



Hey CEO, welcome back to the Fired Up & Focused Challenge. I am so thrilled that you are here with me. I am Racheal Cook, founder of the CEO Collective, host of the, Promote Yourself to CEO podcast and your business growth strategist for these five days.

This strategy I'm about to share with you is one of the biggest ones that has made the most incredible impact in my business. I truly attribute the fact that I have been able to work 25 hours a week on average over the last 15 years while growing a million dollar business to this strategy. This is how I've been able to have three children, two high risk pregnancies retire my husband as a English teacher to become a stay at home dad and part-time carpenter, take care of my mother who requires full-time nursing care and take care of myself. I have a lot of health challenges, chronic and autoimmune challenges that honestly prevent me from working a whole lot of hours. They prevent me from working more than 25-30 hours a week, without it having an adverse impact on my health. And this strategy is how I do it. So it might seem very simple, but I promise to you it is powerful.

I want to walk you through this process today by talking about first this lesson I learned from the 1996, Georgia Tech commencement speech by Brian Dyson, who was the former CEO of Coca-Cola. And if you don't know, Coca-Cola, it's pretty much one of the biggest companies, one of the biggest brands in the world, right? If you don't know who Brian Dyson is, look him up. There are so much written about this incredible CEO. But this commencement speech really blew me away. This commencement speech was where he said, imagine life as a game in which you're juggling five balls in the air. You name them, work, spirit, health, family, friends. You soon understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it will bounce back. The other four balls, the spirit, health, family, friends, they are 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 took this to heart because I come from a family of many, many entrepreneurs. I have the hard work ethic, the workaholic gene if you want to say, buried deep inside of me. 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 his employees. I remember we would finally get to those vacation weeks where it looks like we were going to these amazing places, going to The Bahamas, going to these incredible resorts, but we couldn't do fun things as a family because he was exhausted. He didn't have the energy to do anything fun with us. And that's when I realized burnout is real. It hit me very early on watching my parents.

I also started to experience burnout on my own, in my own traditional corporate consulting career. I got swept away in the belief that all I had to do was grind, grind, grind, and all of my dreams would come true. But I quickly found out through a health scare that if I didn't start taking care of myself and paying attention to the other areas of my life, they would not be there for me if I wasn't investing in them now. My health wouldn't be there for me in the future if I wasn't taking care of it, now my family wouldn't be there for me in the future if I wasn't investing in our relationships now. My friends would not be there. My spirit, my higher source, would not be there for me if I was not investing in it now. And that's how I came to this system today. That's how I came to understanding that you can't wait to find time for what matters most, you have to make time. You have to prioritize these things. You can't hope and cross your fingers that in a few years they will be there. You have to make sure they are a priority right now.

This is very contrarian to what a lot of us are being trained to believe in this hyper capitalist society. We are trained to believe that we should sacrifice everything at the altar of making more and more and more money and being more and more and more successful in one area of our life, while completely ignoring what success looks like for



our health, our family, our relationships, our friends, our creativity, our spirituality. All the things that make us feel like us like a fully evolved human, right?

So, this is the strategy that has made the biggest difference. I call it the model calendar and the approach to the model calendar is understanding that if you don't run your week, your week will run you. Have you ever found yourself at the end of the day or the week or the month feeling like you never got anything accomplished, you didn't move your business forward because you were so focused on prioritizing everyone else's priorities. You were putting everybody's emails, everybody's voicemails, everybody's DMs, everybody's requests on you ahead of the things that will actually help you to be successful in a more evolved definition of success that isn't just about how much money you make, but is about how you show up as the person you want to be. If you are resonating with this, you're going to love this strategy.

So how do we start creating a model calendar? This is where my value of life before business shows up first. This is the highest priority in my business. When I share everybody my values in my business, whether it's my team or my clients, it's always life before business. And that means starting with your calendar, life before business. Family and personal time needs to be the priority. Again, we're not trying to find time for the people we care about. We're not trying to find time for our health. We're not trying to find time for the things that are truly a priority to us. We are going to make time.

So I want you to open up your calendar. I use Google Calendar, and the way I do this is I create a new calendar and I call it the model calendar. And I'll go through this process. I'm literally showing you the process. I go through to map out what my ideal week looks like. And I'm asking myself, what are the most important things to me in my life, in my family and my relationships, everything outside of work. For me, this starts with my morning routine. You can see, I wake up pretty early. I've always been kind of an early bird. I like a nice, slow start to the morning. So I give myself a full hour to kind of wake



up. And in fact, I think I don't really wake up until I've had my morning walk and then two cups of coffee. But that is how my mornings start.

I also know the next priority for me is my family dinner. For me and my husband this is something we knew would be a major part of how we want to raise our three kids. So it is in our calendar. We know that at 6:00, 6:30 at the latest we are going to sit down to have family dinner. We're also going to have date night. This is another priority for us. Every week we have a date night. Currently it's on Thursdays, it kind of ebbs and flows depending on whatever we're wanting to go out to. Sometimes we like to go to a comedy show. Sometimes we like to go see live music. Sometimes we like to go to something else that isn't on a Thursday night, but by having it on Thursday night, we know that Thursday nights, Miss Patty is going to come over and take care of the kids and we are going to get a night off.

I also have my nighttime routine in place. I am not going to get too big into this. I should do a whole episode about my morning routine and my nighttime routine. They're not that complicated. But I do have a problem with sleep. I've always been a very light sleeper. I've always had a hard time enjoying good quality sleep. So I have found that I have to have this kind of wind down routine to start shutting my brain down and getting myself ready to actually get sleep so that I get good quality sleep. So that's another thing that I put on this calendar. It's important to me. And you'll also see on Friday, I'm only showing you five days a week, I have my self care appointments. I generally don't work on Fridays. If I have to work, I try to do it in the mornings so that I can schedule all of my haircuts, all of my manicure, pedicures, all of my facials, all of my massages, all my chiropractic, all of my functional medicine appointments, any appointment I have to make to take care of myself, going for a float. If you haven't tried floating yet, I absolutely am obsessed with it. All of those appointments, I try to schedule for Friday afternoon. It works out really well because my kids are occupied, my husband's occupied, I'm not bothering anybody if I take the time off.



So I start with life first, and that helps me determine my block of office hours. So for each person this is going to be different. My kids are now almost 13 and almost 10, right? They're right on the cusp. And that means I kind of have easy office hours. It's kind of when they're occupied with school, with homeschool right now but in the fall and the rest of the year, it'll be regular school. So my office hours end up being from about 10:00 to 3:00 every day. Do I vary from this? Sometimes I'll come in at 9:00. Sometimes I'll leave at 2:00. But generally I do about five hours a day and maybe a couple hours on Friday. This is my time in the office. This is when I schedule anything that I need to focus on as the CEO of my business.

Once you have your office hours blocked, now we need to drill down a little bit and make sure we're blocking out the most important tasks in your business, including your CEO date. You heard me share more about the CEO date in the day three of the Fired Up & Focused Challenge. But my CEO date is generally on Monday mornings bright and early, as soon as I get into the office. It might take me an hour, it might take me two hours, but I give myself plenty of time to get organized, to plan my week, to check in with the team to make sure no one needs anything from me, because I'm not trying to be the bottleneck of my business. And to prepare for our team meeting.

Then I have the afternoon, a couple hours where I'm doing my CEO development. This is my own education, my own training, my own coaching that I am working on. All in all this makes Monday, my CEO day. This is a day dedicated to being in the big picture, working on the business instead of in the business. From there, I use time blocking. This is something I'm sure you've all heard about. I truly think it makes such a massive difference. Because for what happens to many of us, we find ourselves going through the week and we're trying to fit our to-dos around appointments around calls, and that becomes really, really challenging. We actually need to block time for those most important tasks.



So what this allows you to do first is avoid context switching. A lot of people believe that we can be multi-taskers, but that's not actually how human brains work, human brains don't multitask. When you have to shift from one task to another, your brain is literally shifting gears and it decreases productivity by up to 40%. There's a lot of time and energy wasted. Think about it. If you are getting interrupted or you have to change tasks, let's say you're working on one thing for 15 minutes and then somebody interrupts you, you get a notification from your email, you go to check that and then it takes time to get back into that other task you were working on. It is incredibly inefficient. This is one reason why I love time blocking because it helps me to avoid context switching. It helps to give me a dedicated time to get into the deep work.

This is single tasking. Single tasking is incredibly powerful. There is so much research out there about single tasking and how if you want to be more productive it's not about cramming more into less time. It's about single tasking so that you can get into the flow state. The flow state is where you get into the zone. You get into that creativity, you get into that emotional area where you can do the best work at the highest level because it's all your brain is focused on. And on average, this can save up to two hours a day, which is absolutely incredible.

So what does this look like? I focus first when I'm trying to use time batching, I am going to schedule like with like tasks. So any marketing tasks that I have where I'm interviewing or I'm guest teaching or I'm networking or creating content or doing social media, I try to schedule those all at about the same time in one solid time block. If I'm doing sales related activity, I'm scheduling it in one solid time block. Clients I'm scheduling in one solid time block. Same thing with admin, ops, customer service. Now, my goal is ultimately again, these are the \$10 an hour, \$100 an hour activities, my goal is that you move away from these and your team is handling these. But if you are still managing them yourself, I encourage you to time block them. Put a time in your calendar for once,



maybe twice a day, where you're going to go through all of these activities all at once. This will make you so much more productive and so much more efficient.

So how could this look? Here's a quick snapshot of how my week could look once I'm plugging in the highest priority tasks for me in my business. So this is one example. Let's say that I have five private clients and you can see, I have them scheduled out Tuesdays 10:00, 11:30, 1:00. Thursdays, 10:00, 11:30 and then at 1:00 I have a live Q and A, a live call with my group program. Then I need to prioritize my marketing. So I have content creation, which could be free. So nurture marketing, or it could be paid, maybe I'm creating something for my community. And then I have time scheduled for visibility. So by blocking these things in, I am able to be much more efficient when I sit down to get work done. I know that each and every week I am prioritizing the most important tasks that are going to move my business forward. I know that each and every week I am not dropping the ball on marketing. I know that each and every week I am keeping up with everything on my plate.

One tip for you is you can alternate weeks. Every week does not need to look the same in your model calendar. You might find that you need to alternate client and marketing weeks. This is something I did for years when I had primarily a one on one business, I would alternate client weeks with content weeks. So my client weeks were, again you can see similar times. So client number one at 10:00, client number two at 11:30, client number three at 1:00 and I would repeat that on Wednesdays. On Thursdays, I would focus on my group coaching. And then on Fridays I would take sales calls. I want to point out that I love scheduling clients like this. I think one mistake, a lot of people make that makes them absolutely hate any one on one work is they don't give themselves that buffer. Hot tip, give yourself a buffer. Get your clients to schedule in to the same time spot the same day the entire length of their agreement.



And I would alternate this with a marketing week. So I would have a marketing week where one Tuesday I was doing all the literature marketing. So creating my podcast, creating blog posts, creating newsletters, creating social. One day dedicated to sales calls. And one day dedicated to attract marketing. Attract marketing is, again, other people's audiences, search engine optimization, running advertising, anything that puts my business out there in front of new potential clients. And by alternating these throughout the month, I made sure that I was hitting all of the major things. I was getting ahead in all of the marketing strategies, because I was giving myself a long enough period of time to really batch them and really get ahead.

Finally, leave buffer time for yourself. We as humans need white space in our calendar. I think one of the biggest myths about productivity, again I know I said this before, is feeling like you have to have every minute of the day scheduled. That you have to be scheduled down to the every single five minutes, and that is absolutely not true. In fact, that will make you so stressed out because inevitably things are going to take longer. You're going to have a client session run over. You're going to have content that you don't get finished in the period you thought you would get it finished in. You will have something happen that requires a little bit of flexibility. And if you don't give yourself flexibility in your model calendar, you're not going to have it in your business.

So you can see, I give myself lots of white space. This allows me to come in early if I know that I have a lot of content creation on deck, I need to get a lot accomplished. It allows me to stay a little bit later if I ask some other things I need to do. It also allows me a bit of breathing room between each call. This is massive for me as an introvert and highly sensitive person, I need a lot of white space in my calendar. So if your calendar does not have this much white space, I encourage you to look at how can you give yourself more buffer time?



Okay. I hope this served you today. Go download the workbook at firedupandfocused.com so that you can create your model calendar. And remember, this is a strategy that is meant to adapt and adjust as your life changes. Every single quarter I look at this and I think to myself, what needs to happen in order for this to work for me and my family. I might slightly adjust some things depending on if we're in summer mode, like we are as I'm recording this, or if we're in school mode, if we're going on vacations, if we're traveling a lot, if there's something else going on in my life I'm prioritizing I might adjust this.

So it is meant to be adjustable. I recommend sitting down creating your model calendar, and then give yourself a couple weeks to move your appointments, move your schedule into that. It takes time, it is a practice, but I promise it will make such an impact for you and your business. Please head over to social. Let me know your thoughts, your aha's, your insights. I cannot wait to hear them.