Quick Reference Card (QRC)

Best Practices for Time Management

Play Offense, Not Defense

- Maximize offensively-focused activities where proprietary insights are most likely to be found. Examples include:
  - Making outgoing phone calls to information sources who offer insights that improve forecast of critical factors
  - Participating in private or small group meetings with industry expert(s) or company management
  - Attending an industry conference where few financial analysts are in attendance
- Stop or minimize defensively-focused activities such as those that may provide background but not alpha-generating insights. Examples include:
  - Quarterly earnings conference calls (reading the transcript can be done in half the time as listening to the call)
  - Reading regulatory filings (use services that highlight the information that has changed from the prior filing)
  - Sell-side-sponsored investor conferences (only attend if one-on-ones are available)
  - Site tour, especially when no senior management are present (if the tour doesn't cover a potential critical factor, spend time elsewhere)

Apply the 80/20 rule

- As a general rule, 80% of alpha-generating insights come from 20% (or less), of the available information flow – focus on the sources that traditionally yield insights
- Proactively turn off as much of the 80% unproductive information flow in order to reduce the noise

Take Steps to Work More Efficiently

- Utilize a note-taking system that can be quickly searched and cross referenced (see Chapter 5 of *Best Practices for Equity Research Analysts*)
- Increase your reading speed
- Learn Excel short-cuts if utilizing spreadsheets extensively
- Implement the prioritization skills taught in time management classes. (GTD and FranklinCovey are two of the better ones offered)

Utilize the AnalystSolutions' best practices found in these QRCs, covering specific areas of time management:

- Assessing When to Automate, Delegate, or Outsource

Quick Reference Card (QRC)

Best Practices for Time Management

- Best Practices for Delegating
- Best Practices for E-mail Productivity
- Best Practices for Preventing and Minimizing Disruptions
- Best Practices for Scheduling
- Best Practices for Setting Time Limits

Buy-side Specific:

- Do not give your email address to anyone who can overburden you with unhelpful information
- Unsubscribe from information services and analysts' distribution lists if they don't add value.
- Routinely remind sell-side salespeople of needs and how they can add value.
- Avoid attempting to read every sell-side report on every company, and instead find the two to three analysts in each sector who are the best fit (Bloomberg, StarMine, and FactSet have features to identify sell-side analysts who are the best at forecasting earnings and stock picking). Only watch for ratings changes or other big think pieces from the rest of the sell-side.
- Utilize sell-side or third-party financial models when it doesn't compromise accuracy or insights, such as (see Exhibit 17.2 of *Best Practices for Equity Research Analysts* for details):
  - Creating the model architecture in terms of what's important
  - Building historical data
  - Updating quarterly data

Sell-side Specific:

- Return all non-time-sensitive calls at one block of time during the day (e.g., from 2 to 4 p.m.), delegating some of the less important calls to a junior member of the team.
- Learn how to say "no" diplomatically (e.g., telling a salesperson you're not doing lunch with a small client).

Elements adopted from:

- Lisa J. Downs, *The Time Management Process and Scheduling Time and Tasks*, American Society for Training and Development (ASTD); B. Eugene Griessman, Time Tactics of Very Successful People, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1994.
- Specific to Research Analysts: James J. Valentine, CFA, *Best Practices for Equity Research Analysts*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2011