

FIRED UP & FOCUSED

Hey there. Racheal Cook here, host of the Promote Yourself to CEO podcast and Founder of the CEO Collective. I am so excited about this challenge because it makes such a huge, massive difference. I have seen over and over again that this will play out, you can save up to 10 hours a week. That means 10 hours you can get back in your life to spend with your family, to actually go take care of yourself. Who doesn't want 10 hours back to do the things you really want to do in your life?

Well, research shows that every hour spent planning, saves 10 hours in implementation. What? This is such a huge game-changer. I have seen this play out with so many of my clients who have worked with me in the CEO Retreat and the CEO Collective. This is because so many of us sit down at our desks, first thing in the morning, and what is the first thing we start to do? We check our emails, we return the voicemails, we get on social media, and those things continue to pop up with notifications all day long, constantly pulling us off track. We're always trying to get back into our focused mode and get work done. Often when those things are what are telling us what to do for the day, our inbox is telling us what to do for the day, it's not based on our priorities, it's based on someone else's priorities. Then you add to the fact that 2020 has all of us working from home, kids asking us for a snack, people needing your attention at home, maybe your partner is working at the same time, and it's just really distracting. It is enough to make anybody bonkers.

But when you actually sit down and plan your week, you are a lot more likely to run it efficiently. That is the key. If you have ever found yourself feeling like you get to the end of the day or the end of the week or the end of the month, and you really didn't make much progress towards your goals, then this one practice is something you need to be implementing right away. This is what I call my Weekly CEO Date.

Now, I have been talking about this practice for years. So if you have been following me, you have heard me talk about it, I want you to stick with me because this is a important refresher and deep dive into what the CEO Date is all about. But if you're brand new to me, what the CEO Date is, is a dedicated time on your calendar where you are sitting down to check in with your business. You're checking in with the CEO of your business, that's you. We want to make sure that you are on top of the plan that you have created for your business, that all of your plans are actually on track, or if you need to adapt and adjust you're catching it before it becomes an emergency. This practice will absolutely change the game.

If you remember, or if you worked in corporate or in another large organization, most organizations have a weekly team meeting. But when you're a solopreneur or an entrepreneur of a small, but mighty team, often we let go of those practices, but we need to still sit down with ourselves and check in on our business. It will help you to be more efficient. It will help you to make sure you're planning your week and really running your week so your week doesn't run away from you.

So how do we run our CEO Date? Well, I'm going to walk you through exactly what I do during my CEO Date. Now, I have my CEO Date scheduled first thing Monday morning. I don't care if yours is scheduled Friday afternoon, Sunday evening. It doesn't matter what time you

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do it. The important thing is the practice of doing it once a week so that you know exactly what you need to be focused on over the next few days.

The first thing that we do is we review our metrics. Why do we review our metrics? Because we need to have our finger on the pulse of our business. When we track our metrics, the numbers don't lie. They tell us what is happening. They tell us how well we are doing with the activities in our business.

So there's two main metrics I want you to track. I know there's a dozen different metrics you could be tracking, I don't want to get too granular. I really want to bring it in to two key metrics. I want to talk about leading metrics and lagging metrics. Your leading metric predicts your lagging metric. So your leading metric happens first and then it predicts the lagging metric. Your leading metric is going to be about potential clients coming into your business, and we can track this by tracking those people. So we can track their contact information, we can track how many people are coming into your business. Depending on your business model, you may be tracking how many referrals are coming in each week if you are a referral-based business. You may be tracking how many requests for proposals or requests for consultations are coming in each week.

I track email our subscribers because that is my leading metric that predicts what's going to happen next, people buying something from me. So depending on your business model, there is something that helps indicate your potential clients finding you and essentially raising their hand saying, "Hey, I want to hear more about what you have to offer. Can we talk? Can I learn more?" You want to be tracking that number. Over time, as you track this, you will be able to forecast revenue and forecast sales, and this is a game changer. We're not getting into all of that today, this is something we talk about a lot inside of the CEO Collective, but you want to start tracking it now because this data is invaluable.

The next thing that you'll want to track is lagging metrics, which is revenue. Now here's the big difference, revenue, as you're tracking it, you can't really impact what's happened at that point because it's based on how many people are finding you and how everything is converting, how your offers are converting. So lagging metrics is usually what most people put down as their goals. They put down, "Well, I want to have a \$5,000 a month or, a \$10,000 a month, or \$100,000 a month", whatever it is, but if they're not tracking the leading metrics they have no way of telling if they'll actually get there. So we want to start tracking this.

If you've never tracked it before, just start tracking it now and over time, you will begin to get data that will help you to make smarter decisions and ultimately help you see if you are on track or off track to hitting your revenue goals. If you're on track, awesome. If you're off track, you'll be able to more easily and more quickly shift, adapt, and adjust the plan so that you can get on track again. This is game-changing information. This is what CEO level work is all about.

Okay, once I've tracked my metrics, then I want to sit down and think about my weekly top three. My weekly top three is looking at my 90-day plan, looking at my goals and thinking

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about what are the top three most important things I need to get done, come hell or high water, this week in order to move my business forward? What are the things that need to happen?

Now, I just want to point out really quickly, these should always align with goals. Your top three should not be something about clearing your inbox. That is not the highest priority as a CEO of your business. It might need to get done, but we want to make sure every week we are really moving the needle in our business, and that's only going to come from looking at our 90-day plan and really making sure we're aligned with the biggest goals that we have set for ourselves and our business.

Now, if you need support with that, again, the CEO Retreat is going to be an event you want to show up for because it will help you get that clarity about what those goals should be and the biggest action steps and milestones that you need to be focused on. So we're going to keep going, but I want you to make sure we're thinking about our weekly top three in your CEO Date, and this is where you should be spending the majority of your time that week.

The next thing I do is I plan my marketing activities. Now, this is so important, and as I've taught my clients to do this, it has made such a huge impact because having consistent marketing and sales activities is what leads to consistent clients and cashflow. If you are riding that revenue rollercoaster, chances are you're struggling with inconsistent marketing is usually the problem. So we want to make sure every week that we are thinking about the different marketing activities that need to happen in our business. If you have a CEO Planner, then you know this five-part marketing strategy that I teach. I want to walk you through it quickly so that you understand what you need to be doing each and every week to make sure that things are still happening consistently to get those clients and cashflow in your business.

So this five-part marketing strategy is attract, engage, nurture, invite, delight. I'm going to walk you through this with an example of what each part means. Now, one thing I want you to know as we walk through this is you may have some of these things that are the same week after week, it's just about making sure that you're consistently putting this out there, that you're consistently talking about and sharing these things, you consistently have these in action.

So the first thing is attract. You can see here my example is an interview, like a podcast interview. Attract is all about getting your business out in front of people who do not know who you are, people who are brand new to you and your brand. So there are three core attract strategies, there's Search Engine Optimization, people actually able to go to Google and find you by typing in a question, by typing in a keyword, maybe Pinterest, something along those lines. There's also other people's audiences where interviews are perfect, so being in the media, getting on somebody's podcast, blogging on someone else's platform. And there's also paid advertising. So those are the core attract strategies.

The next step, once somebody hears from me on a podcast interview, for example, then I'm going to send them to my website so they can learn more and they can engage with me. So how do they do that? Well, this is the leading metric we talked about. This is what we're tracking to test the effectiveness of all of our work, to drive traffic towards our business.

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So this could look like a free checklist, like the CEO Date checklist, I have it on my website, you can go find it there. I often go do an interview, mention the CEO Date and talk about it and then offer a free checklist that people can get when they enter their name and email. This helps me get new people into my audience and then start building the relationship with them, which is the nurture stage.

The nurture stage is all about relationship building, it's all about showcasing your experience and your expertise, really helping people to figure out if you are the right person that they want to learn from or work with. So in the nurture category, this is what most of us think of as marketing. This is where our newsletters, our blog posts, our podcasts, our social media, all of this is going out to people who are already in your audience. They already follow you and this is where you're nurturing them, building that relationship, helping them decide if they want to take that next step.

Now, the next step is key because often I find women entrepreneurs are a little hesitant to put themselves out there and invite people to take the next step towards becoming a paid client, but we have to have a clear strategy to invite people to buy something from us. If we don't tell them what we have to offer, if we don't tell them what we have, then you will see slower than normal sales. So an example of this could be my Planner, my CEO Planner, or my CEO Retreat, or my CEO Collective. I will tell people, "Hey, if you want to stay more accountable each and every week, go get a copy of the CEO Planner. It will make a huge difference for you." So I want to invite people to buy that thing.

And finally is delight. This is once people are paid clients, they have exchanged value that you have provided for money, and now you want to surprise and delight them. You want to give them an amazing experience and really help them get the most out of what they have paid for. A great example here could be the bonuses that we offer like the CEO Planner, we have a whole training that's a part of that.

So you can see how this five-part marketing strategy can work. Let's say I had an interview where I talked about how to be the most productive CEO you can be and run your week like a CEO. I send people to opt in with their email address for the free CEO Date Checklist. Then they listened to my podcast, Promote Yourself To CEO, where they learn about my planner, or they learn about the CEO Retreat, or they learn about the CEO Collective, and then we offer bonuses and additional things to really go above and beyond with the entire experience.

So each and every week I'm checking in with this marketing strategy and asking myself, "Am I doing all these things right now? Are all of these things working right now? Am I always putting myself out there, inviting people to take a next step?" Like I said, some of these things may stay the same week after week. I really aggressively go after podcast interviews. I have someone on my team who's responsible for helping me get all those podcast interviews. So every week I'm writing down interviews as one of the ways I'm attracting new people. My podcast, always, one of the ways I'm attracting new people into my business. What I have to make sure I'm doing is consistently inviting people to take that next step and asking myself, what am I doing to go above and beyond? So some of these things will be the same week after

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week, totally fine. It's just about making sure that they're consistently being put out there so you can consistently grow your business.

Okay, that was a lot. I know I went pretty quickly, you can go back and listen again, but I want to make sure we're getting through this checklist pretty efficiently for you today.

Okay. So once you've done all of this, you know where your metrics are, you've adapted and adjusted your plan if you needed to, you set your top three, you checked in on your marketing and sales strategy, now we need to your calendar. This means actually pulling up your calendar for the week and saying, "Hey, where am I plugging in time to do the top three things I need to get done? Do I need to block off some time here in one of the blocks that I have in my model calendar? Do I need to adjust anything this week?" This is really important because often we find ourselves overwhelmed because we keep putting too much on ourselves and we don't adjust the calendar accordingly and maybe we need to pull some things off the calendar. Maybe we need to bump some calls back, or we need to adjust this week what we need to get done because we just need to block out more time on some particular task. That's fine but we need to be ahead of the game instead of feeling like we're constantly behind.

Now, if you edit questions for you, and I put it in as an edit here, because as you're looking at what you're doing it's really important that you ask yourself, what self-care do you need? Sometimes I look at this and I think, "Okay, I need to make sure I'm drinking enough water this week. I need to make sure I have made my lunches in advance to take to the office so I'm not ordering takeout. I need to make sure that I'm taking this particular thing with me so that when I'm at work I'm feeling okay. I need to make sure I'm going to bed early this week." I need to ask myself these questions because this is the first thing that goes when I get really focused or when I get really overwhelmed or stressed. So I always am asking myself, what self-care do you need this week?

Another question I ask myself is, what support do you need this week? Now, this could mean support at business or it could mean support at home, and I want to be really clear about that. So sometimes I'm looking at all the things I put on my list and I realize, "Oh, my team can handle that. Why am I doing this task?" And once I get clarity on that, I pass it off. It takes some things off of my plate, which is amazing. Sometimes I need to ask my husband to help out more, I need to ask the kids to help out more. So sometimes when I have a lot going on, let's say I'm running a 10-day challenge, I might tell my husband, "Hey babe, I need you to take on dinners every night this week. I'm not going to have bandwidth for it. I need you to handle it." So I just make sure I'm clear and upfront and get the support I need before I'm feeling depleted or overwhelmed.

Then I'm going to update my project management system. So a project management system is something that you use to really manage your to-do list, basically. We highly recommend ASANA, and this is what we used for years, for over a decade now. It's free, unless you upgrade to the paid version. We honestly still use the free version. It allows you to manage all your projects in your tasks in one place.

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Now, even if you are a solo business owner right now, meaning you don't have anyone on your team, this will set your business up for bringing team support on. Believe it or not getting some support in your business, isn't as expensive as you might think it is. You can find a virtual assistant for 20, \$25 an hour who can start taking some of those admin tasks off your plate, basic customer support tasks off your plate, and free up your bandwidth. But you have to have a way to keep all the tasks organized, to keep all the deadlines organized, who's responsible for what organized, all the information in one place, so we highly recommend starting with a project management system as soon as you can. It will help you to build out your processes to train someone down the road and it will also just make it so much easier for you to see what's happening in your business and where you are in relationship to all the different projects you're working on.

Finally, we need to update your team. If you have other people working with you, an assistant, somebody behind the scenes who's handling all that tech and little day-to-day details, then you need to be updating them regularly to make sure that everyone's on the same page, they know what the priorities are, they know where all the projects are, they know if there's any changes to what you're assigning to them or any changes to the plan in general. So we have a weekly team meeting with me and my operations director, Amber, where we sit down and go through all of the projects that we're currently working on, we also talk about what's coming up, and then she goes and manages the other people on my team.

If you don't prefer to have a meeting, I tend to like a meeting, but another thing you can do is record an update for your team. So you can use something like Loom, we absolutely love this, and record a quick video update. "Hey, I just want to let you all know here are what the priorities are this month or this week. Here's where we are on this. Here's what I need. Here's any changes. Please let me know if you have questions." This communication is really, really, really important as your business starts to grow and as more people are involved.

Okay, so this was a lot of me explaining a CEO Date, but what I really want you to do is to download the checklist and then have a CEO Date for yourself. Get your week in order so that you can run your week like a CEO, and then make this a standing appointment on your calendar. Go ahead and plug in an hour every week where you're going to run through this checklist with yourself. It might not take an hour, it might just take 30 minutes for you, but it's the practice that is important. And as your business grows, it will only become more and more important as more and more people are involved with your business.

I can't wait to hear your insights, make sure you pop over on Facebook and let me know. I look forward to seeing you in tomorrow's challenge.