



Michael Michelini

REGARDING WORK

**TOOLS & TACTICS TO GET
WORK DONE**

"It's an amazing book.
And you have an
amazing practice, no
understatement.."
Olivier Wagner

Now, this is something I wish I knew when I first came to China. When I first started business actually - but ESPECIALLY when I started doing international business.

You need to calm your mind. The monkey in your brain. All the fears, the hopes, the excitement. It needs to be calmed down and focused.

How to do that? I have found it through meditation. If you told me this just a few years ago, I would have laughed at you - I think always having my mind thinking like a mad man was good for business - to keep the creative juices flowing - but actually - I am like a lethal weapon now when it comes to getting work done.

Meditation lets me work on ONE THING at a time. There is no multi-tasking.

So, now that I hope I convinced you, let's get started with module 1!

So how to start with meditation?

Morning bag, or meditation bag.

App

Insight Timer

Bluetooth Speaker

Chair or Floor (back straight)

Sleep is Critical

I used to work crazy hours, especially when doing international business. I would think I'm being so efficient, I'm going to take over the world. Maybe I'm getting older and wiser - but I truly am sold now that getting enough rest is critical. The amount of blogs I have read, my own research, and discussions with other business owners - getting enough sleep helps you think more clear and get more done.

I like to track it. It makes it a game, and it also lets me analyze it. My wife gave me a gift, Xiaomi Miband, and at first I thought it was crazy - but it has been super. Simple little thing, I don't use it for measuring how many steps I take, but instead for my sleep.

So why wear it all day? I want my body to adjust it being on my wrist - so that I don't feel awkward putting it on only at night.

On top of the built in data tracking, every morning I put it into a Google sheet. This way I can "sleep well at night" knowing that if the app crashes or my account has problems - its backed up. And I am happy I did! Because last year, the app didn't let me login again when I got a new phone. So I had to make a brand new account. Plus if I switch to another hardware manufacturer like Fitbit, I am not dependent on moving my data over.

Sleeping at night, its not about how much sleep, but the quality of the sleep. So I try to make complete darkness. Closing shades is one, but another great way is a sleep mask. Now, I'm not sure where you live and sleep on a regular basis - but in China - there is a lot of background noise. It is a noise induced place. So I use Chris Thomas's invention, Hibernator. It closes off my ears as well as my eyes from outside distractions at night. Though it is a little bit hard on

the ears if you sleep on your side, I use a softer pillow for that.

Tracking It All

If you don't track it, you will probably give up. Or at least not feel as "warm and fuzzy" inside. Tracking it for me as gotten me so excited - and I have it all mainly on 1 spreadsheet. Now, let's take a look.

This is my morning journal. I have 2 main tabs, one for my morning routine, and another for my sleep tracking.

Let's start with the morning routine. I have of course the date, but I also count the days I am alive - as well as the amount of days I have to live.

Adjust this as you see fit!

9999 Template - here's the spreadsheet, you can download it as excel - and then upload as a google sheet, or use on your own Excel (as I know many are in China and Google is blocked) 999

Now, I know all of this is overwhelming. And we don't need to start with all of it on day one. Actually - DON'T. Pick a couple things. Maybe I can suggest for you:

A) try to wake up a little bit earlier, and go to sleep a little bit earlier.

##Mindset

It all starts with you. Do you want to improve yourself.

For years, I thought it was about fixing my business, getting the business operating, then I would take care of myself. The idea of sacrifice now and then later “catch up on rest” and reap the rewards.

Not sure where I got that idea - but it is totally backwards!

In order to succeed, we must be healthy, happy, and clear minded. A business success is dependent on the leader’s performance.

I have read so many amazing books, and I will jam pack it into this book to help my kids one day, as well as anyone else who wants to read this.

##Starting Step By step

This book is a bit overwhelming. Because it is everything that I have been doing for the past couple of years. But I didn’t start all of this at the same time, and I definitely don’t recommend the same for you. Pick one thing here that you are interested in improving, and can commit at least a couple months to doing daily.

So many people I tell these to feel like they could never do the same. But it starts with trying one thing. And just start slowly. For example, trying to wake up early. Don’t start waking up at 5:30am if you are currently waking up at 8:30am!

When I started waking up early, I started moving from 8:30am to 7:30am. I would get more comfortable with this time and then push it up a bit earlier to 7am. Then 6:30am, then 6am, then 5:30am. I even went as early as 5:15am, but that wasn't optimized for me.

The key is - FOR ME. What about FOR YOU. We are all wired a bit differently. My goal with this book is for you to be more aware of working more effectively and keeping track of what works. It is a continuous, lifelong journey. I am still testing and tweaking new things as I go along each day.

So please, do not get discouraged from this book and overwhelmed - read it - get the concept - hopefully you buy in - and then try a couple tactics to see how it works for you.

##Checklist of Tools

There are a few things you may need to "buy" upfront to help you - but almost all are optional.

* HiberMate - I love this product for sleeping. It helps me cancel out the noise around me (I have a young baby.) and also the light. Sleep is so important for your overall health - this is well worth it. Full disclosure - I am friends with the founder of this company but have no financial interest in his company.

* Google docs - Offline Mode - This is a good one for syncing all your journal entries, your spreadsheet tracking. I say offline mode because you may go out to a park or a garden to do your morning routine. This will let you install Google drive on your laptop so that the files sync to your computer and you can access them even when you don't have internet.

* TRX - I love this cable system for workouts. Pretty portable, can put in my

morning bag. Then I just strap it to a tree trunk or a playscape and can do my 10 minutes of exercises.

* Gym Boss - great timer for tons of presets. The magic is that it has different intervals and sets. So you can make complicated timer settings like 5 minutes, 30 second break, 5 minutes, and then repeat that set four times. It can beep or vibrate to remind you - or both.

* Bluetooth Speaker - For my meditation - I love having a mini bluetooth speaker. I keep it always in my morning bag and can quickly turn it on and helps me focus on my meditation.

* Pill case - I take vitamins and magnesium. Sometimes I can't keep track if I took them that day or not. So each Sunday morning I fill up my weekly pill case so I can keep track if I took my pills each day or not.

* Paper Journal (blank pages) - I don't want to look at a computer or mobile phone screen before I go to bed. So I have a plain journal and I put my evening wraps up there, as well as my dreams in the morning there.

* Kindle Paperwhite - Simply love this. Especially because I live outside of US, I can get books as soon as they come out, and carry a massive library in my backpack that I can access at any time.

* Miband / Fitbit - some way to measure you sleep at night. I love to keep track of how well I sleep each night and analyze it every morning.

##Studying Stoicism

You'll see I'm a big fan of Tim Ferriss as you read this book. He is a big believer in the power of stoicism, and I am convinced too. This is a way of

philosophy in the Greek times. He recommends reading Seneca, I bought his audio books and they are great to listen to while you are out and about.

It gets pretty deep, but the main idea of Stoicism is to accept your life for what it is now. To appreciate. To be grounded to earth in the idea that things may not go the way you want them, but you can only do your best to control what you can, and best deal with those things you cannot.

There is another book he recommends which is the “Meditations of Marcus Aurelius” which has his journal entries. There is quite a funny one where he mentions “today I will be faced with vile, disgraceful, horrible people...” so he anticipates things happening that he may not like - but prepares mentally for them.

I have also been influenced positively on Buddhism by my amazing wife, and I see a lot of similarities in the way of thinking. Really it is about being a buddha master. There’s something I read in a Buddhism guide that said if you are stuck out naked in the cold rain, you can complain and cry - or you can simply accept that you are stuck outside naked in the cold rain and realize that you are there and this is happening. Accepting your reality for what it is can be scary - but once we accept we are where we are because of our previous decisions and actions, and face them for what they are - it is so empowering.

##Staying Accountable To Yourself

No one will care as much about yourself as you. They may wish you the best, but it is still up to you to ensure that you are working closer to your goal each day.

Keep journals, track your improvements. Check in with yourself every few months to take a wholistic view of what you are doing. Is it making you happy.

If you were to die in the near future would you be happy.

I like the Steve Jobs talk, he says to look at the mirror every morning and ask yourself if you will enjoy what you are going to do that day. If you say no more than 3 times in a row, then you need to make some big changes in your life.

Hopefully you say yes to yourself every day. No one else can make your dreams come true except you.

##Mornings Are Sacred

How you start your day is critical. While some say they are not a morning person, even if you wake up at 2pm, that is when you wake up. So how you start your day may be a better title here.

Think of it like booting up your computer, you need to start your mind and body for the day ahead.

##Keeping a Morning Bag

When I first started this I would gather all the different things and remember which ones I needed the next morning. Preparing the night before helps a ton. But on top of preparing the night before, get a nice bag that is dedicated for your morning routine.

These small tweaks like packaging your things in dedicated bags has helped me tremendously. I am constantly traveling, and I have wallets and backpacks that are dedicated for different countries or purposes. It just leaves less stress for you to consider what you need to take. It also reduces the ability for you to tell yourself its too much work to prepare or you don't have time to gather everything.

I put my morning bag right next to my bed. When I wake up - I grab is right away. I put in my dreams from the night before, my vitamins, my bluetooth speaker starts up. Get to the jamming right away.

I was inspired by a podcast on Pat Flynn with Hal Elrod

I strongly suggest you stop and listen to it now:

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Then also read his book - Morning Miracle.

I'll summarize it here

SAVERS - I remember this acronym every morning

S = Silence, meditation, prayer, whatever you are comfortable with

A = Affirmation. Repeat outloud, to yourself something that you want to achieve and convince your subconscious mind that it is true.

V = visualization. Close your eyes and use your imagination. Picture what you want to have as if you have it. Or picture how the day will unfold.

E = Exercise - get some exercise in there! Blood flowing.

R = reading. Tons of books say read a few pages every day

S = scribing - or journaling. Write down your thoughts.

##Waking Up

I wake up at 5:30am every day. Weekends included. Been doing that since summer 2015. Sure, I have missed it a few times - when traveling, or when having a massive conference the day before. But I make sure I don't keep missing it.

As soon as I wake up, go to bathroom. Wash my face.

Appreciate what I have. Book "The Secret" is awesome for that.

Brew tea. Following Tim Ferriss again on the Pu'er tea - boil water, I have a tea bag holder thingie.

Prepare breakfast. Drink a ton of water, at least 1 big glass, but try for 2.

##Writing Down Your Dreams

I want to remember what I dreamt the night before. I have a morning journal, well it is mixed with my night journal, that allows me to write down my dreams from the night before. I let my mind flow freely. Dreams, at least for me, are very disconnected and jumping around. I don't try to edit my dreams and make them a formal story. I just want to make sure I remember as much of them as I can and get them on paper. It helps your mind to continue to make more dreams (at least that is my hypothesis) as you are inspiring the mind to create more.

A lot of times I will dream about work, or issues I am trying to resolve. Because I was thinking about them the night before, just before going to bed, as I write down my 3 most important tasks to do the next day, I can work in my sleep. Your subconscious never sleeps, so let it work on something that can help you when you wake up the next day.

I also really believe your sleep state helps your "mental state". When people say "sleep on it and let me know your decision tomorrow" - I think that is so true! When you get proposed a new business opportunity, or faced with a challenging decision, oftentimes it is best to be "Digested" in your subconscious mind overnight.

##Silent Time

I meditate every morning.

I use an app called Insight Timer to measure it. 20 minutes each morning.

But I also use a timer called Gym Boss to track the phases. It has different interval presets, so this way I can have it atomically do the following:

11 minutes for meditation

5 minutes for affirmation

4 minutes for visualization.

##Silence

Meditation is the first. I studied some Youtube videos on this. The main idea is to clear your mind.

Picture yourself in the present - right now.

Separate your mind from your brain. Your mind is a wild beast that you need to tame.

Taming the mind starts with meditation. Try to clear all thoughts. All stress. Just think of a clear sky, and the thoughts in your mind are clouds. Push those clouds out of the sky and clear your mind, like a clear blue sky.

Take deep breaths, and exhale deep as well. Be in the moment. Don't think about what you need to do today, or don't think about something that upset you the day before. Just be here, where you are, now.

##Affirmation

Your mind is made up of 2 things

* Conscious mind - what you are actively thinking

* Subconscious mind - the auto-pilot of what you are working on.

I don't know the exact stats (if it even exists) but most of our decisions are made in our subconscious mind. And our subconscious mind doesn't sleep at night - it is always on. They say that during your sleep, you are processing all the things you learned the day before. It is like formatting your hardware - or defrag more like it.

When you learn a new skill, like driving - you need to think very hard for each turn of the wheel and each shift in the drive shaft (if you're using manual). But once you get the hang of it - you can talk on the phone, talk to your friends, listen to a podcast - all while driving. You are on auto-pilot. That is your subconscious mind at work.

So the affirmation phase of your morning routine is to program your mind to believe the dreams you have will come true. Once your subconscious mind believes they can come true, it will go on auto-pilot through the day to make decisions and do things that will help you reach those goals.

So how to do affirmation? Seems like a cult thing to do, but pick a positive sentence, and repeat it over and over.

“There is no limit to what I can achieve financially”

This is one I say over and over many mornings. This convinces me that it is possible.

Limiting beliefs is what it is called - I learned that from Wolf of wall Street. So many people have been programmed by society, by their parents, that they are limited in what they can do. That life won't let them reach their goals and dreams. So they settle for the life that is handed to them.

You need to break through that! Affirmations is one way for you to break through in your mind and get to the next level.

How long should you do affirmations? I would say 3 months is a minimum. For me personally, it depends on how hard of an affirmation it is for me to convince my subconscious mind. And when I feel satisfied that it is programmed in.

Think of your subconscious mind as an elephant. Or a wild dog. It is out of control, and you need to repeat to it over and over and force it to remember. To tame it. And get it to help you achieve the goals you need in life.

##Visualization

Now we need to convince our minds by seeing it. Many sports stars say they win competitions because they visualize the race the day before. Think about the environment. See the fans, especially when you are on a visitor's field. Imagine them cheering the other players and booing you. Mentally prepare for that sports competition the next day so it isn't a surprise to you when you step on the field.

Imagine you going against the odds and winning. Picture your competitors taunting you. Trying to get in your head and distract you. You are a focused machine, and you have already prepared for this by visualizing it the day before.

It sounds crazy if you are reading this for the first time. But your imagination can make things real. Trick your mind into thinking it has happened already, and similar to the affirmation, it will come true.

##Safe Place

Another thing I have made is a safe place in my mind. I read in some books about presidents who have made this, and under huge stressful times when there is nowhere to go and no one to talk to - they go to this safe place in their mind.

I spent about a month of morning visualization phases building my safe place. It is an office, with a view of the mountains. There are various seating areas around the big open roomed office area. A really cool corner with a glass floor, floor to ceiling glass walls - so I can meditate on it and feel like I am floating above a forest.

Trip I know. But I see it, and when I get stressed, I can close my eyes and put myself in there.

In the book "Think and Grow Rich", Napoleon Hill talks about how he has deceased presidents and world leaders in his mastermind - in his mind. He talks to them regularly, and they give him advice about how to make the best decision at hand. They each have their own personality, and it is all in his head.

The mind is such a powerful thing. I would put all of these different things in the visualization section.

- * Picture yourself going through your day coming up
- * Picture yourself in the future with the goals and achievements you want
- * Build and enjoy your time in a "safe place" you made
- * Have virtual mentors who you can sit at a round table and talk with.

##Exercise

Once I finish "exercising my mind" with the meditations for 20 minutes, I get

to my workout.

I love the TRX cable pulley system. My buddy Dave Ho gave it to me as a gift. I don't even go to the gym anymore, I just use this. And so portable.

If I am at my home, I have an outdoor balcony that I strap the pulley system on.

If I am outside, I find a tree branch to link it to.

Have also used playscape and other fixed items outside.

I take the Gym boss timer again, and go to the "multi" preset mode.

From the book "The Art of Learning" by Josh9 99, he says to master the smallest part of what we are trying to learn, from the inside out. The core move in a karate chop. Then as you master the core, you move further and further outward.

That motivated me to have the morning exercise broken down into this format, which I made up:

I think workouts are normally in 3 sets, with a break in between. But so many times I count to myself and lose track. I forget how many reps I did, how much time I spent on it, and how many sets I have done. So with the "gym boss" again I set:

With multi-setting presets:

50 seconds for 3 sets

45 second break

And repeat that 3 times.

Which works out to be about 9 minutes total.

What workout should I do each morning? I have broken it down as such:

Sunday - chest/upper body:

- * Swings
- * Push ups
- * Triceps

Mondays - core (no TRX needed)

- * Sit ups
- * Leg lifts
- * Planks

Tuesdays - legs

- * Squats
- * Lunges
- * Calve crunch

Wednesday - back

- * Swings
- * Lats
- * Biceps

Thursday - core

- * Sit ups
- * Leg lifts
- * Planks

Friday - legs

- * Squats
- * Lunges
- * Calve crunch

Saturday - flexible day, somewhat day off.

- * Swings
- * Lats
- * Reverse flies

Then repeat the next week.

I should have a journal to track these, but just track if I did it or not (talk about that in the track section of the book).

There is a saying you don't have any progress unless you have pain. I try to push myself to a sweat at the end of each one. But the legs and the core are the ones that hurt more. Upper body isn't so much cardio so I am not getting much - but I do try to make my muscles ache.

Then I go

##Eat

Now, I kind of modified the SAVERS a bit and added an extra E

SAVEERS

I need to eat! Now Tim Ferriss says to have 30 grams of protein in the first 30 minutes when you wake up. I don't want to eat that much before I work out - and I like to exercise my mind (meditate) before I work out - so I am normally

eating about 45 minutes to 1 hour after I have woken up.

I'll probably have some hard boiled eggs and beans. It isn't 30 grams of protein, but I don't want to have to carry protein powder around with me when I am traveling. So I limit myself to what I can easily get. Canned beans I think are great for protein - we'll talk more about this in the diet section.

##Reading

Now that I have exercised my mind and body, and replenished it with some breakfast, I want to read a book for at least 10 minutes.

Set a simple timer (or gym boss if you have it) for 10 minutes. I love my Kindle.

I want to read a book that is helping me achieve a skill or a goal I have. These books are non-fiction, business books.

The hardest thing for me here is to put down the book after the timer goes off! It is tempting for me to keep on reading, but then I wouldn't get the other things I need to get done, done - so I try to immediately put the Kindle screen saver on once the timer goes on. It keeps the bookmark for me.

I also like that it shows how much time I have left in the chapter and the book. So it somewhat gaminess me, and lets me plan how many days it will take me to read the rest of it.

##Put On My Uniform.

Yes, this is quite extreme. But I have taken the advise of Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, and many others and have picked a standard daily attire. Khaki

shorts (or pants) and a black or blue button down.

This small adjustment helps quite a bit. My wife thinks I am crazy and always tempts me to buy the newest fashion clothes - but she has learned. I have about 4 or 5 sets of these clothes, and I don't need to think about what I will wear that day. I simply go to the wardrobe and grab them. Always a clean set. Sometimes I even leave them in various places that I frequently visit, and can switch clothes on the go.

It also just makes me more prepared, and more professional during the day. Sure wearing a funny t-shirt and cargo shorts is nice, but then you need to decide if you will be going to a business meeting that you will need to change for. With my uniform, I feel comfortable (and confident) in any situation.

Its my "battle clothes" to conquer the day ahead.

##Journaling

This helps me really clear my mind. Many times there are still things stuck in my mind.

I use the five minute journal format from Tim Ferriss's 4 hour work week book.

And I have been modifying it as I read more books on self development.

- * 3 things I am appreciative for
- An old acquaintance
- Opportunity today
- Something great that happened yesterday
- Something near me now

Affirmation - repeat what I was saying this morning, also have a secondary one too

1 random act of kindness - I pick a friend to email and appreciate them.

3 things I need to do today - MIT - most important tasks

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

##Stress Journal

I have taken this from a Tim Ferriss podcast - writing down what is bothering you. Then you hopefully realize, is it that bad after all?

So every morning during this time, I will go to another google doc and start writing what is bothering me.

Looking at it - I am almost talking to myself. I convince myself is that really worth stressing out about? Is it that bad. I think about solutions too.

##Friend Appreciation Journal

I then want to at least reach out to 1 friend I haven't talked to in a while. I use contactually.com CRM for this, as it keeps track of who I have not been in touch with for a while.

Just a simple 1 paragraph note. Make it personal, really about how you know this person, and what you have been up to lately that they may be interested in.

##Update Morning Routine Journal + sleep Journal

I track all the things I just did. Some (we'll see next) haven't happened yet - but I want to make sure I have the basis started and can just make a few more tweaks later in the morning once they happen.

##Sleep Journal

I love tracking my sleep. I use a Xiao Miband, so cheap, and has helped me so much!

I chart how much deep sleep I got, and then take that as a percentage of total hours slept to see my deep sleep ratio. I chart it out so that I can compare the quality of my sleep each day next to each other.

Sleep is so hard to track, I have been studying online about how to improve my sleep - with lots of mixed ideas.

Main things I do to improve my sleep are:

- * Take magnesium supplement - learned that on the Bulletproof radio podcast

- * Try to not look at screens before going to sleep. Have you ever looked at a screen and then closed your eyes? It is probably showing a white box resembling the screen inside your eyes / head. At least that is what happens for me. So I try to stop looking at computer monitors an hour before going to sleep - or even more. I know, I know, that is really hard and I don't always follow it -

but it is a good goal.

* Use Kindle for reading - the e-ink / e-reader I don't count as a screen. It is not as lit up in the back and resembles so closely a book. Plus I have gotten used to reading off of it than holding a heavy and bulky printed book.

Drinking water, I believe I get better sleep if I drink a couple glasses of water before going to sleep. I'm still testing how much water I can drink without being woken up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom. Yet, those nights I do wake up, I notice that I do get more deep sleep. Maybe waking up in the middle of the night helps reset your sleep cycle and improve your sleep?

The main point here, is I record all the stats of my morning routine. And I make sure I do them all! If I miss them, I highlight it in red and I try to put a reason why I missed it.

##Plan Your Day

Then I go to my pomodoro journal. This is where I map out my day. In 30 minute blocks.

I write for 1 hour every morning (where this very book is being written), so that is easy.

Then I really try to get my "brain work" done in the morning. My brain is most active in the morning. I have my tea.

I use a google doc for this, and also leave an area where I mark it done if I did it.

It lowers my stress, and I focus on those things during those 30 minute blocks

and try not to think about anything else while I am doing it.

##Study Chinese

This is something that isn't from any book, but I want to learn Chinese. So normally I have finished my morning routine by 7am. Then my family is still asleep, so I have at least 30 minutes before they wake up - sometimes more, sometimes less.

I use a few mobile apps:

* Memrise - love this thing. I am a paid member for the difficult words to be tracked. I go through HSK 1, 2, 3. I also write down the words I am having trouble with in a Chinese writing notebook.

* WrittenChinese.com dictionary app - I am a minority partner in this app. It is a good tool, and basically free. I learn how to write the words, and I also learn the radicals.

Anyway, this isn't a book on learning Chinese. But maybe you can pick a skill you want to learn and do this after you finish your morning things.

Another idea is to go right into writing. Maybe do these things before you go to your day job or your normal work - so that you can squeeze in a new book (like this one). Its all about scheduling, and discipline.

##Read To My Kids

This is an essential. I did it informally at the beginning, but then incorporated it into my morning routine. I track what books I read, how many, how much time.

I enjoy this, and think it will help my kids out a lot in the long term. Reading every morning. Also sometimes in the evening, but has to be the morning.

##Breakfast with my Family

To try to not be a total robot, I try to have a regular breakfast with the family. About 15 - 30 minutes - normally from 8am to 8:30am.

##Start my Day at 8:30am

Breakfast is done. I tell my family I am going to work, I have my home office and I lock the door behind me. I have everything I need and I carry all my morning things into the office.

Time to rock the day, I am excited and energized and ready to create value for the world and my business!

##Tracking is the Foundation of Growth

This is worth a section in itself. I track almost all of those morning routine things each morning. And I track how I work each day. I try to track my dreams.

I love the saying I read somewhere “tracking is the foundation of growth”.

For a few reasons. It shows you your baseline, and it lets you make small improvements each day. It alerts you if you are getting off track.

##Some of my Journals

So I am keeping quite a few journals and I want to share the different ones I currently have:

- * Morning routine journal - this tracks if I am doing all my various morning routines.
- * 5 Minute Journal - this is a more open ended journal that shows what I am appreciative for, etc. It is following pretty closely Tim Ferriss and also has some Jeff Olsen’s Slight Edge influence in there.
- * Sleep journal - really part of my morning journal (as a separate tab) - but consider this a separate tracking sheet.
- * Writing Journal - this is where I write down my writing sessions (such as this one) - when I started, how much I wrote, what I wrote, where I was. This gets me excited to challenge myself to keep it up and keep on writing.
- * To Do For Today / Comodoro Journal - This outlines my day in 30 minute

increments. What time I started and finished, what I did in that 30 minute set, and any notes on how that set went.

* Stress Journal - what is bothering me today, that is getting under my skin. It is almost like self-pep talk

* Relationship Journal - was considering calling this CRM journal - but this is simply a list of 1 person each day I reach out to and thank / recognize / appreciate.

I also have a quarterly journal to see how I have been doing for the past three months.

##Educate Your Friends and Family

When I first started being this crazy optimized productive person, it was an uphill battle with my wife and the rest of the family. They would often ask me to compromise - on my diet, on my sleep time, on my uniform, etc.

You need to stand firm.

The best way I sell it to my family, as well as my friends, is that by being more productive and effective, I can get a lot more work done. Plus I schedule time with them. And when I am with them, I am “there”. I’m not on my phone checking emails, I’m not stressed about something at work. Because I have gotten so focused on my work time, I can also apply that focus to my personal time and enjoy that time even more.

Before I was this optimized, I was always half working and half enjoying myself. I was always checking notifications on my phone, always answering emails, or thinking about work when I was out with the family. Now this new

style, I am dedicated to them when with them.

It will take time to transition, probably even more than you and your own body will take. But it is important to have those people important in your life to know you are doing this, and that it is important to you. If they truly care about you, they will support you and encourage you to keep it up.

##Diet - You Are What You Eat

When you really want to optimize yourself, it is about what you eat. I used to spend an hour or so every other day in the gym, but I didn't lose much weight. When I changed my diet, I started losing a ton of weight. And I stopped even going to the gym! I only do the 9 minute TRX exercise at 6:30am each morning.

##Caveman Diet

I've read a couple diet books, and I am not an expert. But I feel it has really changed who I am, and I have lost so much weight I had to buy new clothes. I didn't even feel that overweight before. People are pushing me to update my profile photo as I look different, and I have done seminars and people say I don't look like the same person in the marketing materials!

I think it is best to be called a caveman diet. The idea is that when humans were cavemen, they didn't have as much choice of food as we did.

They probably ate:

- * Meat
- * Vegetables
- * Berries / Fruit
- * Nuts, Beans

Bread didn't exist. Milk from a cow, I am convinced isn't as healthy as we make it out to see.

I feel so lied to from the food pyramid growing up! It had bread at the bottom of the pyramid saying to eat like 8 to 10 servings a day!

Humans, from what I have been convinced, were not built to eat bread and cards. I really believe it is what big corporations want you to believe because they can make money from it.

Bread is easy to be transported. It can be processed and mass produced. It is SCALABLE. I have been in the startup world - investors and business owners want to find a repeatable business that can grow like a weed. So bread products is perfect for this - it lasts for months (or years) and the corporations can treat it as a long term “asset” (maybe).

Compare bread and carb products with the natural foods like meat and veggies. This is not as scalable. You need to sell it fairly quickly. It is a bit more bulky to deal with. It isn't as easy processed and can't be stacked as high in trucks when in transport, etc etc.

This kind of food is not as easy to make profits from and mass produce.

So therefore, these corporations take the profits, and re-invest a ton of it in marketing. Hiring the best marketers there are in the world to convince people that these carbs are awesome. That they taste good, that they are healthy. Even as far to say as they lobby to politicians to protect their position as being the base of the food pyramid.

Ok, enough of the conspiracy theory stuff - but it is true. As a business owner myself I can imagine the internal executive meetings of these carb-based companies. How do we grow our bottom line, increase sales, reduce costs. Just like any business. So we can't be upset at them, it is what a capitalistic company is supposed to do.

So if you stick to natural food, not processed - and think - would a caveman have had access to this kind of food during his time on Earth?

What is insane is - go to a local 7-11. There is barely anything in the whole shop that is good for you! I am limited basically to the peanuts and other nuts shelf area. The rest is basically, poison, as far as I'm considering it.

##Four Hour Body

Tim Ferriss, love him or hate him, he is a smart dude. He studies closely what he is doing in his daily life and optimized it.

The main point of the book is to increase the weight loss with less work. Mainly it is about what you eat, that is a much bigger focus than on how you work out.

The book is massive, and he tells you which parts of the book you should read for what you are trying to achieve. I believe I picked health and weight loss.

My sections told me this:

Focus on :

Lean meat

No bread / rice / carbs

Green veggies

No fruit

Replace the bread/ carb urges with beans (which are also carbs, but a different kind)

And the other part that I follow closely is the cheat day. So I follow this diet (as closely as I can) six days a week, and then on Saturday I go crazy.

##Cheat Day

I used to be a gym freak in some of my college years. And we would also have cheat day.

But for this diet, Tim says to do it so that your metabolism doesn't slow down. If you follow his diet every day of the week indefinitely, he claims your body will adapt to the diet. So you need to have some periods where you "trick" your body into not going into "starvation mode" and show your body you can get an abundance of food.

What the body is trying to do is protect itself from running out of food. So it will reduce your metabolism to process food slower and store more fat in case there are days you cannot get food. It is making sure you survive the tough times

So by "feasting" once a week, it shows your body you can get a lot of food, and it kicks up the metabolism.

I think of it back to the caveman times, and they probably had village parties or after a big battle or catching a big oxen, they would feast. It wouldn't be too often, and they would indulge.

So as the Four Hour Body says, I feast. I have my family know this day will be crazy. We plan buffets, we plan BBQ, we save up food that is gifted during the week. I splurge like crazy all day on Saturday. Its also my family day, so works out well.

##Working Optimization

How to get to work. How to be effective and ready to rock? Well, by following these earlier habits, I believe you will be on the right track for sure.

Let's now dig into how to work more effectively.

##Dream - Visualization Board

You need goals. You need dreams. I am working in a windowless room right now. But I have a picture of some of my long term goals up on the wall. I glance at them as I work. It helps push me harder when I want to get lazy.

Not only does it help push me when I get lazy. It reminds me what I am working for. I could take the easy way out and just let life take me along the normal track of everyone else, or I can strive for greatness.

A visualization board is where you snag different images (just rip them from Google images, its for your own internal use) and then make a poster of them. On the road a lot? Make a mini one for your wallet, laminate it.

Use this as a reminder why you are working so hard. What you want. What your goals are. Keep pushing yourself.

But back to visualzation during the meditation time - this also re-inforces it. If you visualize something in your mind, you make it true. Act like you have it already, and your mind, your subconscious, will work and make it happen. Let the universe work on your side. DOn't go against the grain.

##Motivational Quotes

Everyone lives off these. I see them filling up my Instagram feed. Just get work done. I have a list of these scattered around my office - and my house if my family let me.

I read the book “Trickle Down Mindset” and it was great. He filled it with quotes that helped him and let us choose some too.

He broke down the quotes into different sections

* Attitude - phrases that will keep you on a positive mindset. My favorite one here is:

Realize you will be working for the rest of your life.

That quote is short but huge! For some reason, when I graduated school I had the feeling that learning was over. Or that now I just needed to move on to making money. But no! You will never stop learning. You will always work.

Even if I become a billionaire, I will still enjoy working. I wouldn't know what to do if I sat on the beach all day. I would go crazy and get bored out of my mind. Try to imagine that for a minute - if you had all the money in the world - what would you do? My mentor in college, Richard Widdicombe, would say the same thing - give yourself all the money you could want - then what would you do with it, what would you do with your life? So many of us are fighting to make money - but then what is the point - what are you doing with it?

So these short little quotes have big meanings once you sit and think about them.

And having them around the walls in your office or where you work, helps a lot.

I also keep them in my morning bag, and try to look at them while eating breakfast. I had them printed and laminated so even if I spill some tea or egg water drippings it can last a long time.

What is going to happen though, is you will pay less and less attention to this list of quotes. You need to somehow change it up, move it around, add new ones, remove ones that don't "do it for you" anymore. Literally looking at mine right now - laminated card and it still helpful - but my brain has dulled the effect.

This is why I try to make it a habit to continue to read "Self help" books and motivational books, to keep a fresh angle.

##Having a Clear Desk

Your environment has a big effect on how you work. Before I was so "optimized" I had all kinds of notes and receipts and papers around my work area. You may not think so, but this does distract and slow you down. It clutters your mind.

I have a pretty empty desk right now as I type this. And I feel more, clear minded. There isn't anything "out of control", things are running smoothly, the items are in their respective drawers or scanned and put into my Evernote. Things are all sorted out.

I know you may not believe this one, but it has helped me a ton over time to be more clear and focused on my work.

##This Is Maker Time

This fully optimized time for you to get work done is called Maker Time. This

is when you are “making” things, creating things. We’ll discuss the other kind of work called “Manager time” later on - and we all need to do that to a certain degree as well - but we should separate this kind of work.

There is a great blog post by investor Paul Graham on this topic - 999

##Finding Your Best Time To Work

Normally there are 2 kinds of people - those who like to work in the morning and those who like to work in the evening. I don’t know many who are afternoon optimized, but hey, probably there are!

The trick is to measure and test your work productivity at different times of the day. See how much work you can get done at that time and how you feel. Are you enjoying the work? Do you feel satisfied.

Of course you may not even like the actual work you are doing, but think about the actual practice of doing work.

For me it is clear mornings are my best time. Once I have done my morning routine, had breakfast with the family - I then move on to writing for an hour. Try my best to hit the 2,000 word minimum goal from 8:30am to 9:30am.

By about 9:45am I am on my work tasks. My most fully optimized work time is 10am to noon. This is when I try my best to dominate the big projects I want to get done for the day. I break it down into sets and then rock it! It feels so great to be focused and disciplined on one thing at a time. Meditation also has helped me to get into deep focus.

The key also - no distractions. I log out of all chat apps, all calendar notifications, anything that can bother me. I put my mobile phone on silent and

put on the other side of the room far from my work space. Normally I'll put it in a charger slot.

These few hours are your precision time to add value to the world. To create, to get things done.

Don't check email, don't do phone calls, don't chat on Slack or Facebook. Get solid, creative work done.

##Music While You Work

I have done it with music and without. But I have to say, music with lyrics is not helpful for your work - at least I will sing along in my head. And radio is even worse with the commercials and the commentators between songs.

I have become addicted to brain.fm - It is scientifically tested music that helps you and your brain at certain types of tasks. I use it for the focused work - but some can choose to also use it for their nap time, their reading time, and other less stressful work times.

Before I had heard about brain.fm I downloaded white noise and other background music of nature. Or classical music. Some say dub-step is the answer - but I was having trouble finding good tracks that didn't have too much talking and distractions.

For me, the key is to have music that is not distracting, and somewhat motivating for you to stay in the zone.

##Working Better

There is the saying, it isn't how hard you work, it is how effective you work. Over the years, I spent countless hours drudging away in my office trying to reach the sky in my business. Only to realize, if I had made systems in place, I could have gotten much further, and saved a lot of those late hours in the office.

This section will share the systems and strategies I use to better structure the business operation.

##The SOD - Standard Operating Document

I love this video and blog post by the guys at Tropical MBA:
<http://www.tropicalmba.com/a-framework-for-hiring-and-and-managing-employees/>

It has inspired this very section.

The core of structuring your business is the SOD - which stands for your standard operating document. Assume you will use Google docs to share this document as well as all your company documents, this will be the most important document you will have.

Put it in a shared folder that you and the rest of your team can access. Share all files and folders in that folder so that people don't need to request access for each and every folder.

This SOD will have the "Table of contents" of all your company internal documents, such as:

- * Organization Chart

- * Job Descriptions
- * KPI spreadsheet
- * Department SODs
- * SOPs for each task and department
- * Company Mission and Vision

And anything else you need to open on a regular basis.

It took me a while to figure out I can interlink different google docs together in other google docs - but the URL for the google document is a static link, meaning it will never change. So you can link that in emails, in other google docs, even on websites (if you choose). So the SOD is a full “sitemap” of your business linking to all the business processes. As you make new SOPs and company documents, make sure you link it on this SOD.

Bookmark this SOD and check it every day you're in the office.

##SOP - Standard Operating PRocedures

This is the “directions” to do a specific task. Step by step, so that someone “off the street” could read it and know how to do that task.

This is where a lot of entrepreneurs make big mistakes and ASSUME the task is easy and/or obvious. This is why so many business owners say working with remote staff is so difficult. Because they ASSUME the staff is as intelligent as they are, and as independent thinking to go out and find out how to do something they don't know how to do.

NO!

You need to give them step by step, clear directions on keeping the task going

from start to finish. People laugh at me when they look at my procedures, but the person I assign the task to really appreciates it.

So when I need to assign someone a task, I don't write an email with a paragraph or two explaining what to do. Instead, I make a new Google document for the task, and make step by step instructions. Then I send this task to the team member (not by email, we'll talk about that later) for them to review.

Let them review it and encourage them to ask questions about it. As they ask questions, update it in the SOP. This is a living document. As the process changes, go back and edit the document. When more questions come up, edit and update the SOP document.

Now you have "something real". This is an asset for the business. This protects you from going insane managing staff. The staff also feels less pressure to work for you - they are less afraid to make a mistake. They will go back to the SOP when they need to do the task, and not need to ask you, or search their email or skype chat history for the instructions. It is all right there in front of them.

The beauty comes when the staff maybe gets sick. Or they decide to quit. Or the worst case, they disappear. This is something you will hear a lot of business owners complain about when dealing with remote staff in Asia.

Yes, this is a very annoying thing, and if you don't have SOPs and instead had to chat over skype for hours to explain a task, is going to be a lot more work for a new team member.

But, with this SOP - it is less of an emergency. You can hire a new team member and have them read the SOP. Or have another current team member to help you in the mean time. Heck, even you can do it and read the SOP. So many

times I have forgotten how to do a certain task that I have delegated a while ago, I am reviewing these SOPs myself too.

While it is more upfront work for you, the staff will appreciate it, and you will have a repeatable process and asset going forward for your business. And you can sleep well at night knowing that if you needed to find new staff for that process, they could get up to speed fairly quickly with the document.

##KPI - Key Performance Indicators

Ah, the numbers. What business would be complete without numbers. It makes or breaks a business. Many people refer to them as KPIs. Are we on track to get business done?

These numbers should be assigned to everyone in the organization. Yes, even those who aren't in sales.

Some examples of KPIs are:

Revenue - easy and obvious

Traffic

Leads

New Customers

New blog posts / content

Customer Happiness ratings

Accounts receivable outstanding

Many management books say assign everyone in the company a specific number. That way they know what they are being measured by. And keeps the company pushing forward for excellence.

You can collect these numbers in a Google spreadsheet, I think weekly is sufficient. And review the numbers. Talk to the team about the numbers. Are they on track. Is there a problem with the goal for KPI and the staff's performance? Is it industry wide, seasonal issue. Try to really understand.

##Job Description

A clear job description is the key to a good start with a new staff member. So many people write a short 1 paragraph job description and post it all over the internet. But my best hires have come from massive, 1500 word job description posts.

The layout normally is as follows:

- * Introduction of the company and why we are awesome
- * What the job entails
- * What tools and software you will need to use
- * What the normal day is like
- * What we are looking for in the applicant
- * How to apply, what is needed.

A full and complete job description will show job applicants that the company is serious and organized. It will also make sure that more qualified applicants apply. You can ask them questions from the exact job description to see if they read it or not. Even put questions inside the job description (spread out throughout) for them to answer when they apply - to see if they actually read it fully.

The job ad is a bit different from the Job description for the internal documents.

The difference is the internal company's JD has additional items like:

- * List of all tasks (with links to the SOPs)
- * Company wide staff SOPs (how to file your daily work report, vacations, etc)

You will have your own differences as well - but really don't be too shy to make a lot of your job description public when recruiting. Being clear and complete will set all the difference to those looking for a long term and quality career with you.

##Organization Chart

I remember in college I thought these were fluff just for the executives to say they were doing something.

But really, it makes a lot of clarity in the organization. Make a Google drawing document and draw out the chart. Make the boxes and the lines and put in each person where they should be working.

This document will be accessible by everyone in the company. They will see who is in charge of what.

I also have another google spreadsheet for the company contact details of each member. That way, if someone needs to talk to an operations manager, they see who it is on the org chart, and then go to the contact details of that person to reach out to them.

##Daily Work Journal

Now, you need to keep your team reporting on what they are doing. Not only

to “make sure they’re busy” - but make sure they are happy and things are going ok.

The format of the daily work journal I use is:

* What Did I Do Today:

(List tasks)

* How many hours did I work, and what hours

* What challenges did I face?

* How can I make your job easier?

The last one is the key - how to make their job easier. That is your job, as the manager - to give a good environment for the staff. To make their jobs as easy as possible.

Have each team member send this in daily to their manager. Can be by email, but recommend to use Slack (discuss this later).

##The Growth Of the SOP and SOD

It seems daunting at first, but as the company grows, so will the SOD. Mine is 12 pages long now as I write this. Each team member will have their tasks, and it will grow and grow.

The rule is, if the task will need to be done more than once time, you need to make an SOP for it. It is amazing to me how many times I think I won't need to do that task again, only to find out that I need to find it again.

I'll search the SOD by keyword and find the task, click the link, and send it to the person in charge of getting it done.

If I don't see an SOP, I'll add a bullet point under that department - and then link to a new google doc in that department's google folder.

Even if you don't have much details to put in that SOP yet, just get it started. Build it out. Let the team member also add to it as you go. It will grow and evolve - the key is TO GET STARTED!

##Tools For Working In a Team

What tools should you be using? We said Google docs already, so I'll skip that one, but now I'll share some of the tools I am using to get through these online management hurdles.

##Asana for Project Management

Where do you put these tasks you need to assign to the team members? Sure, you could email them, and they can reply to email. But soon your inbox will get full of internal messages and you'll be behind on talking to customers!

Try your best to NOT USE email for internal communications.

So I recommend an online project management tool, specifically I use asana.com . You create a project, and then inside this project can make tasks to assign to people.

The format is like this:

Project: Department Name

Task - task name

Description - here's the SOP - link to google doc.

Due date - when you need it done by

Repeat? - This is where the real beauty comes in it can automatically repeat after it is completed. That way you can make sure they need to do it again after they finish it the first time.

Also keep in mind that the URLs in Asana you can link in other apps. So for example, if I make a task, I can copy the URL of this task and email it to someone or send in Skype, etc - so long as they are a member of that Asana project, that is.

When I start a new project, I brainstorm as many tasks as possible. Then I assign them later. A lot of times, this can be done while on the phone, so that everyone can see it at the same time.

##Slack for company communication

Before Slack, I guess I was using Skype. But the problem with Skype or any of these chat applications is - its not just for your work team members. SO you can get a chat from your friend, from your customer, from a factory supplier, etc.

But Slack is here - and it is only for those you work with. This is the inter-company email killer! Use this to send a quick private message to another work colleague. Or use it to send to a group of colleagues in a channel.

Make channels so that people can keep track of different types of tasks that need to be done. For example, if you are in a marketing department, you can make the marketing channel and people can see what is happening in recent news and developments there. Or a sales channel, people can see what clients are saying on sales calls.

The main idea, is it is the center of your workplace. This is where I first go when checking on the “heart beat” of the company.

An advanced use is for integrations. This means, when a new tweet comes to the company’s twitter account, it could automatically post to the twitter channel in the slack chat. This is handy as it puts all types of business activity at the slack dashboard, again the heart beat. Then the person in charge of the social media at that shift can hop into Twitter and reply to that message. This is just one of the many integrations that can be sent automatically to different slack channels.

Advanced note- you can also make private channels - so that not everyone in the company can access it. I use this for the daily work diary messages - as I want to have the manager as well as different managers be able to see what that team member has been doing - but of course make sure the worker know it is private to only those in the group. A public channel, on the other hand, anyone with access to that slack group can join it if they so desire.

##Password Management - Lastpass

Passwords, we need them. We need to make sure people can’t get into our emails, our google accounts, etc. But it gets overwhelming these days with systems. Especially when working in an online team - how do we share these logins?

There are a few password management tools out there - but I have fallen for lastpass.com - it is free for deskctop use, and you can share passwords to other team members quickly and securely.

Forget that excel spreadsheet of all the company passwords you are emailing out to each other - just drop it all together. That is really not safe. And definitely

don't email passwords back and forth - that isn't safe either.

Sure, some of you may be afraid that lasts can get hacked. But is that better than having your passwords emailed back and forth? I've had contractors refuse to use it - only to ask me over and over again what a login is for a certain application. If they had lastpass, they could just login and search for it and get on with their work.

When you think about it - passwords really can waste a heck of a lot of time!

##Helpdesk Email System

Emails, we just can't get out of them. It is the core of communication in today's internet world. Hopefully one day we'll get rid of it - but for now it is a necessity.

How to deal with 1 sales inquiry inbox and multiple staff? Sure, you can all just share the same password and login and try to keep track of who is supposed to reply to which message, but a much better system is something called a helpdesk.

I use help scout.net - it is straightforward. Just have your emails forwarded there, and you can assign the emails to the right person to reply.

Leave notes so you can share it between each other.

It also has customer satisfaction ratings built in. That way you can make sure your sales and support team is handling emails professionally. It is also a KPI you can put in your weekly reports.

Another cool feature is it integrates with Slack. That way, when a new

support email comes in, it alerts people in that support channel to hop in and reply.

And another feature is each ticket is its own static URL. That way, when discussing an email, you can email / chat them with the link to the ticket. I don't think it works like that in gmail and other email providers - you need to tell them to login and search. So this static URL helps a ton when coordinating a reply for a specific email (ticket).

This tool isn't free, but I promise it is well worth the investment and will make its ROI shortly with more sales and happier customers. Don't get cheap on the systems - especially if you are working remotely - take the money saved from the fixed office and put it towards these tools.

##Mire Reading

If you're into this section, it is a lifelong journey for excellence. These are some of the top books I recommend to expand this knowledge and grow this invaluable skill:

Work the System by sam Carpenter

Traction by Gina Wickham

E-Myth Revisited by Sam Gerber

##Taking a Nap / Taking a Break

Gary Vee, that guy just doesn't sleep! But Tim Ferriss, he seems to respect his sleep.

Some of my friends can work on 5 to 6 hours of sleep a night. I can make 6 hours work, but I normally aim for 7.

The best way to balance this is with naps. Seems like so many cultures have a nap time after lunch. Chinese people the whole office has cots and pillows around for their nap time after lunch. In Spain, there is Siesta. America seemed to have skipped this trend.

I vote for naps. I think they are extremely helpful. From my blog reading, they say 20 minutes is the ideal length of a nap time. Longer and it may negatively affect you unless you do a full 90 minute sleep cycle.

But sleep seems so tricky. Yet I have settled on a 20 minute nap about after lunch time. I put my smart watch vibrator alarm on for 20 minutes, take off my necklaces, jewelry and get comfortable. It is definitely refreshing!

##Management Time

Now, after lunch for me, I am a bit tired and lazy. Even if I am fortunate enough to have been able to take a nap - I still cannot work as optimized as I can in the morning.

So what should we do? Do work that may not need our fully optimized mind.

This is where I put the management tasks and time slots.

What is management? It is talking to people. A lot of people I talk to in the afternoon think I am just waking up - when actually I have been away for 8 hours already! That is because I haven't spoken much at all in the morning, I am just in my zone, working hard and getting things done.

Some of the tasks I put in the afternoon "management" slots are:

- * Emails - yes, I try not to check email in the morning. In the morning, if I need to check an email, I will go to a search screen in my email box and search for those people / keywords so that I don't see other email and get distracted.
- * Phone calls - with clients, suppliers, etc
- * Managing staff - answering questions on tasks
- * Meetings
- * Events

##Email Management

I used to be super stressed about emails. I think many of us are. It is because it has been programmed in our mind that we need to check what emails have come in first thing in the morning. The problem with this, is that it sets OTHER PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES. I learned this from a lot of books, but main one that

comes to mind is Tim Ferriss again.

When someone emails you, it is because they need something!

Also, I try to make people understand that sending me an email isn't a guarantee I will reply immediately. I try to make expectations that within a day or two I will get to it.

But the ultimate way to fix this - is have a team member manage your email inbox! Yes, scary I know. They will have access to everything that is coming in. You should have some basic level of trust with this person.

So how to manage your email box? I am a fan of using a helpdesk system, and I have enjoyed helpscout.net for this. Why not just give the staff access to your gmail?

A few reasons. My main reason is there is a level of control. The help desk systems track who did what with the email. You can then see who replied, who tagged it, who assigned it to which person. It just makes a bit more accountability for the staff and protects you a bit more. Plus I set it so that if they reply, it will show their name, if I reply it will show my name. So it is clear who the person replying is. I don't want to trick people to think it is me replying to the email.

There is also the ability to leave notes on various emails (called tickets) - that I can use to explain what this email means and train my staff on how to properly reply. By me not even replying from the beginning, sets expectations that this type of matter can be handled by my fully functional and amazing team.

Sure, you may feel this may upset people- but they should understand this is a faster and more effective way for them to get the work done that they are

asking for. The results will speak for themselves.

Then I have this staff member able to send me an urgent message if there is something that **MUST** get done. This goes into slack.com in a special channel called “urgent emails”. Between my 5 minute breaks on pomodoro in the morning I am checking this alert and normally even ones that are urgent can wait until the afternoon.

What is the point you say? I could just hop into my inbox and see if there is anything urgent.

No, at least not for me. If I “just” hop into my inbox, I will get overloaded with information and distractions. I will “just” reply to one email or another. Before I know it, I am no longer focused on the “big tasks” for the morning and am fighting fires.

So it is peace of mind. It is knowing I have someone who “has my back” in case there is a super urgent email. That takes the mental stress and pressure off of me having to “just check email real quick”.

Seriously this has helped me tremendously in my work productivity.

##Dealing with Phone Calls

Phone calls - this is something that is really a “brain breaker” when you’re working in the zone. I miss so many incoming calls. I really try to get everyone I know to understand we have to schedule a time to talk. It is just so much more effective.

I use a tool calendly.com to get it done. There is a free version for 1 calendar, but I am a super user. I have about 20 calendars or so - for various purposes. If

someone wants to book a call with me about a certain item, I have a calendar for that with a list of questions of what they would like to discuss.

There are other calendar apps too, most will integrate with Google calendar. This way, I book things in my calendar, and when people want to book a call, it blocks out other times automatically. So when someone wants to setup a call, instead of me listing out 4 - 6 options of times and various timezones (international business headaches) - I can instead simply send them a calendly link.

Yes, I do this even for friends and family. Some accept it, some think I am being impersonal. But really, it helps us do more phone calls and avoid missing each other.

While you may not use it for personal, it definitely comes in handy for business purposes.

##Optimizing Meetings

Meetings - they are a necessary thing, but can quickly suck a ton of time. The best is to schedule a start AND an end time. With a specific agenda and a goal that should be achieved by the end.

Again, these things seem cold and maybe even rude to you. But they respect EVERYONE's time. Sets expectations, and will work through the meeting much faster and more effectively.

##Managing Staff and Team

Working with a team is necessary. I have everyone working remotely, which is a blessing and a curse at the same time. Here are some quick tricks I use:

* They all need to “buy into” the tools and systems you use. If you have remote staff, they all need to use the same tools. If they don’t use the tools, then they won’t be effective. I get the team to buy in by saying, if you don’t like working in a fixed office, then you need to use these tools. If you don’t want to use these tools, then we need to work in a fixed office, which none of us like. These tools allow us to be “free” to work anywhere, but with great power comes great responsibility. You need to stick with these tools in order to keep everyone on sync.

* Asana / task management / project management - you need to keep all the tasks in order. Who is doing what, when. You can use Asana to put the tasks in there and then assign them out to the right people. If they have a question about the task, they can leave a comment there, and you can keep all the questions and answers about that task in the thread. This reduces a ton of internal email.

* Slack company chat - this becomes the heart of a business. It connects all the apps, all the people, and allows you to have a “work only” chat environment. Before Slack, I was using Skype or other chat apps. But I don’t like this, as those have non-team members online who can chat to you and distract you.

* Google docs / Google drive - This is where I try to do all the word documents, all the spreadsheets. If you invest in the Google apps for business - you can set rules where only people with the company email can access the documents. Saves you a ton of time in sharing documents one by one. On top of that, when a staff leaves, you simply delete their work account and they no longer have access to the company drive or documents. Highly recommended.

Those are the key tools I use. It gets a bit overwhelming though as your staff grows and the questions and management pile up. Hopefully you can find that shining star in your team who can talk to the others on the team and keep up with

the operations. That way you have 1 person to talk to, and they talk the details to the others.

##Management Time Goes Until Dinner

So most of my afternoon is this management dealings. Communicating is another way to call it.

I'll do this until about dinner time. Hopefully finished everything up.

But normally still need to do some of it in the evening after dinner. Especially the phone calls - this is due to timezone differences. But just have it ready to go and you'll be fine.

##Evening Wrap Up / Wind Down

So you had dinner, maybe you still have some management work to do, such as phone calls or emails. But you should start to wind down for the day. Give your eyes a rest. Take a walk. Get some exercise.

There are great time management people who say that resting is essential for optimizing yourself. If you work and work and work - you will burn out. Plus you won't be as effective. So as much as I want to work day and night - by resting and recovering, we are able to bounce back the next day ten times better.

So really work hard (funny) to rest. As an entrepreneur and someone that wants to make a better life for themselves, we want to work towards that goal all the time - but remember this rest time is helping you get to that goal.

##Read a Fiction Book

I learned from Noah Kagan, on a Tim Ferriss podcast, that its better to read fiction books at night. It is easier on the brain, sparks creativity, and helps us wind down our brain.

So I have a different book on my Kindle for night reading from my morning business book reading. I've read through some fun adventures and enjoyed it. And what is cool is I am convinced it is good for my brain!

It has helped me have more fun and positive dreams. The things I do before I go to bed do seem to affect my sleep and my dream state. So many times I have continued to have a dream based on the book, or the visions I would get of my own life and perspective by reading that book.

Seems healthy, seems to spark that creativity. I enjoy my dreams and it sets

me in a good mood the next morning. I write down my dreams in the morning and it helps me remember them and have more vivid dreams the next night.

##Reporting - Improving

How do you grow? By measuring and reflecting. So if you take some of this advice and do it - it would be a lot better served if you tracked it.

I learned about Grind reports from a Venture Chill blog. He loves pomodoro like I do (and I was really doing it before I read his blog) - and pushed readers to keep a grind report themselves.

The idea of this grind report is to track how many pomodoros you did this month compared to the month before. And publish it on your blog. A lot of bloggers put their income reports online, but this is not about how much money you made, but instead how much focused work sets you did that month.

I have been doing it a few months, and while I don't think anyone actually reads it - it helps me stay accountable. And in the report I don't just show the numbers, but I explain what I did that month that had a positive or negative effect on the results.

Also I predict how the next month will go. This helps me prepare mentally if I can have a productive month or not. I look at my travel plans (not as effective when traveling) and other events and social activities and see how many work sets I can really do.

You could do the same for your diet, your workout, your sleep. I don't publish those on my blog, and you don't have to publish anything if you don't like - but it does seem to give you even more positive pressure to stick to your goal and get closer to it each month.

##Quarterly Checkin

This is one I need to get more religious about. Its like a checkup on how things have been going that month and the past few months. Are you getting things done.

What are the biggest things you have done.

Did you hit the goals you set 3 months earlier?

What were some of the biggest mistakes you made.

Keep on pushing forward, make it happen.

I learned from the Trickle Down Mindset book, to write down your own eulogy. What will people say at your own funeral. What will you be remembered for? What did you contribute to society and the world.

##Just keep making small improvements each day.

The book “The Slight Edge” is an amazing one you all need to read. It is based on the idea that big changes come from making daily improvements. You don’t become a top basketball player overnight. It is from practicing, day in and day out. Measuring, improving, optimizing. So many people think that the next billionaire was an overnight success, but when you really dig in, they were working on it for a decade before.

So don’t get discouraged, and get closer to your goal each day.

##Managing Multiple Projects

How do we keep focused on one project when there are so many things happening at the same time? No matter how focused we are, no matter how many new projects and entrepreneur ideas we say no to - there will still be multiple types of work to do.

I was extremely overwhelmed over the past few years and finally took a step back and really tried to make a bird's eye view of everything.

Then, I wanted to make it a digital map, one I could open anywhere, and easily change on the fly.

Enter Google Drawings. Another tool in the Google Docs Suite that isn't talked about much - this one has become a commonly referred tool for me now. Especially since it integrates with all my other google docs files - documents, spreadsheets, etc. The most exciting part about google drawings is - you can hyperlink images and shapes you put on the drawing board.

Here's how my current "business map" looks

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Yes, I know, total overload. Let's go through it a bit so you can get an example for yourself:

On the left I put the core business, which right now is Global From Asia. Then in the middle I Put investments and projects I am considering to join towards the bottom.

On the right is my skills I am developing.

Then all the way to the right is my personal development, my family, and things like diet and exercise sheets.

How can you make one of these yourself? Pretty straight forward - Make a new google drawing at docs.google.com (its in the additional tools, kind of hidden!) and then what I first do is stretch the map out way more, so I have tons of room.

Then you add pieces, there are a few ways to do this

1) insert text boxes and shapes built into Google drawings

2) take photos and images from the web / from your laptop and insert them. I use jingproject.com to quickly screen capture what I am working on and paste it there.

Now, for the magic- you can link those shapes and images to - ANYTHING. Normally I am linking them to other google docs and google spreadsheets - but I also link them to Asana task lists, to websites, to Wordpress login screens, etc.

Now I'll make a new "project now". I'll add a memorable image to make it interactive but also easier on my eyes to quickly find it when I am looking for it.

I recommend 2 basic links for each major project

1) Link to a "master google doc" for the project. This is kind of like your table of contents and overview of the project, linking to other important folders, files, and external websites.

2) Link to a "main google folder" for the project. This is where I can easily

hop into that project's folder and add a new file, or browse other files and folders if I am looking for something specifically in that project.

To add the link, there are 2 ways -

- 1) click on the image or textbox or shape and then go to the "chain" hyperlink button on the menu bar
- 2) right click and add a link

To then use these links, you have to first click on the item, and then the link will pop up, and from there you confirm if you want to go to the page or not.

This was magic for me - and I spent days adding and tweaking my own business board. Especially because I'm traveling all the time, I couldn't make this on my desk - I needed it to be portable. And I wanted it to be online and private. Google drawings seems to be the best solution - as you can share it if you need with your team, or keep private.

Now, for you guys, I made a template to get you started. Click the link here and you'll get a public version of this google drawing that you can then copy and put in your own Google drive. From there, you can add/remove items.

The most important part - BOOKMARK this - and seriously check it at least once a day. Review what projects are on there, if they are still important or not - and just think more like an INVESTOR. Because whether you think so or not, you're an investor. How you spend your time is critical to the success of your INVESTMENT in business and life.

##Graveyard

And so when I cancel a project, I'm kind of a packrat. So I don't want to totally delete it - but I also don't want it on this main dashboard. So I have a

graveyard board where I copy and paste those pieces.

Let's check that out.

And, maybe quarterly or yearly you'll want to check out your graveyard board and try to learn from it. How did they start in the first place, why did they not go forward?

##Managing an Online Team

So you want to hire people to help you out. How many times have we complained that it is too hard to manage online staff because it takes too much time to communicate to them. Well, that was me for years - annoyed I was always chatting on Skype to them and micromanaging.

But this isn't their fault - it is always your fault. You need to have systems in place, and know what this team member will be doing BEFORE they start.

So before they start, you should have enough work for them, and a clear direction of what their daily work will be and how they will get it done. A staff isn't an entrepreneur. So you need to have them ready to plug into the systems and processes you have already developed.

##Recruiting Staff

So I'm not going to go too deep into finding the staff, you can use sites like upwork.com - and POST the job description there. Show them you are serious and organized.

People that want a job normally want clear directions and work for a company that knows what it is doing and where it is going. From my posts on Upwork and other online freelancer websites, I often get complimented by those who apply.

Many people who post on these sites are either trying to be secretive or not acknowledging the fact they need to sell themselves to the freelancer. So I highly recommend having the first paragraph talking about your business, your culture, what you're up to.

For example, I post something like this:

We are a Hong Kong business blog that works online with staff around the world. We're a young company and always want to give opportunity and chances to those who are willing to work hard and learn. The most important part for us is not how smart you are, but instead how open minded and willing to learn you are.

And then I talk about the specific job position, what the normal day will be like, what tools they will use.

A key here is to also add what is called an "easter egg" in the job description. This is a random keyword buried in the middle of a paragraph, something like this:

Paragraph opening sentence about the job work. More discussion about the type of work. So that I know you read this post and didn't just mass apply, please put easteregg in the beginning of your cover letter when you apply. Those who don't put that keyword I will immediately skip over. Other parts of the job are to check emails at least once every hour and to be available on web chat.

See how I casually brought up the keyword **IN THE MIDDLE** of the paragraph. This way I know someone how to spend time going through the job post to find that keyword - its not just at the beginning or end of the job description.

Because these online freelance websites have a ton of freelancers, you can easily weed out about half the applications. And you shouldn't feel guilty - they didn't read the directions. If they 're not reading the first set of directions, how can you expect them to read future instructions?

##Onboarding a New Staff

Once you found one (or more) of these staff - you want to get them into an “indoctrination” process. This is a standard on boarding process you should have for your new team members.

I recommend a project management tool like Asana where you can copy/paste an entire project with all the tasks. So you’ll make a template project for new team member onboarding, add the task title, description, and links to the google doc.

Here’s an outline of my on boarding task list:

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Now, there are 2 steps you need to get the new team member started:

1) create a google apps email from your company of them. This is so you can add them to the getting started docs

2) create an Asana getting started team member folder. This is so they can see their tasks.

And that is it! For point 1 - you can send them their login to their personal email, or to their upwork account or even in a chat system like facebook or wechat! It doesn’t matter so long as they get their temporary login and can open google apps.

Now, time to see if they can follow the next set of directions - going through these getting started tasks. I have had to cancel some of my new staff because they just wanted too much hand holding.

So, I didn't do a good enough job in the hiring process -as I specifically am looking for staff who can follow directions and work independently.