

## **The Simple method of working smarter - *“Using Time, Tools and Techniques to get your life back”***

### **“The e-Principles and those nasty time wasters”**

By Jon Bartos

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Most of America has been held hostage by the struggling economy that has prevailed over the past couple of years. For those fortunate enough to remain gainfully employed, the trade off was often working more with less. For those of us in the recruiting industry, this meant putting more time in, making more phone calls and essentially working harder to hopefully get the same results. More time on the job translates in to spending less time with our family, friends and enjoying the things we really want to do. *My question to you - “If you had the option, wouldn’t you rather work smarter, not harder? Wouldn’t you like to get your life back?”*

Start with a simple exercise. What are the three things you spend the most time on during the day? Write them down. Next question, what are the three things most important to you in life? If you are like most of us, you will find the three things from the first question do not correlate with those from the second. We all have to work, but finding ways to spend more time on the things that are most important in life should be a top priority. We all know, that at the end of our lives in retrospect, we WONT be saying I should have spent more time at work.

We do not want to put more time in to achieve the same results. We don’t live to work, we work to live. With the addition of the Y generation in to the workforce and the Four-Hour work week phenomena, society itself is experiencing a major shift, trending toward working less and playing more. People are tired of being held hostage on the job and are demanding work life balance.

Luckily there are some alternative options and things that we can do to work smarter and achieve the work-life balance we all want.

### **Pareto’s Principle and The e-Principles**

In working smarter, one needs to firmly understand Pareto’s rule and the e-Principles (effectiveness and efficiency). Vilfredo Pareto was a smart man. In addition to being an Italian Engineer, he was also a sociologist, economist and philosopher. He made several important contributions to Economics, particularly in the study of income distribution and in the analysis of individual’s choices. From his observations, he found that 80% of the land was held by 20% of the people and numerous other comparisons yielded the same relative ratios. Thus was born the concept of the “Pareto Principle” (also known as the 80-20 rule) which states for many events, roughly 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes. Many have taken this philosophy and applied it to every field. In recruiting this means that the 20% of the activities that net 80% of the results are those that lead to Job Orders, Candidates, Sendouts and placements.

*Results equal effectiveness.* This leads us to the first e-Principle, Effective. Effectiveness means achieving the intended or expected result. Ask yourself, “Is what I am doing right now producing the desired results?” Let’s use a marketing presentation as an example. From flipping a recruiting call to doing an MPC presentation, there are many types and many ways to do a marketing presentation.

The key is to determine what is really working, what is the specific activity that nets the result? You can dial all day long and leave voice mails. Sure you will be busy, but you will be miles away from being effective. Identifying what is “effective” for you is critical in determining what to focus on and where to spend your time.

In working smarter, it is important to not only consider the effectiveness of your efforts but to apply the second e-principle as well. Once you identify what is effective for you, it is important to assess whether it is efficient or not. Efficiency means doing what is effective to the best of your ability to achieve more in less time.

In the movie the “The Pursuit of Happiness”, Will Smith plays Chris Gardner who is an unemployed father with a young son to care for. Chris lands an internship at Dean Witter and competes for 1 of 2 positions available. Due to having to leave at 5pm to get his son from Childcare early, he had to get more done during the day than his competition. He did it by not using bathroom breaks and by not setting the phone back in the cradle, but rather just hitting the dial tone button immediately again. He figured he could save over 8 minutes an hour by doing that and it enabled him to not have to work after 5pm. That is a great example of being efficient. Doing things to cut down on time, and using time to its best advantage.

***Make the most of your time.*** Time is money and the Effective and Efficient use of time are the key elements in working smarter rather than harder. This is a very basic concept and all of us know it however we often ignore it. It is important to take a look at what things are eating up your time and not associated with activities that produce results. Determine what you can do without to save you time.

Be careful of the big time wasters in recruiting:

### **Planning, Research and Recruiting – at the same time**

It’s tough to do three jobs all at once, however for many of us, that is exactly what we try to do. If we try to do planning, research and recruiting all at the same time – we become very ineffective at all three. The best way to eliminate this problem is to set designated times during the day for each activity and stay focused on being effective and efficient with each. In my office we plan after 4:30pm. It’s a good time while things are winding down for the day, and it gives us the time during the day to focus on recruiting and marketing.

### **Checking Email or Facebook constantly**

Many good sales professionals and Recruiters alike tend to have a slight case of ADHD. It is very easy to get distracted and off focus looking at the latest shiny object. When we see a message on facebook or email the tendency is to pause from what we are doing and ....look. This is such a waste of our time and

it often prevents us from achieving our objectives and goals for the day. The more you can make it a practice to limit the time checking email and other non-essential sites, the more efficient you will become. Leave it for the end of the day, I am sure you won't miss that much of what is going on in life.

### **Over researching and analyzing before the call**

Many recruiters tend to look over a resume or company for what seems like 30 minutes before picking up the phone and making the call. We can all research or analyze a little more, but what we are really doing is just procrastinating and not being effective by just picking up the phone and making a call. My rule, if the candidate is a 70% fit, I'm calling. I can look for key words, companies and make a decision to call within about 15 seconds. Better yet, I can do this during planning time which then allows me to just pick the phone up and call during critical phone time.

### **Connect hour padding**

We all like talking with a candidate or hiring manager and building that ever needed trusted advisor relationship. Often times we make ourselves believe that we are building a relationship when in actuality we are just wasting time. Remember, the more time we waste, the less effective we are and the harder we will have to work. Here is how to tell if you are connect hour padding. If you have phone calls longer than 10 minutes with individuals or candidates that are not going forward in any opportunity or you have gained no further insight into clients or potential clients... you are connect hour padding. Catch yourself and get off the phone, make your time count.

### **The inability to direct the call**

Often I hear, "But Jon, I couldn't get off the phone with his guy. He would not stop talking!" Working smarter means your time has to be important to you. You have to get good at the ability to direct the call and make the most of your time (efficiency). For example, "Hey Joe, I just have a few minutes before my next call, and there are some questions I need answered before I can go forward with you in the process." By limiting your time upfront, you can get business done quickly. If you feel the conversation getting off track, all you need to do is direct the call back on track. "Excuse me Joe, I'm sorry, I have limited time and really need to get the answers to a few more questions. Why did...." Many people think it's difficult and rude to get off the phone if someone on the other is speaking as they don't want to hurt their feelings. If your time is being wasted, you are not being efficient. Ending a call professionally is a skill that can be developed and it is not necessary to offend the person on the other end. Know what options you can use to keep the call on track and to direct the conversation appropriately. Be cognizant of the results you are trying to achieve.

### **Personal business during Critical Phone time**

We all have a life to live. Things happen and there are things that need to be taken care of from a personal perspective. The question you need to ask yourself when this situation presents itself – "Is this important enough for me to address during my critical phone time during the day?" If you can address the issue at lunch or after work, leave it and focus on the activities that are going to achieve your

desired results. Distractions will only lead to working longer hours in order to get done what you need to.

Life is short. The more time we can spend on what really matters to us, the better our life becomes. Isn't it time you make the decision to do what you can in order to work smarter and not just harder? In the long run, it will be one of the best decisions you have ever made.

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