

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

SURVIVAL ARE YOU IN GOOD SHAPE?



These are the days of YOUR LIFE...

... so make maximum use of them as you strive to get more out of yourself. **Karl Hartey** offers some pointers

Everyone needs to make time to work **ON** their business rather than **IN** their business. Dan Sullivan, the famous strategic coach, asks us to imagine that we are only allowed to have three types of day: free days, focus days and buffer days.

FREE DAY - day off

These are the days on which you rest, recuperate and re-connect with yourself and the people that matter outside work. Don't address yourself in any way, shape or form to your obligations at work. On free days you're not doing education, not popping into the office, not checking e-mails, not doing the business newsletter or the books on the laptop.

FOCUS DAY - focused on getting results

These are the days when you're concentrating on doing whatever you get paid for. You're seeing clients, selling, networking. You're focused on results.

BUFFER DAY - all the other stuff

This is the day when you deal with all the other 'stuff' - admin, reading,

budgets, correspondence, research. How many do you need per week to keep the business rolling? Half a day per week should be enough. Explain to your team that you are not to be disturbed.

The key is not to prioritise your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.

HOW TO PLAN THE TIME TO PLAN

1. Plan and book your Free, Focus and Buffer days up to 18 months in advance.
2. Devise a system to colour-code your diary - use different colours for the three different types of day.
3. Decide which weeks you'll work and which will be OFF. Colour it on your wall planner and in your diary.
4. Some days may be divided into Focus and Buffer activities.
5. Take entire days for your Free days.

DAILY STRATEGIC PLANNING

Find 15-30 minutes every day to switch everything off, find a sanctuary, close the door and allow yourself to think. Reflect on what you're hoping to achieve that day, or the following day/week/month. This is primarily the time when you

organise your 'to do' list. The rules are: Make a list. ABC it and prioritise the As, Bs and Cs. Do the A's first.

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

Take some time, each week, to write down what would have to happen in the following week to have the most positive impact on your life.

MONTHLY STRATEGIC PLANNING

The panel below offers a framework you can use to provide structure and direction to monthly meetings. It may seem rigid, but discipline is essential if you are to tackle problems and capitalise on opportunities.

ANNUAL RETREAT

Take a couple of days once a year to sort out in your own mind what you're going to do for the rest of the following year:

- Step 1 Review your 3-year vision and update.
- Step 2 Review your mission statements and update.
- Step 3 Review your roles and the goals for each role.
- Step 4 Colour code your diary for the following year into Free, Buffer and Focus days (in that order).
- Step 5 Prepare budgets for personal and business expenditure to create your 'perfect' life financially.
- Step 6 Ask yourself 'What has to happen for this to happen?'

Only by asking the questions will we come up with the answers.

MONTHLY STRATEGIC PLANNING

These meetings should be held for one half day every month. Below is a suggested agenda for strategic planning meetings. To make sure the meetings are productive and valuable, and to keep you focused, follow these three simple steps as you discuss each item:

Consider - Decide - Act.

FINANCE

- Review of management accounts for last month
- Review of management accounts year to date
- Comparison of management accounts with budget

- Course corrections required
- Current cash flow situation
- Action needed to accelerate cash flow
- Review of current pricing strategy

SALES

- Review of sales v. target for the previous month
- Review of sales v. target year to date
- Analysis of sales by product/service
- Analysis of sales by customer grade/group
- Review of current selling skills within team

- Review of common objections from customers - and the answers
- Role play sessions scheduled
- Review of new products/services and how they will be sold

MARKETING

- Review of customer grading
- Review of added value methods
- Review of newsletter
- Review of referral system
- Review of networking activity
- Review of strategic alliances
- Review of documentation and corporate image
- Review of publishing and public relations activity

RESOURCES

- Review of existing environment and facilities
- Review of additional facilities required
- Revisions to budgets and targets as a result of purchasing decisions

PERSONNEL

- Review of team performance
- Review of individual performance
- Review of discretionary bonus system year to date
- Team development
- Team training
- Review of appraisals