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# How time management is like eating elephants and frogs

By Jennifer Raftis, CPO

Time management is a subject you probably feel strongly about, either you loathe it or you love it. I have studied time management methods for decades and will share a few basic time management strategies that can help you make substantial, positive changes in how you manage your time. Whether I am working with a company or an individual, the methods are very much the same.

What do elephants and frogs have to do with time management?

Teachers often – in an attempt to make learning fun – use metaphors to help teach certain topics or ideas. I remember attending my first organizing conference, almost a decade ago, and the keynote speaker was talking about gardening. The speech was about growing your business as an entrepreneur. Of course it starts as a seed, water the seed and it grows, so on and so forth. At the time I thought it was rather corny but the visual stuck with me throughout all these years!

With time management, elephants are enormous or daunting projects that you are not sure how to tackle and frogs are the difficult tasks within the project. Sounds so much more interesting than “time management,” right?



## Elephants - Enormous Projects

Have you ever heard the question: How do you eat an elephant? The answer is ... one bite at a time. An elephant is the metaphor for a large, overwhelming project. The idea is that the project is much easier to manage and complete if you break it down into small steps (bites) and don't try to tackle it all at once.

One of the ways to “eat the elephant” is to set a project completion deadline and then list all of the steps that are necessary to complete the project. Next, assign deadlines for each step. One of the benefits of this method is that you are checking off each small step and seeing progress as you move forward. Each step should include an estimate for how long it will take. Note: Estimating time accurately is a learnable skill, but not an easy one. Most of the time we overestimate what we can accomplish in one day or even one hour.

... continued on Page D12