

## Making the Most of Your Time

by Kristi Royse

If you are like most people, you struggle to find enough time to complete everything on your daily or weekly to-do list. In recent years, the entire working environment seems to have sped up. But someone forgot to add more hours to the day as they added all of the additional responsibilities you have taken on. In today's streamlined, fast-moving workplace, it's more important than ever to make the most of every day. And getting control of your time *is* possible.

Time management is difficult, and it's a flawed concept: you can't really manage time. It is finite. What we all know and talk about is, in fact, how we can manage *ourselves* better. So, if you want to manage your time better, you have no choice but to learn to manage yourself better.

This article contains a sampling of the many techniques I have learned, from my own experience in guiding organizations, which can help 1) break through the over-commitment and chaos, and 2) gain the benefit of doing the work rather than dealing with obstacles to getting work done. You may even end up with "free time" to enjoy some fun!

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### SVPMA September Event with Brain Cox, HP

By Greg Cohen

Brian Cox, Senior Director of Software Marketing at Hewlett-Packard Company, spoke at the September SVPMA meeting on *Evolving from Products to Product Suite Solutions in High-Tech*. Brian is responsible for HP Unix (HP-UX.) He sells to large enterprise IT and datacenter customers supporting mission critical applications such as those run by the military and stock exchange. In spite of the product being very mature at over 25 years of age, Brian's customers still faced a number of challenges, including:

1. An overwhelming number of product offerings and features from which to select
2. Complex and long installations
3. Paranoia over incompatibilities between the layers in the software stack. The fear is so acute that customers often stop applying patches once a system is stable.

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## Rule 30: A Launch is a Process, Not an Event

By Laura Lowell, 42 Rules of Marketing

One of the biggest challenges for marketers is "the launch." Whether it is the initial company launch, the launch of a second-generation product, or a launch into a new market segment - the process is similar and the results are equally important.

"Launch" is one of those tricky marketing words. If you ask three people for a definition, you will get three different answers. I define launch as the beginning of an overall integrated marketing campaign. When a launch is planned as a stand-alone event - a big party with industry press, analysts and customers -

you will usually see a spike in press coverage. That spike will generate awareness and demand, which leads to initial sales. But then it tends to flatten out. This is when people start to second-guess their revenue forecasts. Sales starts to question whether Marketing is doing its job. Marketing starts to question why Sales can't close the deals.

Every launch has a beginning, a middle, and an end. If planned well, one launch will lead right into the next. A launch can take many different forms. It can be a "big bang" or "crescendo" where activities lead up to or are triggered by a specific event. It can be more like "rolling thunder" where activities are happening over a period of time. The key here is that a launch is not an event. It is a series of related marketing activities focused around a single purpose - achieving your business objective.

Planning your launch so that each activity is integrated with the next takes teamwork, organization and patience. I like to start by picking a launch date - you have to start somewhere. Remember the launch isn't an event, but it is always helpful to have a deadline (see Rule 37.) The date can be tied to an industry event, a holiday or season, or basic product availability.

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Once you have your deadline, the launch date, you can begin to develop a launch plan by working backwards. List all the activities you have planned for the launch. Identify the dependencies. For example, you need creative content from the landing page to include in the email campaign; you need the messaging before you create the datasheet; you need a customer testimonial for the website and the sales presentation. Based on the timing of each activity, create a timeline of when each item is due, and who is responsible for getting it done.

Your plan should have three main sections. First, activities leading up to the launch date like developing the messaging, creating the webpage, sales presentation and datasheet. Second, specific activities that occur on the day of the launch like when and how the website goes live, the email campaign begins, the press release is issued. Finally, activities to continue the excitement like feature articles, customer webinars, sales contests, email and viral campaigns.

Steve Larsen, CEO of Krugle, used participation in the DEMO conference as one element of his plan to launch Krugle in 2006. Larsen's goal for DEMO was to get 1-2,000 users signed-up for the beta product.

Three days after the conference, Krugle has signed up 35,000 users. The follow-up communications became a critical element in Krugle's marketing plan. The event was only the beginning. The real work had just started.

Your launch plan doesn't have to be complicated. It does need to be a living launch plan. Things have a way of changing. You need to be able to adjust quickly as you learn more, and identify the impact of changes on other activities. Having everything written down helps you identify the impact of changes across all elements of the launch.

It also helps minimize the "oops" factor - that tiny little detail that falls through the cracks, and that your boss and colleagues will remind you about for years to come. ☘

Excerpted from *42 Rules of Marketing* by Laura Lowell which was an Amazon.com bestseller, December 2007. Check it out at [www.42rules.com/marketing](http://www.42rules.com/marketing)



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# October Event: License Management - So What Can We Do, and What Should We Do?

By Jessie Lin

Whether you work on software, hardware or both, license is one of the must-have knowledge areas for product managers. It involves all departments in the company and reflects the business model. Modern licensing technology offers a variety of choices: packaged, subscriptions, and feature/module-based. Dominic Haigh, VP of Business Development of Agilis Software, reviewed the past and explored the future of license management at SVPMA October meeting.

License Management has experienced two ages. During the stone-age, licenses were paper based and enforced with audits. Dongles were also used for better enforcement, but were not very convenient for the user and had to be physically fulfilled. In the Iron Age, a lot more options came out. For example, node-

locked single user licensing, site licensing, and floating or concurrent licensing. There is more flexibility in license controls. Product managers have choices such as perpetual, trial, subscription, and feature/module-based license. Now the internet is heralding in a third age. Modern technology brings more benefits to products and their end-users. It provides more automation such as configuring licenses and issuing email instructions. Single-use licenses no longer require a dongle. Users may have tailored license model for their specific needs. New license models are made possible, such as internet-hosted floating licensing and usage based licenses. The new license technology may also provide Business Intelligence functions to product managers.

Next, Haigh went through several case-studies with the audience. NumeriX provides pricing management software for banks. The company's licensing system had to support customers with and without internet access. This required them to develop an automated system for their clients whose systems had access to the internet and a licensing server to enforce node-locked licensing for clients whose hosts were not connected to the internet. Fair Issac, which helps companies determine the credit risk of consumers, wanted to implement a usage based license and billing system. They embedded Agilis software into their product and linked it to Agilis's Orion Server. This allowed for tracking while customers were offline and used sophisticated cross-checking algorithms to prevent manipulating usage tracking.

Last, Haigh proposed ways companies can transition to a new licensing model. It includes three steps: complement (such as automating key delivery for legacy systems,) supplement existing licenses to accommodate the new scenarios you want to support, and finally retire the legacy licensing system. ☘

*Jessie Lin has a technical background in web applications for enterprise solutions. She has successfully launched several IT systems and has hands-on experience in market research.*



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- Dec. 3rd, 2008 - David Webster, IDEO
- Jan. 7th, 2009 - Ross Mayfield, Social-text

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This led Brian and his team to conclude that once a product sector matures (ie no competitor has a major feature advantage,) companies must compete on ease of use and total cost of ownership (TCO.) Brian's team zeroed in on the goal of improving customer satisfaction by making HP-UX simpler to buy and easier to install. In particular:

- Ensure the right product was purchased upfront
- Reduce the steps and time required to install the product
- Focus on compatibility
- Thoroughly test patches
- Release updates and upgrades on a predictable schedule

In 2000, HP repackaged its product into four software bundles or "Operating Environments." It further simplified the choice in 2008. For installation, HP now requires only nine steps and one reboot. Its competitors require anywhere from 27 to 90 steps and at least two reboots. Although the addition of a single reboot may not seem like a big win, it can take a considerable

amount of time to reboot a machine with two terabytes of data.

Through its strategy of integrated product suites, HP reduced customers' planned downtime by 60% and operating costs by almost 15%. Further, its customers now update and upgrade their systems sooner than ever before. Surprisingly, the company is still the only major vendor selling pre-integrated software packages.

By looking beyond the technology, HP has chalked up another innovation win for its customers and its business. ☘

*Greg Cohen is a principal consultant at the 280 Group ([www.280group.com](http://www.280group.com)) and on the board of the Silicon Valley Product Management Association. He has over a decade of product management and marketing experience, including Software-as-a-Service, channel sales, open source software, and agile development. Greg can be reached at [greg@280group.com](mailto:greg@280group.com).*

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### **Give Reality a Hug**

Most people think they know more about how they spend their time than they actually do. We really believe our memories are good enough for an accurate account of the hours and minutes we spend on a given task. Here's the truth: no one can really master their time until they know how they spend their time now.

If time seems to always be getting away from you, the Time Mastery Profile from Inscape Publishing can help you understand how you manage your time; these insights can help you see where your time goes and then adjust your time management skills to give you more of what you want and need. This tool does more than just tell you how you manage your time, it helps you develop a plan that you can implement to control the time around you.

If you are interested in this online profile, contact me at [Kristi@klrconsulting.com](mailto:Kristi@klrconsulting.com) for help getting started on improving your productivity and efficiency.

### **How to Organize Your Day and Week More Effectively**

One of the worst parts about being too busy is the feeling of being overwhelmed. Feeling overwhelmed happens to me most frequently when I do not have a

clear written list of the work that needs to get done. This results in "thought attacks," where task after task comes into my mind and builds up a mountain of responsibility that seems impossible to manage.

I have found that simply writing down everything that needs to get done makes the overwhelmed feeling go away—even though the work doesn't. A "master list" will get everything out of your head, whereas a "to-do list" only includes tasks you need to complete.

A master list is updated at the end of each day. Fifteen minutes before you leave work, stop responding to emails, phone calls, and other requests. This is *your* time. With your calendar open and your master list in front of you, let your mind wander. Brainstorm and document whatever pops into your head.

I am sure you are thinking, "Yeah right, and how am I going to find an extra fifteen minutes in my day, let alone private time?" As you improve your efficiency and become more organized it will become easy. You could begin by closing your door or placing a "gone fishing!" sign outside your cubical. Maybe by the end of the month, your example will have everyone on your team using this valuable planning time.

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Set aside time each Friday afternoon to use your master list to plan your schedule for the following week. You can review the current week while your activities are all still fresh in your mind. Assess what you accomplished and what remains to be moved to next week and on what day. This will allow you to enjoy your weekend more and leave work at work! When you plan for the next week—particularly Monday—you don't have to spend the weekend worrying about work.

***“Let our advance worrying become advance thinking and planning.”***

-Winston Churchill

### **Managing Email**

Managing email is one of the most commonly cited frustrations when the discussion turns to how we stay sane in the workplace. Email is the most abused form of communication in the workplace today— and may be the biggest factor in the sorry state of communication in corporate America. It is the reason that a number of companies are experimenting with banning email usage once a week.

Email is one of the biggest interruptions in today's workplace. If your computer automatically notifies you when you receive email, turn that function off—especially during your “veggie” time. Instead, set up times to check email three times a day, or once per hour. This method is one of the fastest ways to improve productivity.

A client of mine was in the habit of checking his email throughout the day—each time he heard a ping. Then he created a new system of checking it three times a day, at 10:15, 2:30 and 5:30. Whereas he previously could not keep up with his messages, with his new approach he discovered he could clear his In Box each time he opened it—the reward for fully focusing his attention on email for 45 minutes at a time. He also reset the expectations of all the people he regularly communicates with by email, advising them that he could be reached for an immediate response to urgent matters by phone.

### **Kristi's top tips for improved email management:**

- Do it now and/or delete it now. Act on and respond to your messages the first time that you read them.
- Don't use your In Box as a “to-do list”; it's the electronic equivalent of having piles on your desk. The average person wastes 30 minutes each day looking for old email messages.
- Use folders & subfolders. The rule is never to have more than one screen of email messages in your In Box.
- Spam can come in different forms. Don't open suspected spam email and delete it immediately. If you open spam email, it will tell the sender they've reached a “live” email address.

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Create rules to automatically move your incoming messages into the correct file. This will save time when sorting your messages. Rules can also block unwanted messages.

### **Not Delegating Is Not a Choice**

One of the most common complaints I hear from managers is, "I try to delegate but when the assignment comes back, it's wrong or it's not good enough. So I end up having to do it myself." When delegated tasks turn out wrong, you must resist the temptation to do it yourself. Doing the work yourself is not good for you or the organization.

Steps for effective delegation:

- Think and plan first
- Clarify the responsibility and results intended
- Select the right person
- Decide on the authority level
- Decide on controls and checkpoints
- Create a motivating environment
- Hold them accountable

With effective delegation, you not only save yourself time, you expand the capability of your team and organization.

### **Taking the First Step**

These are a few of the many ways you can more effectively manage your time. Now you need to do something with this knowledge and take the first step.

Identify the habit you want to change. The more you know about what, when and why you do something, the easier it is to identify habits that are detrimental. When you analyze unwanted behaviors and the situations where they occur, you can pinpoint the precise behaviors you wish to change. You should also examine your assumptions to see if any of them are holding you back from achieving the change you desire.

Begin the new behavior as purposefully as possible. Once you've identified the new habit you want to develop, tell people about it so you're not tempted to fall back into old behaviors. Establish new routines associated with the habit, put up signs to remind you of the new desired behaviors, and do what you can to change your environment so the new habit has a chance to take root and grow.

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Try not to deviate from the behavior until the new habit is firmly established. Although you'll often be tempted to do things the old way, resist these temptations. It's tempting to think, "Just this once won't matter;" but the truth is that every deviation matters a great deal. Every time we deviate, we must start over again. Just think of the number of times people try to lose weight or quit smoking.

Ask other people to help you change. Few of us make significant changes without the support of others. Think carefully about who might be able to help you. How could they best help you? What will you ask them to do? If you build a strong support team around you, new habits are much easier to master.

Time management can help you increase your productivity on the job and at home, help you enhance the quality of your work with less stress, and give you a sense of personal satisfaction and accomplishment.

You never know, you might just find the time to reward yourself and do something you have never had the time for! ☘

*Kristi Royse is a nationally recognized speaker, facilitator, management consultant and trainer with over 20 years of experience. You can learn more at [www.klrconsulting.com](http://www.klrconsulting.com)*

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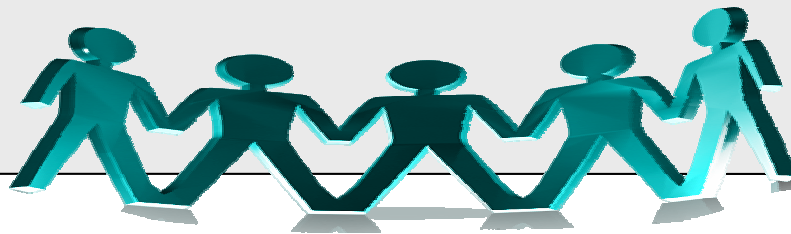
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## BOOK REVIEW

### ***The Product Manager's Desk Reference***

*Review by William Wear*

*The Product Manager's Desk Reference* by Steven Haines, founder and President of Sequent Learning Networks, is a refreshing guide that doesn't insult your intelligence or patronize you with glib, formula-based cheese runs. The author clearly tries to stimulate your thinking with this excellent volume of practical advice and context. Most current and former product managers can easily relate to his reference to "the accidental profession," since in very many companies Product Management isn't a cleanly-defined discipline with clear roles and responsibilities: We know what accountants do, and Marcom has its role, but product manager is usually fuzzy.

This reference creates a comprehensive, reliable context for getting your job done and provides as much detail as possible, including some great templates. The Product Master Plan is genius because it finally shows us how to overcome the spin-cycle of finding and communicating key data over and over again, by reliably capturing and properly categorizing what we collect. The product life cycle I find very useful, because when things are moving fast and loose (as they usually are in a larger firm), it's easy to accidentally bridge phases. I especially like the approaches to strategy, feasibility and discontinuation, because they codify the core of good product management. Too many companies choose their products by intuition, get angry when the engineers can't build it right now, and

then drag dead products way too far past the finish line. It's almost as if they have no plan to evaluate potential or current product performance, and this book sets these out very clearly.

What really sets this book apart for me is the subtitle of one of the sections at the start of Module 3: "Processes Are Linear, Markets Are Not." Product Management isn't Monopoly or Chess, and even Sun Tzu can't cover all these bases. Product Management is probably the ultimate Thinker's Game, and it's nice to see someone who not only admits it, but also gives us the mental input we need to function at a higher level of awareness.

My advice to those considering this book: Get it. Stop trying to use spreadsheets and slide decks to manage the dynamic, unpredictable, accidental profession of Product Management, and start making a difference. This is a tool that can take you a long way toward a more dynamic Product Management skill set. In this economy, especially, creating and fielding successful products requires breaking through a lot of traditional & conventional boundaries that confront the Product Manager. This book is the "velvet monkey-wrench" that will help you slowly dismantle tired traditions and start to gain market share based on solid value, directed at markets that are actually seeking what you sell -- but only if you buy it, read it and use it. ☘

**Have a happy and healthy  
holiday season!**

