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

#1: See #8 below

#2: A Guide to Developing Computing Policy Documents
   Edited by Barbara L. Dijker

#3: System Security: A Management Perspective
   By David Oppenheimer, David Wagner, and Michele D. Crabb
   Edited by Dan Geer

#4: Educating and Training System Administrators: A Survey
   By David Kuncicky and Bruce Alan Wynn

#5: Hiring System Administrators
   By Gretchen Phillips

#6: A System Administrator’s Guide to Auditing
   By Geoff Halprin

#7: System and Network Administration for Higher Reliability
   By John Sellens

#8: Job Descriptions for System Administrators, Revised and Expanded Edition
   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
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?
Budgeting for SysAdmins

Adam Moskowitz
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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

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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.