

FIRED UP & FOCUSED

Hey there, Racheal Cook here, host of the Promote Yourself to CEO Podcast and founder of The CEO Collective. This is my very favorite challenge in the Fired Up and Focused Challenge because it is truly the reason I have been able to work 25 hours a week for the last 12 years and have a beautifully full life while growing this amazing business. So you know by now, I am a mom of three young children. My husband is a stay at home dad and carpenter. Who's currently renovating a bathroom in our home. And I really honor the time that I need for my own personal self-care, my own wellness, my own wellbeing, my own personal development. I really honor the time that my family needs from me right now as we have twins who are 10 and 10 and our little guy Mitchell's seven. And I really honor my husband and our relationship and the time that we need together.

So I want to walk you through this process today and shed some light on how we manage it all, how we create this beautifully full life without the overwhelm and without the constant need of feeling busy or being busy. It's not about packing in every single minute of your week was scheduled to do is just giving you a structure that will help you find some more flexibility and so more flow in your week. I first heard a quote that really impacted me when I was in college. It was the 1996 Georgia Tech Commencement Speech by Brian Dyson, who was the CEO of Coca-Cola.

And what he said was, "Imagine life as a game in which you're juggling five balls in the air, you name them work, family, health, friends, and spirit. You keep all the balls in the air. You soon understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. The other four balls, family, health, friends, and spirit they're made of glass. If you drop one of them, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged, or even shattered. They will never be the same. You must understand that and strive for balance in your life." I really took this to heart when I heard it because I come from a family of entrepreneurs. And I remember so many times watching my dad burn himself out, working 80 hours a week, going into the office, staying late, going in on the weekends, just to make sure he could hit payroll for all of his employees.

And I remember when we would finally get to these vacation weeks, we wouldn't do fun things as a family, because he was exhausted. He didn't have the energy to actually do anything fun with us. So with that in mind, I realized, "Oh, okay, burnout is a real, real thing." And it really hit me when I started experiencing burnout on my own, in my own traditional corporate consulting career. I realized, "Oh my gosh, I'm going to end up just like my dad." And if I didn't start taking care of myself and paying attention to other areas of my life, then I knew that they wouldn't be there for me when I really wanted them. So I knew things had to change.

That's how I came to create this system I want to share with you today so that you have some more spaciousness. And at the same time, you can get the highest level priorities done in your business. I call this the model calendar. Now this is not super fancy and it's not overly structured. It's not about mapping every single minute of your day for the entire week. I need a balance between structure and flexibility. And I also need a lot of white space. I need white space to tweak and edit and ebb and flow as things come up. But I do need accountability to make sure that I'm not neglecting these five key important entrepreneur tasks that we talked about in the very first challenge.

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So I want to walk you through how to design your model calendar. And this is the process I use to create mine. And I do come back to it whenever there's a change. I come back to it every three or six months. I'm always asking myself, is this still working for me or do I need to edit it or tweak it a little bit first? The first step is to put in your family and your personal time. Now this sounds counterintuitive, but I have found for so many entrepreneurs that we put work first. And then we struggle to find quality time with our family. We struggle to find time for our own self-care, for our own wellbeing. We struggle to find the quiet time we honestly really, really need. We struggle to have quality time with our loved ones, with our friends.

So I want to make sure that we're actually plugging these things into your calendar and ask yourself, "Why do I really need to thrive right now?" So for us it's family time, it could look like making sure we have our nightly family dinners, making sure that we have times that we're going to do things as a family, like our weekly game night or a weekly movie night, making sure we have time plugged in to spend with each of the kids kind of one-on-one. It could be making sure you have time with your significant other. I know we're together all the time right now, but we still have to find that quality time for my husband and I. This is going on our morning walks together. It really is that one time every day where we can connect.

And it could also be other things that you need. So self-care, your wellness, your health, your fitness, all of those things should go into your calendar here. For me, personally, I like to have time that is just for me and I am highly introverted, highly sensitive introvert. So I do need a lot of downtime. And my husband knows I need a couple hours in the morning before everybody else is up so that I can read, so that I can do yoga, so that I can have that quiet time to myself. And it's in my calendar. This way I'm accountable to it and everyone in my family knows, "Hey, this is mom's quiet time in the morning."

Next you need to mark your office hours. This is really important. It's never been more important than right now. And it's important because we are starting to feel, as a society, like we are living at work. And this is really a dangerous place to be. We need to have clear boundaries between work and life. So we want to make sure that we're deciding what the working hours are for your business. We don't want to be working 24/7. We don't want to be constantly taking calls or checking emails or anything at all hours of the day. We need a container here. So carve out when your office hours are going to be.

Next, schedule your CEO dates. Now, we're going to be talking about this more in a couple of days, this is one of my most important practices to help me stay focused and accountable to my plans. But we want you to schedule at least an hour every week, mine is Monday mornings, where you're sitting down and setting your week up for success and actually checking in with your plan, checking in with your team and making sure that the rest of your week is all ready to go. You know exactly what needs to happen that week. We're talking even more about that in a couple of days. So just wait for that challenge to come up.

Then we need to schedule blocks of time for the five core tasks that we talked about in the very first challenge. Now, the key here is not to schedule individual tasks, because what you're doing in each of these areas might change week to week. But we do want to make sure that there's dedicated time each week, where you're doing the marketing activities and the

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sales activities, where you're working with your clients, that you're actually making sure that you're getting that forward progress on things.

So I like to do this in blocks of time because specific things might change within there. Once I schedule things with blocks of time, I start to group like with like, and what I mean by that is if I have client stuff that I need to work on, if I have content I need to create, if I have some admin things I need to get done, if I try to do all three of those things in one day, I will probably find that I get out of the flow very quickly. That's called context switching. It actually takes a lot of effort for our brain to shift from one type of task to another type of task. So this is one reason why you might have one of those days where you're like, "Wow, I got a lot done. I'm exhausted." Because you're constantly shifting mode.

So we want to group like with like. So that means I have client days where all I'm doing that day is focusing on my client calls. I'll have content days or marketing days where all I'm doing is creating specific types of content. And along the same lines is batching reoccurring tasks. So these are things that you're doing on an ongoing basis, every week you're doing it, every week you're putting this stuff out. So an example would be every week I'm putting out The Promote Yourself to CEO Show. I don't do that right the week that it's coming out, I actually batch and record three or four episodes at a time. If I am looking at all of our content going into a lunch, for example, I don't create it all the day that it's going out, I sit down and create it all at the same time.

This makes it easier to get it done. This makes it easier to get ahead. And honestly, it just makes everything so much smoother. So I'm going to walk you through how I've done this. And again, there's a worksheet that you can use. You can also use Google Calendar, but I'm going to show you using this slide so that you can see how I have done this. If you look at the areas that are in this light blue purple, you can see I have blocked out the time for myself and my family. And this really creates a container for my work time. I have my work hours from 9:00 to 3:00, that's it. Okay. I have my work hours from 9:00 to 3:00. So I often will adapt and adjust this, by the way, this is an example.

You might decide that you love having longer workdays and you have no problem with that. That's totally fine. You might be somebody who thrives doing three or four hour work days more often. So you're going to work in shorter bits every single day. There is no right or wrong. I don't want you to feel like my way is the only way, because it absolutely is not. But I want to share with you how we've put this together using that process that I have shared with you. So, like I said, I plugged in my time, my personal time, my family time, I created our office hours, which is really important. I have my CEO dates, first thing on Monday morning. This is crucially important for me and my business. It is the first thing I do before I sit down for the week and I use my CEO planner. We will be talking more about this soon.

Then I follow up my CEO date with a team meeting. And this is important to note because I know not everybody has a team. Maybe you are the whole team. Maybe you just have a virtual assistant, but I always follow the CEO date with a team meeting. So I can check in with everybody, make sure that we are all on the same page. We know what our priorities

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are for this week, for the next couple of weeks, we can check in on all of the projects we are taking care of. Okay.

Then let's talk about plugging in the five core task areas. So you can see, I have my CEO and biz development time is on Monday. What does that mean? That means this is when I'm working with my own coach. I might be working with a consultant on something. I might be working with my team to create a new product, program or service. I might be creating a new advanced training for the CEO collective. This is my CEO date, and it creates this nice day on Monday where I am 100% focused working on the big picture for my business. Everything fits in that biz development, education, training level of work.

Then you'll see, this is client-facing week. So I have my clients on Tuesdays and Wednesdays where I have my one-on-one clients. And then on Thursdays, I would do the group calls for my programs. Now this is just an example for anybody who is running a client-focused business, you still have a lot of one-on-one clients. I really encourage you to, one, have client days where you can get into that flow and find the right timing for those client days. So in this example, you can see, I have three clients in the morning, take a break, and then have two clients in the afternoon. And then I'm done. And this is seeing 10 private clients with two groups that I'm running. So that's all of the client time.

Then you can see that I have plugged in time on Friday for sales calls. And if I was still running a primarily one-on-one focused business, this is exactly how I ran it in the past. I made sure I always had time on the calendar so I could have sales calls so that I was always enrolling people, either one-on-one or into my groups. So this would be an example of a client-focused week. You might be thinking, "Racheal, what about all of your marketing? You're not really doing, you're doing some sales, but you're not doing a lot of marketing." I like to alternate client weeks and content weeks. And I find this works really well for a lot of us.

So a content week is basically the same, except for the days where I would have been seeing clients the week before. So Tuesday, Wednesday, groups on Thursday. Now it's all blocked out for creating content, because that's the majority of the marketing that I do in my business. So this content time could be creating content for my paid programs, creating new trainings, creating podcasts, writing newsletters, creating social media content, anything along those lines. And you also see that on Friday instead of sales calls, those are blocked out for interviews. So that would be podcast interviews. That's my favorite way to go out and attract new people into my business.

So these are just two examples of how you could play with the concept of a model calendar. You could have an alternating calendar, as I'm showing you here, where you have a client-facing week, and then you have a content type of week. You could put them all together and maybe give up some of the time on Thursday for doing your marketing related activities. There is no right or wrong here. The goal is that you're just making time for the highest priorities in your business.

Now, the one question I do get a lot is, "Racheal, I don't see any customer service or admin or ops time." At this point. My team handles all of those things. So that's where the

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team meeting comes in. But if you do not have a team, you will want to plug in time for your customer service, admin, ops. And I would usually recommend choosing one, maybe two times a day where you're going through that quick checklist. And again, you batch things. So maybe one time a week, you're knocking out all of your invoices and all of your bookkeeping and everything like that, that might take an hour of doing a lot of little tasks. But the things you need to check in on every day, maybe you have a quick checklist where you return emails, check all your DMs, reply to things on social media. You do all of those, I don't know, at 11:00 and 3:00, something really easy that keeps you out of the weeds most of your work time.

So I hope this is helpful to see. There is no right or wrong way with this, and I will be sharing more example model calendars with you, because as you start using this, you will find the rhythm and flow that really works for you. And that's what this is all about. Finding the rhythm and flow that works for you and just making sure that you're making time for this highest level priority work in your business.

So go ahead and take action. Download the workbook, start creating your model calendar. And in the next few challenges, we are going to dive in even more to help you take that model calendar and actually start sticking to it. So share your insights with me over on my Facebook page. I've loved hearing from you and I cannot wait to dive into tomorrow's challenge.