



and over THERE.



An IT manager shares his time management and hiring tips

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TechRepublic member **Roger Ferraro** says if he could change anything about his job, it would be to have a more flexible work schedule and better remote access. Ferraro manages an eight-person IT department at Capital Community College in Hartford, CT.

Since telecommuting isn't an option, Ferraro spends a lot of time on the road going to and from work. Ferraro shares those long hours in the morning and evening with other business professionals in a vanpool, which adds almost an hour to his daily commute.

"I do it for a number of reasons," said Ferraro, "one of which is my desire to be 'green,' and another, so that even though it adds more time, I can use the time productively to read technical material I don't normally have time for."

The vanpool also forces Ferraro to do something that more IT managers should do to balance their work and home life: He ends his day on time and works strict hours. He has little choice, since there's only one ride home.

TechRepublic: What's the most challenging part of your job?

Ferraro: Trying to build and maintain, on a very limited budget, an up-to-date system used by over 2,000 people.

TechRepublic: Give us a brief list of projects you have worked on recently.

Ferraro: Network core upgrade, Web Server installation, and the Ghost 7.0 deployment.

TechRepublic: How much time has been spent on the Ghost deployment?

Ferraro: We are still working on phase one, which concentrates on deploying the ability to send images from the Ghost Enterprise console. We have been working on that for about six weeks and expect to have it complete in about two weeks. This time also includes the time we spent experimenting with the 3Com boot services and WOL (wake on LAN) features.

TechRepublic: In keeping up with the newest technology, do you feel you need more certifications or degrees the longer you stay in the industry?

Ferraro: I think there is always a need to keep up to date with training, seminars, and vendor briefings on new technologies. I also have been considering graduate certificates as a good way to continue my IT/management education, especially as more telecommunications responsibilities fall on my department. I don't put much faith in manufacturers' certs, as they are too product-specific and seem to me to be more of a marketing tool designed to lock you in to a specific brand of equipment or software.

TechRepublic: As a manager, do you look to hire individuals with certain certs, rather than degrees?

Ferraro: I always look for a degreed person, even if it is only a two-year degree, because I want someone who

I know is capable of independent thought—indispensable for troubleshooting. It's important to have the capability to read and research the answers to problems. They also tend to have a more in-depth knowledge of theory and the field in general. Someone who is just certified seems to have trouble generalizing [his or her] learning, in my experience. In summary, I value education more than certification and believe you need to be educated before you take any in-depth product training or certification.

TechRepublic: Any advice for IT managers on hiring competent employees?

Ferraro: I find hiring to be one of the most challenging parts of my job. The interview process doesn't seem to be a very good predictor of the candidate's true potential or personality. I don't have a good alternative though. Maybe some interview training for the managers here or hiring some placement consultants to help with the hiring process.

TechRepublic: Do you encourage employees to further their education?

Ferraro: I think it is important to further your education. Employers should recognize this and provide a robust tuition reimbursement program that includes using professional development time or sabbaticals for obtaining further education. It is the best investment they can make. Especially if their policies are structured to make their company or institution somewhere a person would want to work at and remain with after furthering their education.

What part of your day can be put to better use?

Taking a staff member out to lunch is a great way to squeeze in time for planning a project or providing feedback to an employee. Other managers say they arrive to work an hour or so before anyone else to achieve uninterrupted work time. What's your secret to finding those hidden minutes in your schedule? [Post a comment](#) or [send us a letter](#).

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