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# WHAT WOULD YOU DO? It's Not Productive!

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Here is our next entry in the “*What Would You Do?*” series.<sup>1</sup> Write to me at [SteppingStone@JHACareers.com](mailto:SteppingStone@JHACareers.com) to tell me what you would do. In the next issue, I'll compile the responses received (preserving your anonymity, of course), along with what actually happened in the real-life situation.

Help me craft future case studies. Write to me about your own challenging, surprising or nightmarish situations involving business, leadership, management or any of the topic areas covered by *The Stepping Stone*, and what lessons you learned from them. I'll collaborate with you on turning your situation into a simple case study, being careful to ensure no one is identifiable. And share your own thoughts (pro and con) on the series as a whole at [SteppingStone@JHACareers.com](mailto:SteppingStone@JHACareers.com).

## IT'S NOT PRODUCTIVE!

Foundation Life was installing a new administrative system to support its large life insurance portfolio, and the project was far behind schedule. The actuarial group in particular was taking a lot of heat for not providing enough support. Zachary was an FSA who had supported or led major systems conversion initiatives to successful conclusions, and was brought in as an independent consultant.

Zachary was very productive, writing tons of analyses and recommendations, and quickly began to make headway in bringing the project back on track. However, his client-supervisor Christine told him “she had been instructed” to review and approve every memo before release. Her style of reviewing was that:

- Zachary had to sit with Christine while she reviewed any document. During that meeting she would allow herself to be interrupted regularly by phone calls, people dropping things off (that she would insist on reading while they stood there), and so on.
- Christine wanted to wordsmith even the most innocuous of statements.



Zachary felt this was a huge waste of time; a review of a simple three-paragraph memo would take a minimum of a half-hour. This was also creating delays in getting decisions made and communicated.

This was Zachary's first consulting assignment, and was critical to building his portfolio. He didn't want to offend Christine and jeopardize it.

What would you do? ■



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## ENDNOTE

- 1 Past issues in the series have considered whether to demote or fire a difficult employee; performance reviews and their aftermath; interview challenges from both sides of the desk; evaluating job offers; miscommunication; a difficult product decision; how to build connections with the home office; and career decisions. To catch up on the entire series, which started in May 2013, check out back issues of *The Stepping Stone* on the Leadership & Development Section website at [www.SOA.org/ld](http://www.SOA.org/ld).