

Dear Friends,

In our line of work, it is typical to have more on our “to do” lists than we can actually accomplish. If an organization loses staff, the remaining staff are often expected to take on additional work to make sure that projects continue to move forward. This is the situation we find ourselves in, currently, at Firelight.

One of Firelight’s goals is to help our partners strengthen their organizational management. Today we are sharing some resources about the long-term consequences of understaffing an organization. We are also sharing some tools and tips for prioritizing your work when you have too much of it.

And, finally, we have an announcement about the Newsflash. The Newsflash has been a weekly publication for the last eight years. It has been a labor of love, shared by the members of Firelight’s Programs Team. We will continue to send the Newsflash to our partners, but for this period where we are short staffed, we will reduce the frequency to once per month.

Enjoy this edition of the Newsflash! And look for the next installment next month!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

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- (Resource) Understaffing Issues in the Workplace - The Houston Chronicle
- (Resource) Tackling Multiple Priorities at Work - Idealist Careers (Excerpt)
- (Resource) More Tips on Prioritizing Work - Business Productivity
- (Resource) 5 Tips for Effective Delegation - Ian’s Messy Desk
- (Open for Applications) Research for Social Impact (ERI)

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(Resource) Understaffing Issues in the Workplace - The Houston Chronicle  
by Mary Nestor-Harper, Demand Media

While this article was written from the perspective of American businesses, many of the consequences they highlight can also be found in non-profit organizations.

Forecasting staffing needs is an element of strategic planning. Staffing levels affect many aspects of a small business. Too many employees drive up overhead and directly

affect business profitability. Too few employees limit the ability to serve current customers and grow the business. Understaffing may make sense to the management team but have negative impact in the long run.

### Payroll Costs

Cutting staff immediately reduces payroll and benefit costs. However, if staffing levels are too low, hiring temporary staff at a premium rate can drive up payroll. Fewer employees who now have to work overtime can be more expensive than hiring additional full-time staff. The time regular employees spend training temporary staff and correcting errors reduces productivity. Replacing temporary workers repeats the expensive hire-and-train process.

### Quality

Both product and service quality suffer when fewer employees are available to serve customers and run production lines. Fewer employees must work faster to handle a higher volume of work, and errors increase when quotas are stressed over quality. Employees may be rushed through training or begin working without training to ease the workload. Poor quality over time diminishes a company's reputation and drives away customers.

### Employee Stress

Reducing staff makes existing employees responsible for more work, and increased workload adds stress to complete work and meet performance expectations. Increased stress lowers morale and employee job satisfaction, takes a toll on an employee's mental and physical health and can increase time needed off work. Turnover rates also increase when overwhelmed workers quit their jobs rather than keep up with increased workloads at the same pay rate.

### Lost Business

An understaffed business misses growth opportunities because it lacks the capacity to meet customer needs. If a business takes on new clients or products and can't deliver the goods or services, it can lose the business and damage its reputation in the industry. Lost business means lost revenue and growth into new markets. A business should weigh the cost of an employee against the amount of revenue generated by that employee's contribution to the organization. Adding another employee may seem like adding a lot of overhead, but the expense could be outweighed by the value of increased business capability.

You can find this article on the Houston Chronicle's "Small Business" section of their website:<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/understaffing-issues-workplace-46884.html>

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(Resource) Tackling Multiple Priorities at Work - Idealist Careers (Excerpt)

## Wearing too many hats? Here's how to tackle multiple priorities at work by Kimberly Maul

Despite our titles, very rarely do we have just one role. You aren't just a program manager; you're a teacher/hiring manager/fundraiser. You aren't just a founder; you're a marketer/accountant/data analyst. Reasons for this may vary: perhaps due to budget cuts, you have to shoulder additional projects or if you work for a small or new organization, wearing multiple hats just comes with the territory.

Regardless of the reason, if you find yourself taking on more and more responsibilities at work and are starting to feel overwhelmed, here are a few tips to get a handle on your workload.

### Clarify your priorities

As you start to see projects pile up on your desk, or even if there was an official meeting where you were tasked with taking on the responsibilities of an open position, take some time to talk one-on-one with your manager. Figure out what tasks are really priorities and what will just have to wait until you have more time.

This can be a hard conversation to have with your manager or even with yourself. To start, here are a few questions to consider inspired by Business Productivity:

1. What projects will have negative consequences if we put them off?
2. What projects will give us the biggest return if we tackle them now?
3. What are the long-term projects that can be done slowly over time and what are the short-term projects that require immediate attention?

We have included just an excerpt of the full article that is available here: <http://idealistcareers.org/how-to-tackle-multiple-priorities/>

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(Resource) More Tips on Prioritizing Work - Business Productivity

Business Productivity's website has advice on prioritizing work by "doing the right things in the right order":

<http://www.businessproductivity.com/prioritizing-doing-the-right-things-in-the-right-order/>

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(Resource) 5 Tips for Effective Delegation - Ian's Messy Desk  
by Ian McKenzie

As a manager/supervisor, you just can't do it all. To achieve effective results, you need to be able to delegate projects and work to others. By effective delegation, you communicate to your employees that you have confidence in their ability to complete a job or project.

1. Define the task and identify the outcome, not the process. The process that works for you may not work for others. Maybe you've been doing a job one way, because that's how you were taught 20 years ago. When delegating, describe the successful outcome and let the person to find their best way to completion. Who knows, you might learn something from them.
2. Give enough authority to accomplish the task. If the person receiving the task has to get approval at every or most steps of the way, you might as well have done the job yourself. Turn the employee loose, with the resources to achieve the desired outcomes.
3. Monitor the process, but allow people room to work. Don't micro-manage! (See tip 2.)
4. Make yourself available for support or feedback. Just because you're not micro-managing doesn't mean you disappear completely. Let the delagatee know that you are there to answer questions or to review milestones.
5. Reward and recognize effort as well as results. An employee who is trying a task for the first time, may not get the whole thing correct. Make sure you recognize and reward the effort expended and the steps done well. Then, the next time you delegate, they will be able to build on the successes of the earlier effort.

Plus: Don't dump your garbage jobs on your employees. Delegation is not an excuse to get rid of the [things] you don't want to do. You employees will recognize that strategy and will not see it as a development opportunity.

Through effective delegation, you can expand the range of what you can accomplish, as well as develop the skills and strengths of the team you manage.

The full article is available here: <http://www.ismckenzie.com/5-tips-for-effective-delegation/>

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(Open for Applications) Research for Social Impact (ERI)

Research for Social Impact (ERI) is a new organization that offers grants and impact investments to promising organizations that aim to reduce poverty and social injustice, both global and domestic, by addressing the roots causes that perpetuate them.

Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

Any non-profit organization that meets the following criteria:

1. Its mission is to promote social justice (in the sense of a fair distribution of social goods) and/or poverty alleviation at the global or domestic level.

2. Is currently or is intending to make efforts to address some of the root causes that perpetuate poverty and social injustice.
3. Is able to provide an evidence-based argument that the root cause they are addressing is such that:
  - (a) It is a significant contributor to poverty and injustice.
  - (b) Reforming it is likely to result in a significant reduction of poverty or injustice.
4. Is able to produce an evidence-based theory of change that explains why their activities are likely to result in an effective reform of the root cause they are addressing.
5. Does not engage in any way or endorse any kind of activity that involves: unjust discrimination, disrespect or violation of any person or group's human rights, or violence.

What kinds of grants do we issue?

We issue two kinds of grants:

1. Operational grants: non-dedicated grants that are meant to support the operation of non-profits who strongly meet the aforementioned criteria.
2. Project grants: dedicated grants that are meant to support a specific project, which meets the aforementioned criteria.

Who is eligible for an impact investment?

Any organization, including non-profits, social enterprises and impact-oriented businesses, which meet the following criteria:

1. Is able to provide a return on the investment, in the form of monetary yield, goods and services, or impact on poverty reduction and social justice.
2. Is currently or is intending to make efforts to reduce poverty and social injustice.
3. Does not engage in any way or endorse any kind of activity that involves: unjust discrimination, disrespect or violation of any person or group's human rights, or violence.

Funding application guidelines

We are acutely aware of the difficulties, frustrations and heavy time investment involved in the fundraising process. We are also aware of the fact that these costs weigh most heavily on smaller organizations who have very limited resources available to commit to effective fundraising. Therefore, we consider it to be part of our mission to help impact oriented organizations reduce these costs by making our application process simple, transparent, respectful and fair.

Our grant application process includes two stages. The first stage is the Letter of Intent. The applicant should submit a short (up to two pages) and informal letter of intent describing:

- a. The organization requesting the grant or investment, its mission and main activities.
- b. Information about the kind of funding they are seeking: whether it is a grant or an impact investment, the amount of funds requested and the desired schedule for receiving the funds.

c. What the organization plans to do with the requested funds.

ERI will respond to letters of intent within a reasonable timeframe and invite applicants meeting the funding criteria to submit a full proposal.

ERI's website also has a form where you can write a brief description of your project:<http://www.eri-institute.com/#!/eri-apply-for-a-grant/c83g>

We did not find a deadline on their website.

Contact information: [www.eri-institute.com](http://www.eri-institute.com)  
Address: 50 Basel St., Tel Aviv Israel, 6274426  
Phone: 972-54-5399225  
Email: [info@eri-institute.com](mailto:info@eri-institute.com)

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As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website:

<http://www.firelightfoundation.org/resources/newsflash>

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at [newsletter@firelightfoundation.org](mailto:newsletter@firelightfoundation.org)