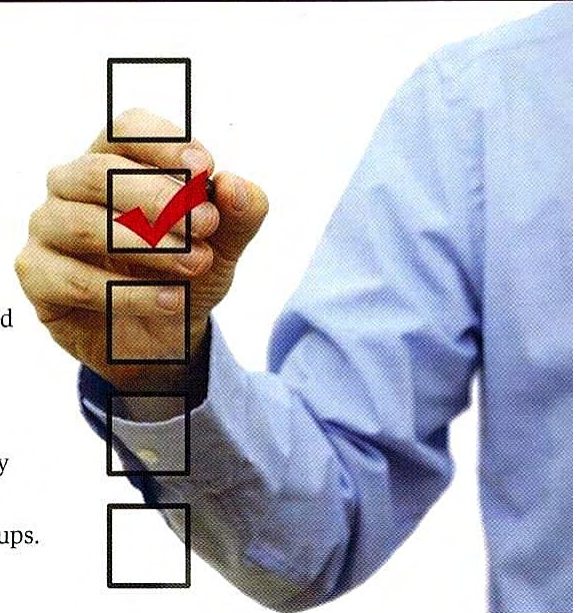
Draw upon your own wisdom:

- Prepare for contingencies.
- Assemble the right team.
- Know whom to consult.
- Befriend such information purveyors as librarians.
- Be able to say no. Make more effective choices.

## Get More Organized

Becoming more organized, in general, represents a second front on the path to effective time management by better use of resources. Take this quick quiz to see where you stand:

- Is your desk at work or at home piled horizontally with reports, papers, and files? Nobody can manage a horizontal pile.
- Do you have trouble finding a particular item in your desk that you use



often? Maybe it needs to be left on your desk.

- Do you feel that you could be organized if you only had more space? More space is seldom the answer; filing or getting rid of what isn't important is.
- Do you have piles of newspapers and magazines at home that you don't have time to read? If you're attempting to read these publications cover to cover, good luck. Clip out what looks important or interesting, and recycle the rest.
- Do papers clutter your desk for at least a week? A desk is not a filing cabinet.
- Do you ever find something at the bottom of a pile that you didn't know was there? Beware: You're liable to lose anything! Break down your piles now.
- Do you sometimes spend five to 10 minutes or more looking for a letter or document that you need? The search should take no more than 45 to 75 seconds. More than that and, well...you're wasting everyone's time.

Recognizing that getting better organized in and of itself is a "resource" worth cultivating, here are some ideas to help you benefit from your own organizational skills:

- Organize documents for optimal use.
- Train others to respect your time.
- Work away from the office to avoid distraction.
- Find a quiet room or place within your facilities.
- Limit distractions as often as practical. **PM**



**JEFF DAVIDSON, MBA, CMC**, is principal, Breathing Space® Institute, Raleigh, North Carolina. An author and presenter on work-life balance, he holds the world's only registered trademark from the United States Patent and Trademark Office as a "Work-Life Balance Expert."®