



Push, Pull, Prod – Time to Stop!

By Betsi Bixby

Talk to any business owner right now for at least 5 minutes and my educated guess is you'll hear a time frustration indicator, something about them feeling pushed, pulled, or prodded. Typical phrases include:

- I wish I could be in two places
- I meant to do that
- I didn't have time for that
- I get to the end of the day and still have my list barely half done
- I feel like I have to...
- If I could just clone myself I'd get it all done

This talk has become commonplace. People globally, in all types of positions from laborers to CEOs, are feeling pushed, pulled, prodded and, may I dare say, just a little bit out of control? This leads to undue stress, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and short tempers. As a leader of your company, is this the state you want to be in for major or even daily critical decisions?

With time complaints so prevalent in today's society, just how does a person go about reclaiming their life? I've become fascinated with the fastest ways to get one's life back. It is something I became passionate about in my executive and team coaching.

Hearing a CEO tell me they just took their first totally relaxing, worry-free extended vacation makes everything myself and my team do here at Meridian worthwhile. And through my years of consulting with some of the best and brightest, I've noticed that those leaders who mastered their time were the ones achieving record profits and making significant impacts through charitable giving in their communities.

From these experiences, I've become quite sure that to lead a life of significance requires mastering your time choices. While we all are given the same 86,400 seconds every day, how we use them is completely our personal choice. That's a hard pill to swallow as it's much easier to blame lack of time for anything not getting done. Through my work with family businesses, I've recently created a time formula I'd like you to try if you still have time challenges:

T = Track. You need total awareness of exactly where your 86,400 seconds is going right now. To do that you need to track. And on those days where you feel you didn't get enough accomplished, you get very detailed with your tracking.

I = Intention. This is where you make deliberate decisions about how much of your time you want to spend in each aspect of your life. Family, work, spiritual pursuits, health, recreation, etc. I have a client whose joy is to be in the office about 60 hours per week. He adores work. But most owners I meet are working 40-60 and want to work 30! Or they want to take that vacation with their spouse or their grandkids. Once you are perfectly clear you can begin to conquer the gap between Actual and Intention.

M= Map. Once you set your intention, next is mapping it out so you know what your week, month and day should look like. You block your calendar (I suggest Outlook as the perfect tool) for the non-urgent but important pieces of your life – time with spouse, kids, hobbies, vacations, etc. If you really want a 30 hour work week, then plan your calendar that way.

E = Execute. With your time mapped, now you must execute your plan. Don't allow distractions to get you off your mapped intentions. You'll likely find you will need to Delegate and Discard. What are those things you are hanging onto out of habit because you think you do it best, or worse yet, think you are the only one who can do it? I'm reminded of one CEO who recently told me that all business leadership is just relinquishing control. Loved that!

Music to my ears is when a CEO tells me, "I don't do that anymore." That means they've empowered one of their team members. And I adore when they delegate something they really didn't like to someone who likes it and therefore excels!

To get you thinking, here are typical time-consuming tasks CEOs are delegating successfully after setting up systems and good mentoring:

- Pricing
- Hiring (other than direct reports)
- Supply and purchasing
- Banking negotiations
- Sales and marketing

If you want your company to blow out all its goals this year, set a great leadership example by mastering your own time! Track, Set Intentions, Map using Outlook or another favorite tool, then Execute. It's your 86,400 seconds. Go reclaim them!

Meridian Associates has been partnering with family-owned businesses for over 30 years to remove barriers, accelerate business growth, build their legacy, and reduce stress levels. With three, high-impact business events each year, The CEO Exchange, Women in Family Business, and The Family Business Intensive, we continually provide best practices & proven strategies that keep multigenerational businesses thriving. Discover how Meridian can help your business thrive through our combination of high impact business coaching, advisory, M&A, and precision company valuations by visiting www.askmeridian.com or calling us at 817-594-0546.