

CATEGORY MANAGEMENT LEARNING FORUM (LINKED IN.COM)

TOPIC: ADDING BUSINESS VALUE IN CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

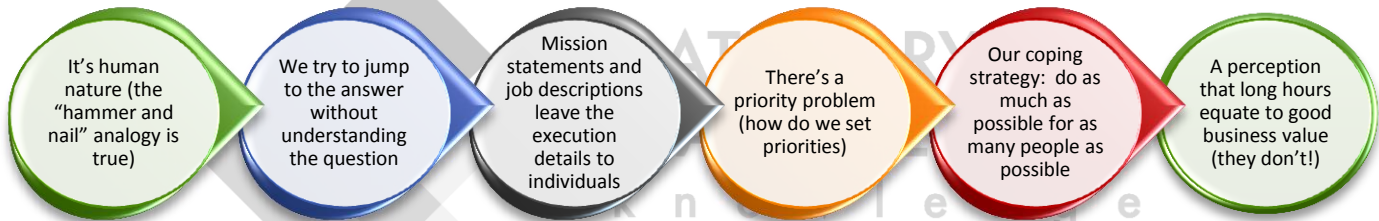
By Sue Nicholls, President,
Category Management
Knowledge Group
www.cmkg.org
sue@cmkg.org



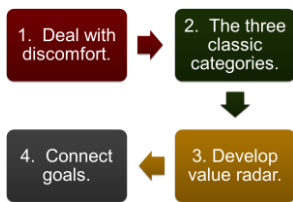
Today's tip focuses on **YOU**, and how you work, which can be an uncomfortable topic for many of us. In today's world, we struggle to achieve a balance between work and life, where we feel if we put in long hours burning the midnight oil, we will add more value, and where we sometimes barely complete projects before we can finish the succinct and sharp answers we were hoping for. By better understanding the work that you do, and by making changes to your approach, you can achieve a better balance, and create better output!



Let's start by thinking about why we tend to complete low value work as category management professionals (I'm not saying that you specifically do, but most people tend to). I can think of a few reasons, which I already shared in our learning forum (please let me know if you have others!):



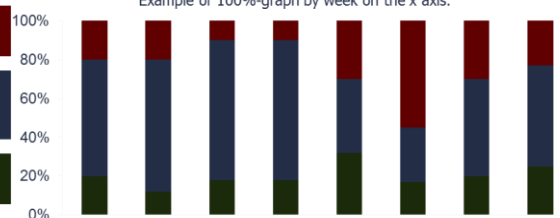
We get so busy at our desk, that we give little time to think about why, or how to improve the situation. This results in limited business value, and a more reactive approach to the business. There are four steps that can help you to add more business value in your category management role:



Once you deal with the discomfort at the thought of assessing yourself and the work you do, "just do it!". You should complete an assessment requires, including an activity/outcome diary for three or four weeks, and then categorizing the outcomes of your activities into some basic categories (office time, counseling and projects). Don't track things like "wrote an e-mail" or "attended a meeting", which are activities, but the outcomes from the e-mail or meeting (like "e-mail to Bill about the new product launch" or "team meeting"). This detail will become very important when you complete step 3, which is "developing value radar".

Developing value radar allows you to understand not only where your time goes (as in the diagram on the right). It also requires a subjective assessment to really understand the value to the business that your activities contributed to. You need to ask peers, bosses and team members how they used the work that you provided them with. Ouch! It can hurt to find out that a huge project that you burned the midnight oil to complete is still sitting in someone's in-bin, or even worse, that they didn't really need it after all! But it's important to know what is not used, so that you can better plan your future time and priorities..

Office Time e.g. PTO, idea sharing, process mgmt.
Counseling e.g. conversations, quick answers, attending meetings
Projects e.g. Delivered project work.



Completing this assessment takes only 5 or 10 minutes per day, and can provide you with a whole new perspective on where you spend your time and how you complete your work. From here, you can connect to your personal and business goals, and develop targets and action plans to improve your future work. Take the time today to invest in a better tomorrow!

CMKG has partnered with Ford Consulting (www.fordconsulting.com) to create a great solution for those of you who may be looking for "help" to make the necessary changes in your category management role: (click on the links for more details):

- CMKG's **FREE** eLearning course provides more details on the approach, and will give you more details examples and explanations ("[Four Steps to Add Business Value](#)" – purchase for \$0.00 in our store!);
- CMKG's "[Increasing Your Effectiveness in an Analytical World](#)" eLearning course (\$99 per person) includes sample activity diaries, an 8-step process for projects, a sample critical path, and examples on how to create action for future success; and
- Ford Consulting's Outlook Add-in software called "[KnowTime Tracking](#)" (a free 30-day trial) which can help you to more easily track your time