

How Many Hats?

In the consulting firm I founded and led, we had the privilege of working with leaders at dozens of large, highly respected companies, including Avery Dennison, Burger King, Ericsson, Nextel, OGE Energy Corp., PepsiCo, TXU and Trammell Crow Company.

Today, I work mostly with CEOs and leadership teams of small and mid-size companies helping these leaders improve organizational and individual effectiveness.

Whether you work for a large organization or a small business, there's a good chance you're now being asked to wear more than one hat.

Staff reductions and shifting operational needs caused by market turmoil have prompted organizations to ask more of their employees – starting at the top. Few are exempt from feeling the effects of the worst recession in 80 years.

If this is happening to you, there are two ways to view this turn of events.

Your choice

One way, of course, is to view this doubling up of duties as a burden. From this vantage point, the organization is attempting to boost productivity and profits while holding costs in check at your expense. More work. Same pay. No fair.

The other way to view the extra work is as an opportunity. You now have the chance to make an impact in more than one area of the organization. You can enhance or develop skills that increase your value to your organization as it emerges from the downturn. And it's an opportunity to work smarter. Because even when performing routine tasks, you have the opportunity to set a new standard for how that task is performed.

Like most decisions in life, it's all in how you look at it. The choice is yours.

In the April 2010 bulletin ("Where Have All the Leaders Gone"), I posed a series of questions that already are proving helpful to the leaders I work with regularly. Here are two of those questions: *Do your player-coaches know how much of their time should be allocated to leading...to guiding, questioning, coaching? Alternately, does each player-coach on the management team know how much of their time should be allocated to doing?*

Lack of clarity around these and other issues makes it difficult to achieve effectiveness.

A New Way to Think About Your Time

The changes occurring inside and outside your organization have placed a new premium on time.

Whether you're the CEO of a small- or mid-sized business or you're leading a department or team inside a

multinational company, time is one of your most valuable assets. Time is the only asset that cannot be replaced once it's gone.

In my second book (*Lead The Way*, 2008), I provide dozens of exercises for effective planning and execution. There are a handful of exercises and practices related specifically to time management.

Here's one exercise from the book that I've modified to help you – no matter your position in the organization – view your time from a different perspective and transform *Doing* into *Leading*:

Doing	Leading
Solving colleagues' problems	Coaching colleagues
Solving customer problems	Preventing customer problems
Correcting colleagues' mistakes	Improving and monitoring processes
Checking others' commitments	Advancing the strategic plan
Chasing paperwork	Driving value
Feeling "I'm in a rut"	Feeling "This is challenging, meaningful work"
Believing "Somebody owes me"	Believing "I control my destiny – it's what I make of it"

1. Take a blank piece of paper and draw a line down the middle of the page. Write *Doing* at the top of the left column and *Leading* at the top of the right column.
2. Think about where you currently spend your time in your business, and, using the phrases in each column above as guidelines, list those activities in either the *Doing* or the *Leading* column. Be specific.
3. Estimate the percentage of time you spend on *Doing* activities. Now estimate the time you spend on *Leading* activities. Is this how your time should be spent?
4. For the next 30 days, track your time in 30-minute increments to see how your investment of time compares to your original estimate.
5. As you study how you've invested your time, understand there are three ways you can increase your effectiveness: a) eliminate the *Doing* activities entirely, b) approach the *Doing* activity from a *Leading* perspective, or c) delegate the task to a person better suited to doing it. Be specific.
6. List the actions you are going to take with a deadline for completing it.

These days, more is being asked of everyone. So if you're wearing more than one hat inside your organization, just remember...so many hats, only one head. ■