

ASPECTS (Redux) 2018

According to Wikipedia, *redux* (literary term) is a post-positive adjective meaning “brought back, restored” (from Latin *reducere*, “to bring back”) used in literature, film and video game titles.

What does this have to do with *ASPECTS*, the newsletter of the ASP?

The last edition of *ASPECTS* was published in January 2015, more than three years ago. We view this re-launch of *ASPECTS* as the beginning of a renewed effort to communicate with our membership and to make our actions as ASP officers more transparent and visible.

ASPECTS Extra

This extra edition of *ASPECTS* is an excerpt of the *ASPECTS* which was distributed to all ASP members in April 2018. The members-only edition included an additional article from Howard Sobel, Chairman of the ASP, calling for volunteers to drive and support association activities and initiatives.

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The Key to Productivity

BY JAMES GREENE, ASP DIRECTOR

Thousands of self-help books have been published on the topic of time management and productivity. Regardless if you are a business owner, manager or a file clerk, every one of us is expected to squeeze every bit of efficiency out of our business day.



The quintessence of time management is simple – plan and prioritize your tasks, then execute the plan, ideally during a period of time where you won’t be interrupted. In theory, that sounds pretty easy.

One of the biggest efficiency killers is interruptions. A typical office environment is full of sources of interruptions – the smart phone on your desk (phone calls, text messaging, instant messaging, social media, etc.), office communications software (e-mail, instant messaging, meeting reminders, etc.), as well as the more traditional causes (co-worker questions, hallway discussions, coffee breaks, and many more). And working in an open-space office environment offers little protection from interruptions – we have talkative (disruptive) co-workers and a higher overall noise level to deal with. Even people walking silently by your desk can disrupt your train of thought, causing you to lose focus.

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ASPECTS

The Official Newsletter of the Association of Software Professionals

ASPECTS is published for advising and informing member of the Association of Software Professionals about group activities and sharing of information. All material is compiled without verification of accuracy or applicability to a specific task or information system. Comments are the view of their author and no other person or organization.

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*James Greene, Editor
aspects@asp-software.org*

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ASPECTS

The Official Newsletter of the Association of Software Professionals

Upcoming ASPECTS Publication Dates and Submission Deadlines

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ASPECTS Volume 29, No. 2

Publication: **July 16, 2018**

Submission Deadline: **June 30, 2018**

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ASPECTS Volume 29, No. 3

Publication: **October 15, 2018**

Submission Deadline: **Sept. 30, 2018**

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ASPECTS Volume 30, No. 1

Publication: **January 14, 2019**

Submission Deadline: **Dec. 31, 2018**

PAD Specification 4.1 Working Group

The update of the ASP's Portable Application Description (PAD®) specification is under way, and you can be part of this important initiative.

PAD version 4.0, announced in December 2012, includes support for publishers to add social network links (Google+, Facebook, Twitter, etc..) and links for video content (YouTube, etc..) while also incorporating authentication, certification, and other security features to protect publishers and their applications from PAD SPAM, fraud, hijacking and malware. All PAD v4.0 files use a real-time PAD Validator and are reviewed for official publication by technical professionals before placed on the Official PAD Repository.

A PAD Committee is now being formed to specify the next release of the PAD specification (PAD version 4.1). Like all previous specification updates, the ASP is inviting members to join the working group and contribute to the next generation of the PAD specification.

A group has been created on the LinkedIn® professional networking platform by Joel Diamond, ASP Vice President and PAD committee chair.

If you would like to help shape the future of the PAD specification, connect with Joel Diamond on LinkedIn and request membership to the PAD Spec Group.

Joel Diamond on LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joeldiamond/>

PAD 4.0 Specification:

<http://pad.asp-software.org/>



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If you want to become more efficient, you should make every effort to block some time each day when you can work without interruptions: Put your smart phone in “Flight mode,” turn off all e-mail and instant messaging notifications, and close your office door (if possible). If you don’t have an office, try to block some time (e.g. one hour) in a meeting room, where you can focus on your most important tasks.

Plan some time each day, either in the morning before you get absorbed by “daily business” or late in the afternoon before you leave, to prioritize your tasks and demands on your time.

Make a List

Begin by creating a “To Do” list – writing down of all of those things which need to be done.

Just by writing everything down, you’ll begin to feel a bit less overwhelmed – when you put it down on paper (or type it into your electronic to-do list), you no longer need to keep everything in your head. This simple act alone can take some of the burden off of your shoulders.

At the same time, facing a huge list of tasks can be intimidating and overwhelming.

I once attended a presentation from an extreme sportsman. During his presentation, he was asked how he prepares to run a marathon. His answer was very simple:

“All I have to do is run one kilometer – a simple task, which is done easily. If I can run one kilometer easily, then I can do it again. A marathon is simply running one kilometer, 42 times in a row.”

Dealing with an overwhelming list of To Dos is exactly the same: Instead of trying to swallow a whole meal at once, take one bite at a time.

The Eisenhower Box

When looking at your list of tasks, the first question that you will likely ask is, “where should I begin?”

There will be items on your list which will need to be done soon. And there will be items on your list which are important. And when you be-

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<p>DO</p> <p><i>Do it now.</i></p> <p><i>Finish the offer for a customer project.</i></p>	<p>DECIDE</p> <p><i>Schedule time to do it.</i></p> <p><i>Training / Fitness.</i></p> <p><i>Research for a new white paper.</i></p>
NOT IMPORTANT	<p>DELEGATE</p> <p><i>Who can do it for you?</i></p> <p><i>Make travel arrangements.</i></p> <p><i>Schedule an interview with a new job candidate.</i></p>	<p>DISCARD</p> <p><i>Eliminate it.</i></p> <p><i>Checking social media and internet forums.</i></p>

Figure 1 - The Eisenhower Box

gin to look carefully at the items on your list, you will likely find that just a few items fall into both categories.

The idea of differentiating between urgent items and important items has been attributed to Dwight D. Eisenhower, the 34th President of the United States of America. He is quoted as saying,

“I have two kinds of problems, the urgent and the important. The urgent are not important, and the important are never urgent.”

This led to the creation of the Eisenhower Box or Eisenhower Matrix shown on the following page.

Take a critical look at your To Do list: How many items fall into the **not important** category?

Obviously, those tasks which are both important and urgent (in the **DO** box) should be given your immediate attention.

The **DECIDE** category is where you can really make great improvements in your time management: Scheduling time to address the important tasks *before they become urgent*. When you schedule time to deal with tasks which are important, like preparing for an important meeting, writing your business plan, or going to the gym

regularly, you can relax knowing that you have time to dedicate and complete these tasks before they become urgent.

Tasks in the **DECIDE** category should always be listed with a completion date. Note them in your agenda: Block time so that you can complete these tasks before they become urgent.

The **DELEGATE** category includes those tasks which need to be done soon, but don't require you to do them yourself. If you are responsible for leading the development of a new product, you should be dedicating your time and effort to that goal. Administrative tasks like making travel arrangements, scheduling job interviews, preparing project status reports, etc. can (and should) be delegated to someone else.

The **DISCARD** category is often the most difficult to embrace but provides the most immediate benefit to your time management. The quickest way to complete a task is to simply remove it from your list. Tasks which are not urgent and not important should be eliminated – they are “time wasters.”

The goal of the Eisenhower Box is to help you focus your efforts on tasks which have the most value, while freeing yourself of tasks which are of less importance.

When you begin to use these techniques, you will probably find that you have many urgent tasks, some important and quite a few which are neither. Once you have adopted these techniques as part of your daily routine, you will soon notice a shift in your To Do list – the number of **DO** tasks (requiring your immediate attention) will drop. You will have more time to work on important tasks early (in the **DECIDE** stage), because you are able to plan your time and become more proactive instead of reactive.

James Greene is a Senior Manager at Significon AG in Mainz, Germany (Significon.de). James holds professional certifications in Project Management, Quality Management and Computerized Systems Validation. James has been a member of the ASP since 2006 and an ASP Director since 2016. He can be contacted at aspects@asp-software.com.



Softonic.com Launches New 'Developer Hub'

Developers can now upload their titles to the world's largest software catalog.

Softonic.com, the world's largest software and app discovery destination, announced the launch of the Softonic Developer Hub, a service that allows developers large and small the opportunity to add their software titles to Softonic's huge catalog.

The Developer Hub is a free, easy-to-use service that lets developers add their titles to the Softonic catalog in no time, and also allows developers who already have a listing on Softonic.com to claim their titles and manage version updates each time they update their software.

The Softonic.com catalog is currently home to hundreds of thousands of titles, contributed by some 60,000 developers worldwide. To facilitate easy use of the tool for developers, the Softonic Developer Hub supports the ASP's PAD® file standard, allowing for a smooth and simple way to upload and manage software.

The Softonic Developer Hub is available at <https://sdh.softonic.com>.

More information about the ASP PAD Specification can be found on the ASP website under <http://pad.asp-software.org>.



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Business Action vs Business Impact Action

BY JESSICA DEWELL, ASP DIRECTOR

Finding the balance of working on things and working towards things is tough. It takes effort and discipline. Spot checks can be fun (and sometimes a nice distraction from all the daily distractions to get back on track).



There is some element of making the tasks support the abilities we have — not what our business needs.

We must ask ourselves: Is the task for you to further your efforts?

Tasks you create to work on your business include writing blog posts, contributing on LinkedIn and other Social Media sites further your relationships and are needed for a strong Internet presence.

When your goal is to build content and reach your target audience, you are furthering your efforts. If, though, you have established a routine and are working on maintaining steady growth and reach of your content and relationships, the task becomes maintenance: a process you execute continuously.

If most of your tasks, like this example, are maintaining instead of furthering — can you get the task off of your to-do list and still get it done? Maintenance is needed for business longevity. That doesn't mean you have to be the one doing it.

Let this quick check-in with your to-do list help you be aware of where you are right now. This knowledge will help shape your planning to create tasks and projects that provide forward progress on your goals.

And there are things our business needs that we really want to do, will help us build our business, and that we really like to do. Yet...we put it off as a reward (and then, we never get to it because the tasks we don't like and don't impact

our business are done instead.

We must ask ourselves: Is the action-item interesting to you?

Sometimes I have a list of to-dos that seems two miles long. For me, the longer the list, the less I like the things on the list (meaning I save up all the least exciting things and try to do them all at once). On these days, the equivalent thought is “no pain, no gain” when exercising comes to mind. I put my head down, power through and don't have a good time executing the tasks, nor do I feel accomplished no matter how much I actually get done.

If your tasks aren't fun – why do them? Out of obligation? Out of necessity? Or just because you've always done them?

With a list like this, or a different variation on the same theme, stop right now and go eat a treat. Then while you're up, step outside and take a few deep breaths of fresh air. When you're ready come back to your desk (hey, and maybe you won't come back to your desk after being up and about from tasks you abhor).

These items are most likely (and in my case, always) can be put off. Do that. Put the tasks off.

Your job is to get each and every one of this type of task off of your plate forever. Tasks like this are the ones we hide behind: “I don't have time, I have to...” or “Before I can start, I must...” It's a form of procrastination.

What is one thing we can pay someone else to do for us that impacts our business?

This is THE first question I ask when thinking about growth plans and scaling businesses. We can't do it alone, and even when we already have people working for us to get to the next level more must be offloaded.

Jess Dewell, CEO of Red Direction, implements frameworks for business resilience (RedDirection.com). She is a nationally-recognized business development tactician and popular host of The Voice of BOLD Business Radio. She can be contacted at jess@reddirection.com.



Write it Right! Eight Ways to Generate More Leads

BY IVAN LEVISON

What do software marketers covet and crave?



Leads! *High-quality* leads that can be poured into the sales funnel and transformed into profitable sales.

If you want your web pages and emails to generate a lot more leads, I've got eight time-tested ideas for you. And here they are...

1. Include your offer in the headline.

Prospects are moving quickly and won't stick around waiting for you to get to the point. If you want them to take advantage of an offer, say so right from the get-go:

"Announcing a FREE software trial offer for accountants who manage fixed assets!"

2. Expand on the offer in the subheadline.

There's no law that says you have to write a headline and then jump directly to the body copy. A nice little subheadline can flesh things out:

"Announcing a FREE software trial offer for accountants who manage fixed assets! (Here's your chance to try our award-winning software without paying a penny!)"

3. Explain the offer quickly.

It is a big mistake to wait until the end of the email/web page/letter before explaining your offer. Again, it's a fact of life that readers want you to get to the point quickly, so let them know what you've got to offer immediately:

"Dear Bob:
I'm writing with a free offer that can help you solve some of the toughest ISP management problems you face every day ... If you contact Anonotech immediately, I'll send you a copy of our fact-filled "Complete Guide to Effective ISP Management" absolutely free.
This must-read 12-page document shares the vitally important lessons we've learned..." etc.

4. Include the word "Free."

You know this rule of course. So tell me why this magic word isn't used more widely in software marketing materials. Hey, it works!

5. Stress the fact that your offer has no strings attached.

Very important. Your prospects want to know that if they respond, they won't be hounded in the future. So be sure to let them know:

"Please remember that there is nothing to buy and no risk or obligation of any kind."

6. Include an image of your offer.

If you've got a white paper, a report, an information kit, a free anything, show it. An image of your fulfillment piece makes the offer real. The picture can appear on a web page, envelope, letter, reply form, etc. The image tells the prospect what they're going to get and why it's worth requesting the offer!

7. Give your fulfillment piece a compelling name.

Whatever you do, don't make a bland offer. Give your offer a name and sell it!

WRONG: Get our free report now.

RIGHT: Get our free report, "Five Ways to Protect Your Data Center!"

WRONG: Request your free Information Kit.

RIGHT: Don't miss our free Information Kit, "How To Choose An ERP Solution - A Practical Guide For IT Managers."

8. Make it a "limited-time" offer.

One of the ways to get prospects to act is to create a sense of urgency. So give them a deadline. (You can always contact them later and say that due to incredible demand, you're extending the deadline.)

Ivan Levison is a freelance copywriter who builds profits for software companies. He's spent over thirty years writing mail and web content for industry leaders like Microsoft and Adobe. To download his report "101 Ways To Double Your Response Rates" visit <http://www.levison.com> or contact Ivan at 415-461-0672.

