

NUCA and the 80-20 Rule

The "80/20 Rule." Have you ever heard of it? I first learned about it at my hometown church. Maybe you will recognize it by another name — the Pareto Principle or the Law of the Vital Few. Suggested by business management thinker Joseph M. Juran, the 80/20 Rule simply states that, for many phenomena, 80 percent of the consequences stem from 20 percent of the causes. The principle can be applied in many different ways. For example, 80 percent of our sales come from 20 percent of our clients or 20 percent of the work consumes 80 percent of our time and resources.



Where I have most often heard the principle mentioned is within an organizational context — e.g., a church or other volunteer organization. In that context, the principle is often applied like this — 80 percent of the work is done by 20 percent of the members. Let's face it. For the 20 percent who are involved, it must be very discouraging. At times, they must feel as if they are carrying the burden for the whole group.

I suppose when I look at NUCA I see some of those dynamics at work. I see about 20 percent of the members at the different meetings throughout the year. I see roughly 20 percent of the members involved in the different committees and clubs. I even see it on a larger scale — 80 percent of the nation's utility contractors benefit from the work of the 20 percent who are members of NUCA.

If you are one of the "vital few," I applaud you. If you are one of the 80 percent, consider the following. The 80/20 Rule also suggests that of the things you do during your day, only 20 percent make a real difference. Because those 20 percent produce 80 percent of your results, doesn't it make sense to identify and focus on the people and activities that account for your productivity and profit? If it becomes clear that something on the schedule has to go, make sure that what gets cut or deferred to a later date is not part of that vital 20 percent.

For me, membership and active involvement in NUCA fall into the 20 percent of the things that I do that produce results. And, I'm talking about tangible results that benefit not only my company's bottom line, but also me personally. It is, for example, a great source of pride to me to be part of an organization that aggressively protects and advances the interests of the industry in which I work.

It would also make me proud to say that the 80/20 Rule doesn't apply to NUCA. So, if you identified yourself as one of the 80 percent who watch the other 20 percent carry the load, won't you pitch in and help? However much or little you do, I promise you that you will get more out of NUCA than you put in.

Regards,

James King

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