

## **About the Series**

This is the tenth in a series of booklets that SAGE is presenting to the system administration community. They are intended to fill a void in the current information structure, presenting topics in a thorough, refereed fashion but staying small enough and flexible enough to grow with the community.

Series Editor: Rik Farrow

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Edited by Barbara L. Dijker

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Edited by Tina Darmohray

**#9: Backups and Recovery**

By W. Curtis Preston and Hal Skelly

**#10: Budgeting for SysAdmins**

By Adam Moskowitz

## **About SAGE and USENIX**

SAGE, the System Administrators Guild, is a Special Technical Group within the USENIX Association dedicated to advancing the profession of system administration.

USENIX is the Advanced Computing Systems Association.

# **Budgeting for SysAdmins**



# DILBERT™

BY  
SCOTT ADAMS



CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHY YOUR PROJECT IS BEHIND SCHEDULE?



YES. A SCHEDULE IS AN ARTIFICIAL DEVICE CREATED WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE.



WILD GUESSES ARE USED AS SURROGATES FOR KNOWLEDGE.



PROJECT DEADLINES ARE TIED TO TRADE SHOW DATES INSTEAD OF REALITY.



THEN MANAGEMENT CUTS THE BUDGET UNTIL FAILURE IS ASSURED.



I ASSUME YOU CALLED ME HERE SO YOU CAN APOLOGIZE FOR YOUR ROLE IN ALL THIS.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR HOW BUDGETS ARE CREATED?



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# 10 *Short Topics in* System Administration

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*Rik Farrow, Series Editor*

## Budgeting for SysAdmins

**Adam Moskowitz**

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2003

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## Contents

Foreword <i>by Rik Farrow</i>	vii
Acknowledgments	ix
<b>1. Budgeting Basics</b>	<b>1</b>
Why Budget?	2
Why Me?	3
Budgets and Accounts	3
Charge-back	4
“Most Economical” Versus “Cheapest”	5
Basic Management	5
What Is a Budget?	6
<b>2. What’s in a Budget?</b>	<b>7</b>
Items	7
Hardware	8
Software	11
People	11
Services	12
Consumables	13
Contingency Fund	14
<b>3. How Much to Ask For</b>	<b>16</b>
The Accounting Department Is Your Friend	17
How to Talk to Managers	18
Now What Do We Do?	19

Policies 19

Infrastructure 21

Questions 21

Whom to Ask 23

#### **4. Packaging Your Budget 25**

The Written Layout 25

We're Making a List and Checking It Twice 26

Reorganizing Your Lists 28

#### **5. Presenting Your Budget, Or, How to Get Your Budget Approved 29**

Groupings 29

“Bottom-up” Versus “Top-down” Budgets 33

How to Reduce Your Budget 33

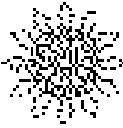
Other Budget Reductions 34

Padding Your Budget 34

Odd Bits 35

#### **6. Wrapping Up 37**

About the Author 39



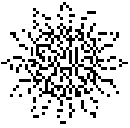
## Foreword

When Adam Moskowitz suggested that he write a booklet about budgeting, I confess I wasn't terribly excited. I was certainly grateful that Adam was willing to write for SAGE, but found the topic of creating a budget less than interesting. Budgeting, I thought, is best left to bean counters and managers.

As I read various versions of Adam's manuscript, I experienced a shift in perspective. I began to see how being involved in the budget process gives you more control over your work, in terms of the systems you manage and the infrastructure that supports that work. In the most basic terms, a budget provides you with a chance to ask for what you want, as well as what you need. If you don't even bother asking, the odds that you will get what you want or need are insignificant.

I also learned that budgeting is a political process. My own career has consisted largely of self-employment, partly because I did not want to be involved in office politics. Budgeting requires working with other people, negotiating, and other people skills that take practice. Adam's text provides an excellent guide to this process, and one I believe you will appreciate, whether you are responsible for creating a budget or not. If you work in an organization, the budget for your group affects you, and the better you understand the process, the more successfully you can participate at any level.

*Rik Farrow*



## Acknowledgments

This booklet would not have been possible without help from many people. Thanks go to Greg Hamm, who was my manager when I went through the budgeting process that forms the basis for much of this booklet, and for his help in writing the LISA '99 Invited Talk which became the outline for this booklet. Pat Wilson, as Invited Talks chair, encouraged me to give the talk. Rik Farrow has been a wonderful editor, keeping me on track and making sure I always knew what needed to be done and when. Rik deserves special thanks for being so patient with me as the project got further and further behind schedule.

Brent Chapman, Rob Kolstad, Bill LeFebvre, Tom Limoncelli, Justin Peavey, Hershel Safer, and Josh Simon all provided valuable input as technical reviewers. Mark Lamourine let me bounce ideas off him during our bicycle rides, when we could have been enjoying the scenery instead. Thanks to Jane-Ellen Long for her copy-editing and layout efforts, and to anyone else in the USENIX/SAGE office who helped in ways I never knew.

My father deserves a special thanks, for making me care about writing, and for looking “over my shoulder from inside my head” as I thought about each word I wrote. Finally, my wife Opal provided support and understanding throughout the whole process. My apologies to anyone I may have missed.