



February 2016

## Smart Strategies

Solutions for Workplace Challenges



Alan Krieger  
President  
Krieger Solutions, LLC

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Dear Alan,

We're happy to announce our [new website!](#)

Same address: [KriegerSolutions.com](http://KriegerSolutions.com). Let us know what you think.

In this issue we continue our discussions on **time management** and our **work/life balance** column. We also have links to **new blog posts** on time management, board development and dealing with difficult people.

Do you have a question or challenge related to dealing with people or other challenging situations at work? If so, email me and I'll answer it in a future issue. We also welcome success stories or tips and strategies to share.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Alan'.

Alan Krieger

## Announcements

We've had a busy two months, and in building the new website we posted a number of new blogs:

- [Mastering the To Do List](#)
- For non-profits - [Strategies for Recruiting New Board Members](#) (Parts 1 & 2)
- What is [Leadership Coaching](#)

Join in the conversation with comments, questions or stories! We'd love to hear your ideas or challenges.

Alan is at work on a book on time management - if you send us your tips, questions or challenges, we'll enter you in a drawing for a free copy of the book. (It won't be out till the summer most likely.)

Strategic planning is a major undertaking that often doesn't go very well. We'll be doing an article on that in an upcoming blog post. If you have any tips or questions, let us know and we'll work them in. [Email Alan](#).

We found working with our new web designer, **Melissa Clark** to be a great experience.

## Personal Life Balance - Building Healthy Goals

It's time again for most of our new year's resolutions to have faded away. People laugh about them since they're often ignored, but I think it's great to take stock once a year and think about how we'd like to improve.

**The key to success**, is breaking it down in bits so it's realistic. (See our [December blog](#) on time management for more about this). You can't eat the whole apple all at once, but in small bites, it's easier to master.

So too with goals. Go wild and make a whole bunch of goals - everything you'd like to do differently. Then, pick ONE goal that you want to work on for now. File the rest of the list somewhere where you can find it later. Letting go of all these great ideas is hard, but *essential*. You need to let the other goals rest for a while. Tackling one is enough of a challenge.

Set aside at least three 15 minute bits to finish developing a plan for your goal.

Bit 1:

Create a **vision statement** - how will you look/feel/act when you've accomplished this goal? Get a very clear visual and emotional image. This is the reward. Hang onto it and visit it often.

Bit 2:

List all the things you will have to do to accomplish this goal.

Melissa is a sixteen year veteran of building and designing technology and web-enabled solutions for businesses including financial services firms, news magazines, professionals, non-profits and various other businesses that need a web presence. If you'd like to find out more about Melissa, [click here](#).

## Check Out Our [New Website](#)

Help us debug the site - if you find any broken or bad links or other problems with the site, let us know and we'll enter you into a drawing for a free coaching session!

Click [subscribe](#) to find out more about us and to subscribe to this complimentary newsletter.

### Bit 3 (and probably 4)

Break each action step down into 15-30 minute bits. This is a lot of work, but is essential to success! Steps involve:

- Gathering information
- Creating a plan or process
- Implementing this on a daily basis.

Be very concrete and specific. Set it up so you have no more than 3 bits a day, each under 30 minutes. (If you want to exercise for an hour, that could be 2 bits in a row.)

This might take you an hour or so over several days, but if you can develop a plan that is limited to **one goal** and **3 bits a day...** you've got a good shot at success!

The other key is to find a buddy to either do the activities with you or talk with you every day until you develop a deep habit - a minimum of 28 consecutive days, but better to do it regularly for 3 or 4 months before going solo. It can be a quick 3 minute call once a day, an email or text a couple of times a day... whatever works for you. Knowing that there's someone cheering you on (and holding you accountable) will help you get through the tough spots.

If you have other strategies for implementing personal change, let me know. I need all the help I can get!

## Mastering the To Do List!

How many of you create a new to do list each day, mostly copying over the one you had from the day before you never finished?

In our [December blog](#) we presented a strategy of breaking down major tasks into a series of

## Share this Newsletter



Forward this issue

Feel free to forward this email to friends and colleagues.

You may also reprint any of these articles as long as you include the following in the reprint and send a copy to me at [alan@krsol.com](mailto:alan@krsol.com):

*"Reprinted from 'Smart Strategies - Solutions to Workplace Challenges', a newsletter from Krieger Solutions, LLC. [www.kriegersolutions.com](http://www.kriegersolutions.com)"*

discrete bits. It would be a huge effort to keep copying all these bits. In our [February blog](#) we'll present a simple strategy for organizing all these bits.

In this article, I want to share something surprising I learned in my time management classes - I mentioned in class that I often make a to-do list, go and do something that's *not* on the list, *write it on the list* and then cross it off! It always felt a little weird to me, but I recently discovered a logical reason for doing this! So I asked the class if anyone else did it, figuring I could put their mind at ease as well. Imagine my surprise when nearly 2/3 of the class raised their hand, sheepishly at first, then proudly as they saw they were in the majority!

Turns out that when we make a list and cross something off, our brain rewards us with a small shot of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that makes us feel good (kind of a zero calorie piece of chocolate!). So now I write down everything I do, cross it off and feel good all day!

As noted in our previous issue, most tasks involve a number of steps. This means that we don't get to cross off the task until we complete all the steps, a dopamine restricted diet! So now you can see an additional benefit of writing all the bits - there's more to cross off! In addition, facing a large task on my to do list turns on my procrastinator self. Facing a small bit seems manageable, so I sit down and do it.

My bit for today was to write one time management tip, I ended up "on a roll" and got three done. If I had on my to do list doing three tips... I would have put it off. But only one? I could do that in less than 15 minutes, and once I crossed it off, the dopamine reward kept me rolling for two more.

## Contact Us

[Alan Krieger](#)

President/Owner

[Nicole O'Connor](#)

Office Manager/Project  
Coordinator

Krieger Solutions, LLC

5223 Scotch Ridge Rd

Duanesburg, NY 12056

Ph: 518-895-2939

Fax: 518-895-2947

[www.KriegerSolutions.com](http://www.KriegerSolutions.com)

So I hope you are writing all your bits down and crossing them off in great celebration! The question is, how do you organize all these bits so you don't have a chaotic to do list? An Excel Spreadsheet is the answer. I'm out of room here, but [click on this link](#) to find out more about this brilliant, simple and elegant tool (I know I'm being a bit humble here, but I did invent this)!

Email me with some feedback, tips you find helpful or questions you have: [Alan@KriegerSolutions.com](mailto:Alan@KriegerSolutions.com).