

# Are You Working Too Hard?

## *Here's an Efficiency Audit for Office Staff*

**(Hint: Struggle does not equal accomplishment)**

**W**ith increasing demands from customers and constituents, coupled with dwindling resources, RWD and city office employees often find themselves drowning in tasks, never quite caught up, with work piling up despite their best efforts.

Here's the good news. With a little attention on efficiency, you may be able to shift from being behind the power curve to leading the way. The adage is true: Time is Money! So, take this informal quiz to find out your efficiency score, and get some hints on what to do about it!

**1. Most of the questions from our customers and constituents during an average day are:**

- a. the same ones over and over again; I feel like a tape recorder all day long!
- b. easy questions that you would think most people already knew the answers to.
- c. a mix of normal repetitive inquiries and unusual questions.
- d. mostly obscure exceptions that fit into any category but "frequently asked."

**2. Most of my time during the day is spent:**

- a. answering the phone or providing in person service, dealing only with requests, not longer term tasks.
- b. working on routine tasks constantly interrupted by calls or customers.
- c. segmented into periods of providing customer service, accomplishing routine tasks, and working towards long term goals when there is time.
- d. productively accomplishing tasks that my job description dictates, with time for planning as well.

**3. When customers or board members or other employees need specific information:**

- a. good luck.
- b. we can usually provide that in a week or two, depending on how

**According to TNS Research, March 2010, for InterCall:**

- ✓ 48 percent of American workers are required to do more work with fewer resources
- ✓ 39 percent are doing the work of two people because of the economic downturn
- ✓ 47 percent have difficulty taking time off from work due to work requirements

busy we are with other things.

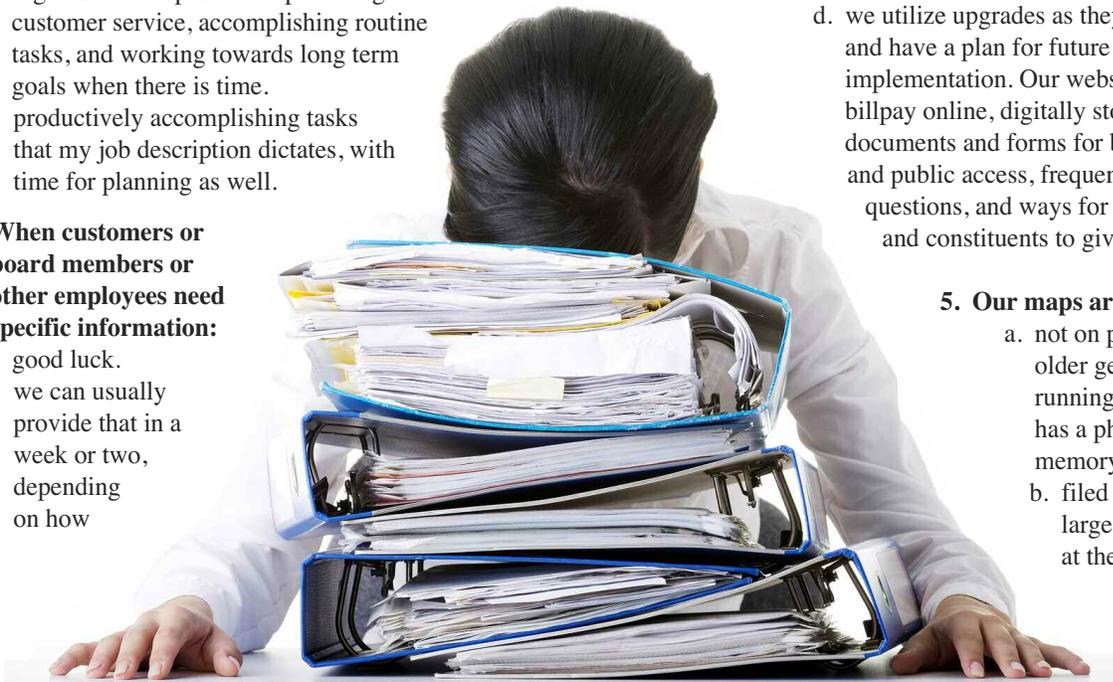
- c. we can generally provide that information while they wait, or within a day or two.
- d. for the most part they can look up that information online themselves instantly.

**4. When it comes to information technology:**

- a. we are light years behind; I have an email address, that's about it.
- b. we can usually implement some technology one item at a time as the money and time is available. We do have a website, but it's not ever updated and I'm not sure people use it.
- c. we don't have the latest but we have enough to help us do our jobs better. We utilize shared documents either by email or in the cloud or online. We have a website that helps disseminate information as well.
- d. we utilize upgrades as they are available and have a plan for future implementation. Our website features billpay online, digitally stored documents and forms for both internal and public access, frequently asked questions, and ways for our customers and constituents to give us feedback.

**5. Our maps are:**

- a. not on paper. The older gentleman running the system has a photographic memory.
- b. filed on paper in large sizes available at the office.



- c. printed and stored electronically, available both at the office and digitally for other staff in the field.
- d. available for large high res printing as well as digitally stored with GPS coordinates, accessible from the office or in the field.

**6. I take a break every:**

- a. Break? What do you mean break? There's no time! Unless you mean just to run to the restroom.
- b. day, usually just for lunch.
- c. couple of hours, just to get away and reset whenever things slow down a little.
- d. hour to hour and half, purposely yet loosely scheduled in my day.

**7. If I have a big project to tackle, I usually:**

- a. have no time for it because of all the routine tasks I must attend to first.
- b. put it to the side and get little stuff taken care of first.
- c. try to work on it a little at a time as free time comes up.
- d. set aside an hour and half without distractions to deal with it first.

**8. My workspace can best be described as:**

- a. chaos – stacks of paper that won't fit in the cabinet anymore, boxes everywhere, and you have to dig to find the phone when it rings.
- b. cluttered but organized where at least I know how to find something. I could use more storage space. I'll make it look neater as soon as I have time.
- c. a mix: public areas look neat and organized, while some back offices could use some attention. For the most part, everyone in the office can retrieve the information they need.
- d. mostly free of items except those associated with current tasks, easily retrievable archived paperwork, plus a personal touch with photos of my family.

**9. The complaints that our customers have and/or mistakes employees generally make are:**

- a. the same stuff over and over, with some very important issues.
- b. repetitive and affect our system over the long run.
- c. seemingly small at first, but generally caused by lack of communication.
- d. cannot be generalized; we seem to be making new mistakes and dealing with them immediately.

**10. Our procedures and work flow are:**

- a. non-existent; we have so much, we just deal with it as it comes. Whoever can handle the task just takes it on when they can.
- b. in place, but not used, mostly due to the work load. Sometimes it's not apparent who needs to do what and when.

- c. sometimes used and somewhat helpful, but inconsistently applied.
- d. a standard for everyone in the office; they are also reviewed periodically to make sure they are still valid. Tasks are delegated to those with the right skill and experience.

**If you scored between 110 – 150:**

Congratulations! You are doing an exceptional job of making the most of your time and resources. You understand the value of teamwork and dividing up tasks and have a handle on how technology and planning can keep the ball rolling!

**If you scored between 90 – 109:**

Nice job! You are on your way to making some real progress with efficiency. You might want to set some time aside to outline your strengths and weakness and make a plan for some procedural tweaks or new goals. For example, if you already have strong workflow and delegation of responsibilities, but the tasks seem repetitive, you might focus on using a website and getting in the cloud to get information out to the public so your time can be freed up for less monotonous duties. Keep going!

**If you scored between 60 – 89:**

While you may be getting the job done, it could be at the sacrifice of your own sanity! Everyone needs a break, and the best way to be able to take one is by feeling on top of workload. Make priorities outlining what is both urgent and important. Especially if you dread a certain project or have one that is larger, schedule time for it and do it first! Procrastination only adds to distraction and that makes you less efficient overall. Minimize interruptions by assigning someone dedicated to handling phone calls, while you block out time with your door closed to make headway towards other important tasks. Maybe it's time for an office makeover? Organize your space to allow you to perform your job fluidly in a clean environment that is both pleasant and functional. Make the most of how KRWA can increase your efficiency with GIS mapping, templates for reports, CCRs online, Web Services, and more!

**If you scored between 0 – 59:  
Perhaps you'd better call me.**

**How'd you do?**

Give yourself:

- ★ 5 points for each time you answered "a"
- ★ 8 points for each "b"
- ★ 10 points for each "c"
- ★ 15 points for each "d"

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