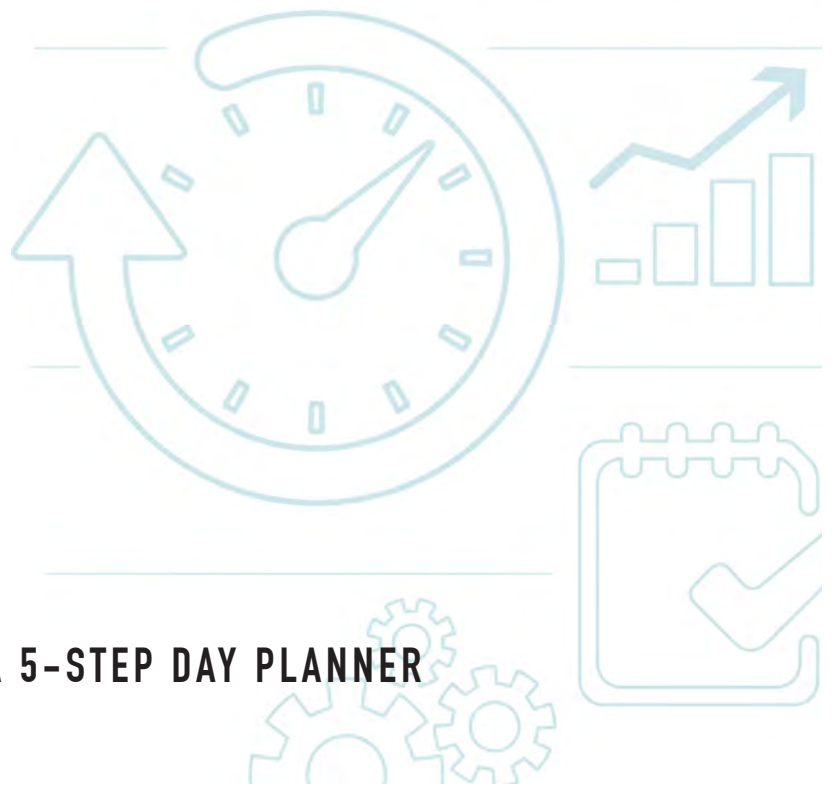


THE ENTREPRENEUR'S GUIDE TO

# PRODUCTIVITY: A 5-STEP DAY PLANNER





# THE ENTREPRENEUR'S GUIDE TO **PRODUCTIVITY:** A 5-STEP DAY PLANNER

**Time is a hot topic these days. It's also a great leveler: We all have exactly 24 hours in a day to work with—no more, no less. Everyone starts on a level playing field.**

Why is it, then, that some of us get a tremendous amount accomplished in a day and have the time to enjoy not only work life, but all the things we love to do in life outside of work, yet others are always crunched for time and pressed by deadlines, full inboxes, phone messages to be dealt with, errands to run—and always feeling frustrated and frazzled?

**HOW EFFECTIVELY  
AN ENTREPRENEUR  
USES THEIR TIME  
CAN MAKE A SIGNIF-  
ICANT DIFFERENCE  
TO THE SUCCESS OF  
THEIR BUSINESS.**

Everyone today wants to make the best possible use of their time. And perhaps more than anyone, that is true of entrepreneurs. How effectively an entrepreneur uses their time can make a significant difference to the success of their business.

What if you had a strategy for making the best use of your time: time to focus on what brings money into your company, which is likely you selling your product or service; time to plan for the future of the company, set goals, and figure out how to make them happen; time to prepare, clean up messes, hire a new team member; time away from work to spend with family and friends; and time to do all the non-work-related things in life that you love to do?

**The top coach to entrepreneurs has a plan.**

Dan Sullivan, Strategic Coach® founder and creator of The Strategic Coach® Program, is a highly successful entrepreneur who coaches other successful entrepreneurs on how to do the work they love, work less, and still make more money. Over 17,000 entrepreneurs have used his strategies and thinking tools to eliminate complexity and, in the process, simplify their lives while growing their businesses exponentially.

Dan regularly follows a 5-step plan he developed to achieve his most productive working day, no matter what his day involves. This guide walks you through the five steps, and why each step is important to the success of his day.

# STEP 1 Do only what you love and are really great at.

When people's natural strengths are fueled by passion in their work and personal lives, they're able to contribute to the world around them in the most valuable ways possible. Strengths plus passion put into play is an unbeatable formula for success.

Working and living in this way, people are happy about and fulfilled by what they do each day. They have a great deal more energy because they're doing what comes naturally to them and what gives them confidence. This amazing combination of talent and passion always produces their best results. We call it Unique Ability®.

## What is Unique Ability?

Unique Ability is the essence of what you love to do and do best, and how you make your greatest contribution. It has four characteristics:



**“If you work throughout your life on improving your weaknesses, what you get are a lot of really strong weaknesses.”**

In fact, as you’re able to focus more and more on using your natural talents, you feel as if you’ll never run out of possibilities for growth. Those around you count on you for these talents and skills, and once you begin to understand your Unique Ability, you’ll zero in on exactly what they admire and rely on you for.

Here’s the funny part about discovering your Unique Ability: The most natural response in the world is to immediately downplay your natural talents. You think everyone can do what you do because it comes to you so easily. But that’s the furthest thing from the truth. Your unique combination of skills and talents, passion, and life experiences could *never* be duplicated by anyone else.

The secret is to embrace this idea and then use your unique talents and skills at every opportunity until you’re working in your “zone” exclusively—which will ultimately mean learning to delegate more and more of the energy-draining activities you’re not competent at and really dislike doing. That’s where the power lies. Discovering, understanding, and being able to work in your zone is your surest path to success.

In Dan Sullivan’s case, he’s done the work to fully understand and strengthen his own natural talents. One of his most memorable quotes says it all:

“If you work throughout your life on improving your weaknesses, what you get are a lot of really strong weaknesses.”

Just think what’s possible with a focus on strengths!

#### **What Dan’s day looks like.**

As the leader of a company that believes the happiest, most fulfilling life is one in which you’re always growing, Dan understands that knowing what you do that leads to your greatest productivity and results is a game changer. It gives growth a chance to take hold and, just like compound interest, provides exponential returns for you, your team, and your business.

He’s also aware of where his mental energy lies for certain tasks and how he will instinctively approach them. *This helps him to know what he should and should not be doing.* In fact, the entire team at Strategic Coach knows Dan’s Unique Ability, as well as that of everyone else on the team.

When Dan comes into the office in the morning, he knows that all the right people are supporting his day in all the right ways. For example, his direct assistant goes through his schedule for the day and has all the details of calls or meetings set up and ready to go.

His direct team makes sure he has everything he needs to start his day and be prepared throughout. Even our caterer is an important part of our team. He provides a healthy lunch, ensuring another important area is taken care of. Each of these people on the team takes responsibility for something outside of Dan’s productivity zone of strengths so he can focus solely within it.



Now, that's a strategy for doing what you love and are best at—and achieving the kind of results a strong focus can provide.

### Why is Unique Ability so powerful?

A focus on your natural strengths, the activities you're passionate about tackling and have all the energy in the world for—your Unique Ability—is the beginning of a never-ending journey of growth as an entrepreneur and a life that's ultimately satisfying, rewarding, and fun.

Working and living inside your zone of natural strengths is where your greatest and most productive energy lies. So, how can you begin to zero in on the natural strengths and passions that are the key to all opportunity?

Our book *Unique Ability® 2.0: Discovery* is a great place to start. It leads you through a step-by-step process to discover and gain a fuller understanding of the natural strengths and driving passion that make up your Unique Ability—and how you can use it to its full potential to create your greatest impact.

## BONUS: Guidelines for doing what you love.

1.

### Start eliminating.

Look at all the activities in your business and tell the truth about them, beginning with the ones that irritate you. Figure out how to STOP doing them, and realize that you can't do it all yourself!

2.

### Determine what's truly important.

Get clear on what clients and customers count on you for and that brings in money, but that you DON'T love doing. You don't need to be the one doing these activities—delegate!

3.

### Find your sweet spot.

Zero in on everything you love doing and wish you could do more of. This is where you provide leadership to your team and clients. By eliminating the irritating, you open up time for the exciting and motivating.

**Insights:** What did you learn from this strategy? What elements are most useful to you?

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**Opportunities:** What could be possible if you implemented or customized this strategy?

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**Actions:** What are the first actions you can take to increase your momentum in this area?

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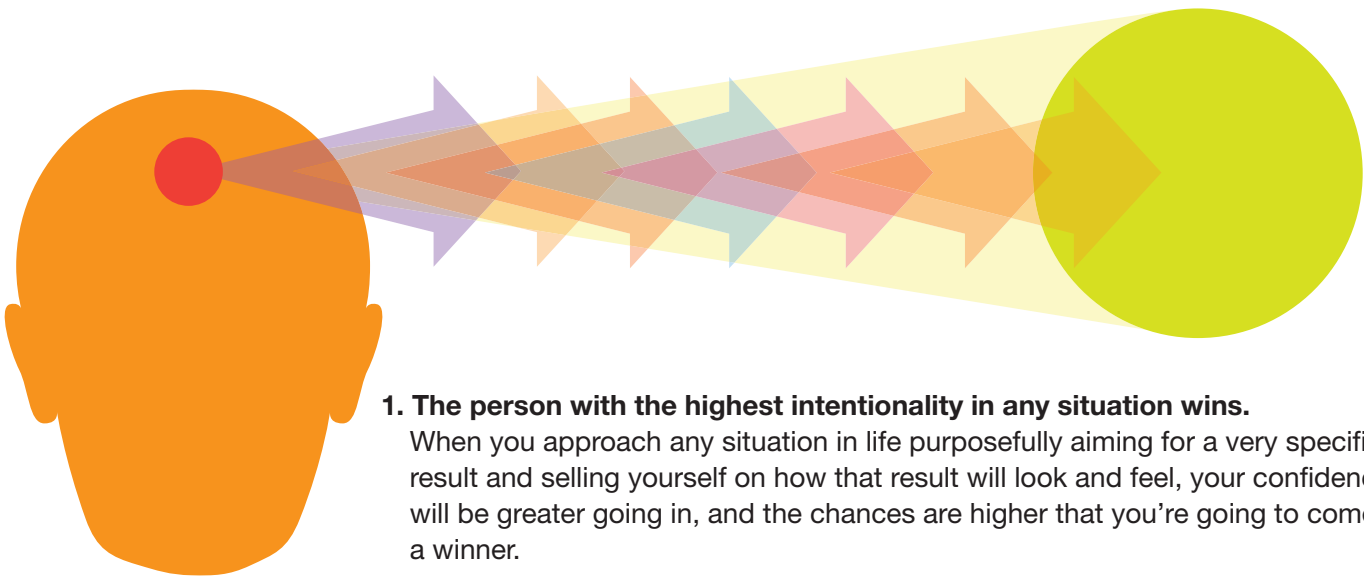
# STEP 2 In everything you do, be intentional.

Being intentional means having a powerful sense of purpose. It means knowing the importance of what you're doing and being very clear about what your ideal outcome looks like. It's actually selling yourself on and emotionally committing to any project or situation in life.

With entrepreneurs, it's all about results, with every decision and action focused on the growth of their business. This means intentionality is a critical mindset for any entrepreneur. The more clear you are in any given situation or on any project, the better and faster the result, and the greater the success—plus the easier it will be to sell others on the idea and get them emotionally committed.

## The intentionality mindset.

Developing an intentionality mindset is easy if you commit to making some relatively small changes to the way you're currently thinking and operating:



### 1. The person with the highest intentionality in any situation wins.

When you approach any situation in life purposefully aiming for a very specific result and selling yourself on how that result will look and feel, your confidence will be greater going in, and the chances are higher that you're going to come out a winner.

As an entrepreneur, wouldn't you want to be as intentional as possible, then, about any project you're about to get involved in? When you make highly conscious decisions that lead to a successful outcome, you do away with disappointing results that eat away at your confidence and ultimately decrease productivity.

### 2. Never go into any situation without being totally sold on your intentionality.

Sometimes, by actively thinking about your intentions in a situation, you'll find that what you're aiming for isn't right for you, your company, or the important people around you. You're not sold, and if you're not sold, you're never going to successfully sell anyone else who's involved. There's no harm in walking away at this point, and, in fact, you've saved yourself from getting involved in a situation that would likely be stressful and a waste of your time and money.

Intentionality  
is a critical  
mindset for any  
entrepreneur.

### **3. High intentionality multiplies high-quality situations and continually eliminates low-quality situations.**

Being intentional can also decrease your own involvement and time spent on a specific project while increasing the quality of your results exponentially. The important visioning you've applied to achieving a specific result on one project might easily be applied to another or many other similar projects or situations—and the whole documented process possibly followed by someone other than you! What a tremendous saving of your time and energy.

#### **What does intentionality look like?**

Almost all the trouble you'll get yourself into as an entrepreneur will come from trying to sell someone on something you're not sold on yourself. To avoid this, Dan always goes through a documented process to sell himself on a project or idea before taking any action whatsoever.

This process gets him highly focused on the exact result he wants to see, and the half-hour or so it takes to complete not only saves time for him and everyone else involved, it can weed out projects he actually can't sell himself on.

It's a hugely effective productivity strategy for organizing your thinking, getting any project launched, and planning effective teamwork.

Dan uses a proprietary tool called The Impact Filter™ to document in writing his intentionality. The thinking process behind it essentially looks like this:

**1. What you want to achieve.** The first step is to ask yourself what you want to accomplish, what the biggest difference achieving this will make in the end, and what the completed project ideally looks like. Describe not only the more concrete details, but how you would feel in this situation. This might point to some troubleshooting you might have to do, outside resources you might have to invest in, a change in timing, or any number of factors that will affect the success of the project.

- Consider things like what it will mean to you personally—for example, your confidence, your belief in yourself and your goals, your values, your reputation, your financial situation, your ability to keep growing your company, new opportunities opening up, your physical and mental well-being, your family's well-being, and so on.
- What about others who are involved? How will these people be affected—your client or prospect, your team, your partner, your spouse, family and friends, the people in any of the communities you're involved with? The more detail you're able to capture, the better prepared you'll be to move forward with confidence.

**Almost all the trouble you'll get yourself into as an entrepreneur will come from trying to sell someone on something you're not sold on yourself.**

**No one said that it  
has to be you doing  
all the work.**

At this point, you'll either have sold yourself, or you won't have, and you'll have to make the decision to move forward or let go of your idea.

**2. Best and worst.** Next, look not only at what the best possible result would be, but also the worst-case scenario in all its worrisome detail. (In fact, Dan recommends doing the worst-case scenario first.) Detail is the key here: Put your imagination and articulation skills to work, capturing each result as fully as you can. Once you're done, you'll feel like you're living that moment of elation or defeat. Either is a tremendous motivator when you think about it!

**3. Success criteria.** Last, clear-cut criteria for measuring the final result is critical. What you're looking at here is what has to be true at the end of the project. Again, the more specific you are on what your success criteria are, the more successfully you'll be able to get the outcome you're looking for. Success criteria are actions, decisions, communications, and completions.

Actual numbers, dates, dollars, and other ways of measuring success will not only get you much clearer on what you want to achieve, they'll give you solid benchmarks to measure against after the project has been completed—useful information for next time.

The intentionality process we've just described is most powerful when written down, diagrammed, or otherwise captured for future use on other projects. This document is not only a great way to repeat successes more efficiently, it's also one of the most effective ways to delegate.

**The ideal delegation strategy.**

Dan uses this thinking process before starting any new project, workshop, or event. He will also go through it before speeches, interviews, client meetings, and marketing events.

If he wants to sell anyone—clients on a new idea, the team on a new project—he knows that he has to sell himself first, then sell it to them, and then get them to emotionally commit. This is always, without fail, his delegation process.

In his own words, he's set out his expectations and measurements for a successful result. He's provided the "why" of it. With all of this clearly laid out, his team has all they need to get started, and they'll figure out on their own the best way of getting the result.

Dan says, "I don't involve myself in telling other people how to do things. I rely on the fact that if I'm asking them to do something, it's something I know they're better at than me."

No one said that it has to be you doing all the work, and, in fact, we believe you shouldn't. Why work harder and longer? Use this intentionality process to delegate, and devote your newfound time to doing more of what you love.



## **BONUS:** Guidelines for having an intentionality mindset.

1.

**Establish your purpose.** Lay out the purpose in any situation, understand why it's important, and get clear about what your ideal outcome looks like. At this point, if you haven't sold yourself on the project, you won't be able to sell it to anyone else. Abandon it.

2.

**Describe best- and worst-case scenarios.** Two things contribute to high motivation: excitement and fear. If you do decide to move forward, envisioning in detail what both success and failure would look like provides lots of both!

3.

**Establish your success criteria.** There is no progress without measurement. Come up with specific, measurable results in the form of actions, decisions, communications, and completions.

**Insights:** What did you learn from this strategy? What elements are most useful to you?

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**Opportunities:** What could be possible if you implemented or customized this strategy?

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**Actions:** What are the first actions you can take to increase your momentum in this area?

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# STEP 3 Delegate your schedule.

The best investment in your own productivity, bar none, is a direct assistant, who will handle your schedule and hundreds of other small but important details that clutter up your life and mind—and when added up, cost you hours of your time.

How many times in a day are you interrupted by someone who “just has to ask you a quick question,” and one thing leads to another and another? Or one of your top prospects calls back to finally set up a time to meet with you—tomorrow? Or the client you’ve accommodated by changing your lunch meeting three times calls again with a new date?

Here’s the real question: Are you still your own scheduler?

## **Best investment ever.**

Your direct assistant can be a huge asset to you and your business. A talented assistant leverages your ability to create results and provides confidence and peace of mind that everything is being handled.

A good assistant is your first and last line of defense against the endless distractions, interruptions, and demands that can separate you from your Unique Ability, the area where you should be spending as much time as possible.

At the very core of all your activities lies your schedule. A good direct assistant is adept at simplifying, organizing, and focusing your time, activities, and attention.

Not only do they schedule your time and keep you on track, they protect you and your time from scenarios like the ones we ask about in the second paragraph above, which might be “business as usual” for you. They’re the key to your working at what you love to do and do best, which is the true path to growth for you as an entrepreneur and for your business.

The right hire will offer a warm yet professional welcome to those who want a slice of your time and attention. They clean up “messes” that have been claiming space in your brain you’re not even aware of anymore—and, better yet, they can help prevent them in the first place. They’re organized, strategic, and just want to help.

## **The one-person show.**

Entrepreneurs are often terrible delegators. After all, they’ve been the one-person team doing it all and they’ve managed. It can also be difficult for them to give up control and trust another person. They mistakenly think that they can do it better, but that’s seldom the case.

Another hurdle to delegation is feeling guilty about asking another person to do a task you hate doing. You might think everyone hates doing it too, but this is definitely not true.

A good assistant is your first and last line of defense against the endless distractions, interruptions, and demands.

Entrepreneurs often resist hiring an assistant, yet it can be one of the smartest investments in the growth of any entrepreneurial business.

Think of the joy and satisfaction you experience landing a client you've been courting for months. The right assistant might find joy and satisfaction in creating a system for getting the most out of your schedule, organizing your important files, protecting you from details you don't have to be involved in—and training you to trust them and accept their help!

Consider the things that annoy you and that you hate doing. This person actually loves doing them. In fact, they're so much better at them than you are that once you give them up and see the leap in your productivity, you'll chide yourself for not hiring them much sooner.

**One person and one person only.**

Dan Sullivan has a schedule that's full and complex. He's found over the years that it works best when one person, and one person only, is in control of it—his Strategic Assistant®. All requests go through her, including his own. No one else can enter anything in his schedule, and she checks with Dan before adding any new requests.

Every evening, she lets him know what his upcoming day looks like, and again first thing in the morning. If he needs any paperwork or other information before a scheduled activity, she has it ready and gives it to him before it begins. If there's any follow-up afterward, she takes care of that, too, or hands it off to the right person. This allows Dan to be prepared, present, and at his best for any commitment he's made the decision to be involved in.

Your list of activities might differ from Dan's, but we'll bet the time involved in keeping on top of it yourself and the possibilities for conflicts or missed appointments is considerable.

Dan's system is straightforward, and when there's buy-in and trust on both sides, there's much less chance of error. And it keeps getting better with time as Dan and his assistant become aware of how improvements and efficiencies can be made.

Once his clients, personal friends, and other parties understand that in order to protect his focus time, Dan doesn't have a business phone at work or even a cell phone number or email address that's shared, they quickly get on board and trust that their message will be relayed to Dan through his assistant. If Dan doesn't need to be involved, his assistant knows who to contact to have the message or request taken care of.

You can see that establishing a strong, trusting working relationship with a direct assistant requires great communication and takes time and patience. In the end, though, you'll find that investing the time and the money will pay you back exponentially. Entrepreneurs often resist hiring an assistant, yet it can be one of the smartest investments in the growth of any entrepreneurial business.

**A true story.**

Dan Sullivan was once speaking with a client, a financial planner who had hit a ceiling. He was unable to focus on growing his business because he was overwhelmed with day-to-day activities. When Dan asked how many people he had working for

him, he replied that he was sharing one support person. Dan told him that at his level of success (\$250,000), he should have at least two full-time staff members. The financial planner insisted that he couldn't afford the cost.

In an earlier discussion, the client had revealed that he had recently made a \$50,000 investment in a highly speculative stock. Dan asked him to compare this investment with the cost of hiring one full-time, experienced team member at \$40,000 per year:

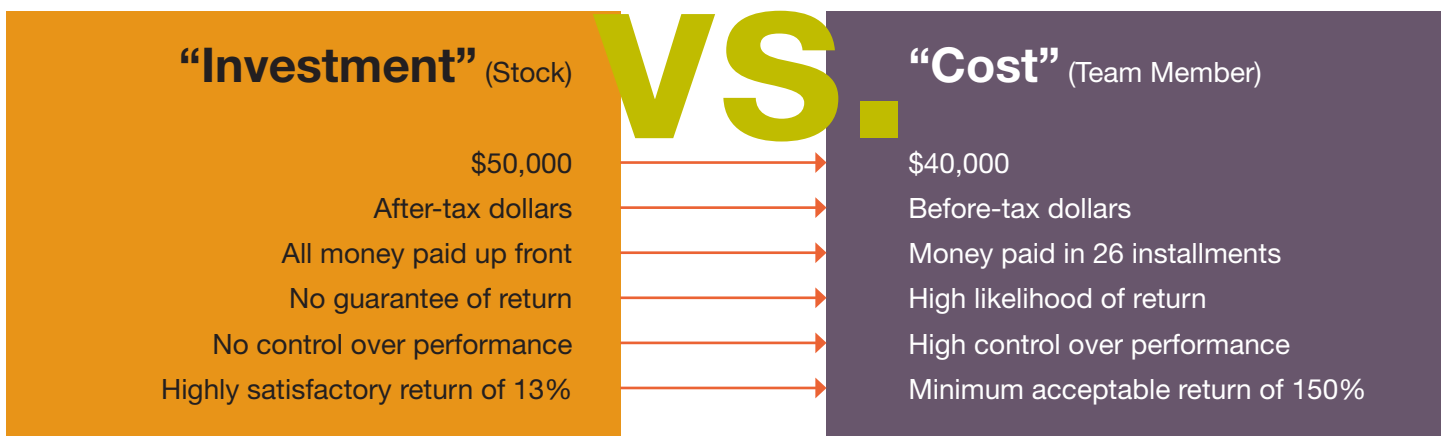
**After tax vs. before tax.** The "investment" was paid for with after-tax dollars, whereas the "cost" of an assistant would be paid for with before-tax dollars.

**Upfront vs. installment.** The investment had to be paid for up front, whereas the cost of a team member's salary would be spread out over 26 pay periods per year.

**No guarantee vs. high likelihood.** The investment was highly speculative, with no guarantee of return. When hiring a highly qualified team member, there's a high likelihood of a return.

**No control vs. high control.** There was no control over the performance or the outcome of his high-risk investment. Hiring a skilled person, on the other hand, would give the client a high degree of control because he could directly influence the team member's performance.

**Expectations of 13% vs. 150%.** When asked what rate of return he would find acceptable for his stock investment, the client said he would be happy with 13%. However, his minimum acceptable return for a new hire was 150%—\$100,000 on his cost of \$40,000. Because he was thinking of his new team member as a cost, he applied a completely different set of standards to this expense.



Start thinking of a direct assistant, or any other new addition to your team, as an investment to be maximized rather than a cost to be minimized. To break through your own "ceiling" and achieve your next level of growth, make this critical investment in *yourself* and experience a wealth of benefits.

## **BONUS:** Guidelines for working with a scheduler.

**1.**

**Make the investment.** Shift your thinking from employees as a “cost” to employees as an “investment” in your growth as an entrepreneur and in the growth of your business.

**2.**

**One person only.** All requests go through one person—no one else can make any entries into your schedule, you included.

**3.**

**Delegate all control.** Trust that there is a person out there who not only will do it better than you, but will actually enjoy doing it. Can you truthfully say you enjoy your role as scheduler?

**Insights:** What did you learn from this strategy? What elements are most useful to you?

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**Opportunities:** What could be possible if you implemented or customized this strategy?

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**Actions:** What are the first actions you can take to increase your momentum in this area?

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# STEP 4 Surround yourself with the right support people.

You might not relish the idea of relying on others—after all, you got where you are today on your own, right?—but doing everything yourself isn't much fun either. Nor is it very strategic.

To get started on the teamwork path, you must first overcome what we call the Rugged Individualist mindset: "I can do this better myself." It's easy to make yourself believe that involving other people will slow things down, but it doesn't; it actually speeds things up! You need to set your ego aside and shift your mindset to "we can do it better together."

In your own area of capability, interest, and passion, you are the best person for the job, but the circle of things you should be doing and that you're best at is actually fairly small. When you go outside of it, you begin to do too much, until eventually you reach the point of diminishing returns.

On the other hand, when you focus on what you love to do and are best at, and then develop the communication and delegation skills to partner up with other people who love to do everything you don't, you have the key to success.

## **A right-fit team that really clicks.**

Dan Sullivan's strategy to completely hand over the managing of his schedule to his direct assistant, which we talked about in the last section, is a tremendous start if you haven't already taken this step. If you have, over time, you've likely seen the positive effect this has had on your results.

The next step in freeing up your time is rounding out your team with other right-fit people who will support your focus and growth even further. The ultimate form of teamwork is what we call Unique Ability® Teamwork, where each person on the team is also working in their Unique Ability zone to support a specific area in the company.

With this type of team in place, everyone is doing what they love to do and are best at, and each team member is part of a high-performing whole. Everyone is more invested, takes more responsibility and ownership, and is having more fun. It might sound too good to be true, but it's not.

## **Do people like this even exist?**

Of course they do. There are all different types of people out there with all different types of really amazing skills. For example, let's say that an activity you're currently doing out of necessity but that you hate doing is cold calling.

You might be surprised to find out how many people there are who get tremendous energy from cold calling. They have the innate ability to jump in and try something new each day, they have exactly the right personality, they're strategic in their interactions with people, and it helps if they can shake off a whole lot of rejections.

You need to set your ego aside and shift your mindset to "we can do it better together."

Imagine that everyone in the company just knows what to do. They're clear about how to help the company reach its goals, and they're also highly motivated and passionate about getting those results.

You might hate doing it, but there are people who thrive on this activity. And there are also people who get great satisfaction from organizing and filing, or dealing with difficult clients, or searching relentlessly for the best price on the ideal photocopier for your company's needs.

Remember, just because you don't like doing something or aren't very skilled in a certain area, it doesn't mean there aren't people who enjoy doing it and are really good at it. They're out there.

#### **A Self-Managing Company®.**

Once you start putting in place the right-fit people who can take over the time-consuming, energy-draining tasks that keep you from what you really should be doing, you have the beginnings of what we call a Self-Managing Company. In this type of company, because each person is doing what they love to do and do best, they take complete ownership and responsibility. Here's what that can look like over time.

Imagine that everyone in the company just knows what to do. They're clear about how to help the company reach its goals, and they're also highly motivated and passionate about getting those results.

In fact, they're often happier when you're out of the office because they can get on with the business of growing the company without spending too much time reporting to you. You, in turn, trust them to make the right decisions and give you only the feedback you need to create the overall vision and direction for the future to keep them on track.

Beneath this idyllic reality is a system of communication and problem-solving processes and tools that everyone knows how to use and that quickly and effectively gets everyone on board and moving forward, no matter the challenge.

This is how a business based on each person working in their zone of natural strengths—in support of your natural strengths and goals—develops into a Self-Managing Company, creating the biggest payoffs for everyone.

#### **Dan's inner circle.**

If you want to create a Self-Managing Company, start with the people that directly support you. Aside from his direct assistant, Dan Sullivan's support team consists of two other types of roles. Dan is a visionary entrepreneur, an "ideas person." He comes up with the idea, his "innovation manager" turns his innovation into action, and then his "focus manager" manages the process. These two types of managers are very different, but each one plays an equally important role.

This is how you can spot the difference in people on your team whom you might be considering for one or the other role, or when hiring: When you give a process-oriented person your new idea, their first inclination is to put it at the bottom of their list of things to do because they already have processes happening that they're working through. You might be disappointed that they aren't immediately excited by your idea. Don't be; it just takes them some time to think about it and process what you've given them.

The inclination of an innovation-minded person, on the other hand, is to put your new project at the top of the list because they love working on new things, and they're probably as excited about your idea as you are. Today's idea is a lot more exciting to them than your three-day-old idea! These team members are problem-solvers who naturally facilitate and respond, and are results-focused.

Essentially, one type of manager defaults to "existing"; the other defaults to "new."

These two managers will consult each other along the way, but usually, it's best for focus (process) managers to take over only when it's proven that your idea is worth repeating. They will then turn it into an ongoing, sustainable process—and continue to make improvements over time.

About his core team members, Dan says, "For the most part, I just show up and do what is needed." Even when Dan is not there, his projects are still moving forward. His team is armed with the skills and tools they need to turn his vision into reality.

## **BONUS:** Guidelines for working with the right people.

# 1.

### **You make it up.**

As an entrepreneur, you're the ideas person. Your job is to create the vision, not execute on the tasks.

# 2.

### **Someone else makes it real.**

Your innovation manager is the one who figures out who, what, where, and when, and gets the ball rolling.

# 3.

### **Another team member makes it recur.**

Your focus/process manager picks up the ball and manages the process through to the end. If it's successful, they will figure out how to keep it happening.

**Insights:** What did you learn from this strategy? What elements are most useful to you?

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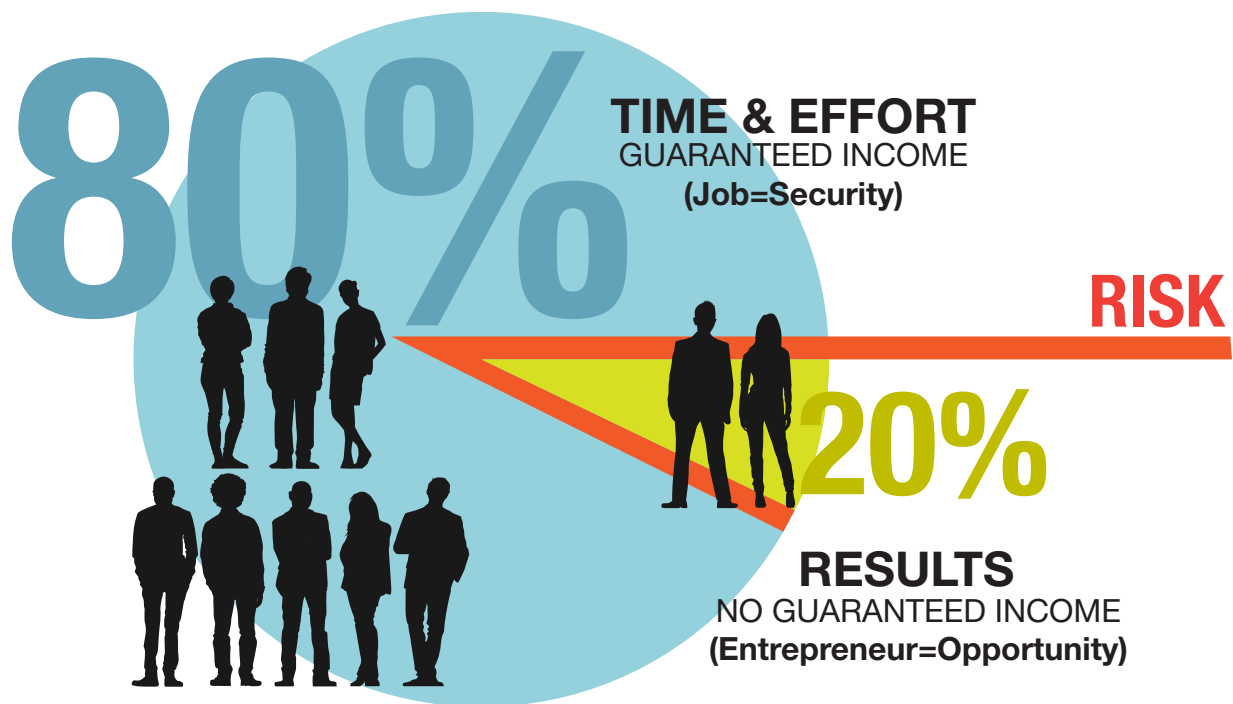
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# STEP 5 Focus on results.

In reality, the entrepreneurial world is very different from the world of corporate or institutional bureaucracy. Each operates in its own separate economy, which means that when entrepreneurs try to run their business using bureaucratic concepts and ways of doing things, they experience frustration, slow or no growth, and at worst, failure.

## The two economies.

The Time-and-Effort Economy accounts for about 80 percent of the working world. It includes government, bureaucratic organizations and companies, educational institutions, and so on. For the most part, they provide people with job security, predictable activity, and guaranteed income. Most people start out in this economy, and some stay for a lifetime.



The Results Economy, on the other hand, is based on the desire for greater opportunity, income, and freedom of action. This is the world of the entrepreneur, who gives up the comfort and safety of the Time-and-Effort Economy to follow their vision of a bigger, better future regardless of the risks involved.

For entrepreneurs, it's all about results. That's what fuels your growth and the growth of your business.

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business.

**Design a day where you always win.**

As your business starts to grow, there's a tendency for things to get complicated. Eventually you hit a ceiling, and, no matter how hard you work or how long you work, your business is at a standstill.

You became an entrepreneur to have the freedom to work on your own terms. In essence, you wanted to design your entrepreneurial career just like Dan Sullivan did his. It's our guess, though, that unlike Dan, you're still working as if you were in The Time-And-Effort Economy instead of The Results Economy. If that's the case, the way you're using your time on a day-to-day basis almost guarantees that you're going to lose the game that you designed.

Like many entrepreneurs, you most likely schedule too many things to be accomplished in one day. Let's say you put down ten things on your list, but at the end of the day, you've done only six. You don't see the six things you did accomplish; you see only the four things you didn't get done. As far as you're concerned, that was a losing day, while most people would say that getting six important things done in a day is a fantastic result.

It wouldn't be too bad if you did this on just one day, but there are entrepreneurs who have done it every day of their entrepreneurial career. They designed a game, but ever since they started playing, they've been on a losing streak.

Instead of getting home at night and going to bed with a sense of accomplishment and increased confidence, they go to bed on a losing streak. They're awake during the night because of the losing streak, and they have bad dreams because of it.

What do you think their frame of mind will be as they start their day the next morning, faced with another ten-item to-do list? You have to design a game you can win.

**To multiply, first you have to simplify.**

Dan's strategy around this is that he never does more than three important things a day.

He doesn't have a long list of things to be done; he has three things that he wants to accomplish. When he has completed those three things, it's not a matter of putting in the time and effort; it's about achieving a 100 percent result.

Startling to most entrepreneurs who hear Dan's strategy is that he's had days where he's accomplished his three things before lunch, and he's finished for the day. What he will do with about a half-hour of the rest of the day is plan his three things for the next day. Then he might do some reading or explore something that interests him.

Sometimes it happens that Dan does a fourth thing, which he considers "bonus territory" because the three things are his 100 percent.

**Get on a WinStreak®.**

Life is a game, and we can set it up every day so we're always winning.



At the end of each day, regardless of what happened, record your three biggest “wins.” Then plan your three biggest wins for tomorrow. This keeps you focused on your goals while recognizing and celebrating your achievements—or wins—along the way. Our free WinStreak app will help you keep track of these results and stay accountable.

Even if you experience setbacks, disappointments, or obstacles during the day, you know you’ll always have wins from today and have a plan to accomplish more wins tomorrow. You’ll find that tracking your progress in terms of wins will increase your productivity and kick-start your motivation.

The way you interpret your days is entirely up to you. Would you rather see your days as wins or as losses? It’s a phenomenal breakthrough to realize that you’re in control of your day—and your entrepreneurial career.

Our experience is that making this kind of focused, positive thinking a habit actually means anyone, entrepreneur or not, can be more effective, fun to be around, and enjoyable to work with.

## **BONUS:** Guidelines for focusing on results.

# 1.

**Remember, it’s not about time and effort.** As an entrepreneur, you’re totally results-focused. Celebrate the progress you’ve made, not the number of hours you’ve put in.

# 2.

**Celebrate three wins from today.** Little wins are just as important as the big ones because they give everyone a boost, increase confidence, and keep you moving forward.

# 3.

**Establish three wins for tomorrow.** Having three goals to shoot for daily keeps you on track and excited to tackle what’s next. Progress is a great motivator!

**Insights:** What did you learn from this strategy? What elements are most useful to you?

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**Opportunities:** What could be possible if you implemented or customized this strategy?

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**Actions:** What are the first actions you can take to increase your momentum in this area?

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# Nothing changes if you don't take the first step.

As Dan Sullivan has said, “There are two necessary conditions to become an entrepreneur: absolute confidence and total ignorance.”

As an entrepreneur, you've taken a leap of faith to start your own business. You've taken a risk that 95 percent of people on the planet won't take. You've given up security—a steady job, a regular paycheck, and clearly defined responsibilities—in exchange for unlimited opportunity. You're betting on your intelligence, expertise, and problem-solving abilities to generate the types of creative solutions that people are willing to pay you for.

Why not continually increase your chances of achieving all you envisioned when you made the decision to become an entrepreneur?

The 5 strategies Dan Sullivan has put in place to support his productivity each workday are strategies he shares with entrepreneurs who come to Strategic Coach to become better leaders of bigger, better companies. They not only want to fulfill their own purpose in life, but contribute greatly to their families, their teams, their industries, and their greater communities.

Why not start with one strategy that you can see would make a difference in your business? It might be easier than you think. Within that strategy, start small, then build. Every bit of progress counts, making your life a bit easier and more enjoyable, and your results continually more rewarding. It's the getting started that's important.

And don't forget to celebrate your successes, even the ones you might consider insignificant. We know they could be the start of something amazing—but that's a story for another day.

**We wish you every success!**

**Contact us for more information  
about Strategic Coach and what  
we can do for you.**

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