

Organize Your Business for Max Productivity

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Today we're going to talk about how to organize your IM business to achieve maximum productivity in limited hours. Just a little bit of discipline and a little bit of ingenuity -- that's all it takes -- and you're going to get a lot more done than you ever thought possible.

So I'm going to walk you through some practical steps here. I'm going to give you some of the big picture stuff. Then we'll get right to the nitty-gritty, too. So you're going to get it all today in this seminar, and it really first starts with determining your three to four most valuable skills.

Determine Your Most Valuable Skills

Once you know what's going to make you the most money or currently makes you the most money, that is stuff you should be doing every single day.

So let me walk you through it here. These are my three to four most valuable skills.

Really, this first one here is a mindset kind of thing, but copywriting is something that makes me a lot of money. I got to sell products; so I've got to write the advertisements for those products. I need to create those products as well; so product creation is something else that makes me a lot of money. And e-mail marketing -- to get people excited, to keep them in the loop, to build trust, to do all kinds of other stuff; so when I give them my offer of my product with really good copywriting -- make a lot of money.

And finally focus. Just being able to handle all of these tasks running a business and still be able to get a bunch of stuff done in a minimal amount of time. That's my most valuable skill.

So the trick to that is every single day I'm either creating a product, e-mail marketing, writing copy, and then I'm focusing. Whatever I'm doing I only want to focus on that one thing -- this, this, this, or this.

Now the interesting thing is most people don't do their most valuable skill every single day. They're too busy either messing around, or they're too busy working on minutia stuff that doesn't give them their big results.

Write a List

So let's first of all -- you want to start out creating a list. If there's skills that aren't making you money right now, determine what three or four skills are going to make you the most money, and start doing at least one if not all of those every single day. Do something. Maybe it's a small thing, but you should at least do something every single day like that.

The cool thing here -- the other interesting thing is I play to my strengths. I've always been a very good writer. So these things are all writing for the most part, except for product creation. The other thing is I've just been a good communicator in general all my whole life; so I work on those strengths. I'm not very analytical, and the fact that I get bored very easily if I'm trying to analyze numbers and try to do all this weird traffic stuff. I don't like to do a lot of things; so I don't do those things for the most part. Those don't play up to my strengths.

So these are my most valuable skills that I'm also very good at naturally, that I have an inclination to be good at. These things I have proven made me a lot of money; so that's what I do.

It's like I say here -- do at least one of those skills every single day.

Do The Most Important Thing FIRST

Now here is the real secret to getting a lot done in a little bit of time here: Do the most important thing first thing when you wake up or have time to work on your business. So right now I'm finishing up a batch of videos for Daily Seminar. It is 6:51 a.m. on a Saturday morning my time. So I woke up, got my caffeine, cleared my head; and then as soon as I felt focused, this is the very first task I did today. I did not check my e-mail -- I guess I lied. The very first thing I did this morning was look at my numbers and see how much money I made since the last time I checked my PayPal account. That's always a good way to start the day out.

But after I did that, this is what I'm doing. And then I got four other videos I go to shoot after that. Then when those are done, I know if I do nothing else for the day, I'll be happy because these are something I absolutely had committed in my mind to getting done. So that's one example.

However, if I get all these done -- it's a Saturday. That's when I really like to get caught up on customer service, so that'll be the next thing I do.

And then when that's done, if I still have time -- because I got to go into town today and negotiate some stuff out for my mom -- when I come back, if I still have time, I'm going to start working on a product that I have to do. So there's product creation, and this is technically product creation too.

So that's what I'm going to do today. I have it all laid out -- focusing on one thing at a time. But I'm doing what I deem to be the most important thing first right as I have woken up. Yes, it's hard until you get the habit, because it's so seductive to want to check e-mail or to want to just -- I don't know -- check the forums or mess around, get on Twitter, get on Facebook. I'm like, "No. I got to get this done." So this is the very first thing I'm going to do in the morning.

Enter Simplicity

The next step here is to practice the art of simplicity. I always tell people -- stress this -- think less, not more. When people come to me with a big idea, I have noticed something very interesting. They cannot succinctly describe it to me. It typically takes them forever. They don't know how to drill it down into three or four things and just explain it to me like that right off the cuff. And that usually tells me that it's too cluttered in their mind. It's not organized well in their head; so therefore, it's not as likely to get done as if it was very simple in their mind.

And so notice the art of simplicity I had today. I'm going to shoot five videos is what I got to shoot, take a break, come back, do my customer service, take a break, come back, start working on a new product. That's pretty freaking simple. I just explained it to you. And if you ask me what I was going to do for the product -- transcribe the ads, then do an analysis for the ads because this is a copywriting product. And then when that's done, start working on the PDF report. Then how are you going to write the PDF report? I'm just going to use my formula, the WWHW formula -- why, what, how, what if. There you go.

I could tell you pretty much every single task I can break down into two or three sentences. That's important because I have learned to identify critical elements, and that's what I work on -- the critical things, the most important stuff for that task.

So for this video, it's not very hard for me because I've done it before -- critical elements. I'm going to write up the mind map, queue up Camtasia, record it, and explain each of these points until about 20 minutes has gone by. Then I'm done. That's the critical element.

Notice sometimes there's misspellings here, and sometimes there's things I add to the mind map as I'm shooting these interviews, but that's secondary. I wanted to make sure you guys got at least the core information here, and that's very critical.

Identify Critical Elements

So you learn how to identify the critical elements in any task, and then just work on those critical elements. There's usually a handful of them. And then everything else that's not one of those big critical elements, don't worry about it. Just let it fall wherever the hell it falls. It's usually going to be good enough if you

just go and put it out there as quickly as possible. Don't spend a lot of time on it. Just make sure you get those three or four things that really stick, that really make the difference. That's how you actually practically use the 80/20 rule.

And finally, you've got to develop a strategy to learn how to deal with overwhelm. So here's my strategy for dealing with overwhelm. Whenever I get the feeling of "I'm overwhelmed. What do I need to do next?" -- which these days is very rare because I've got the strategy -- I simply stop and say, "How can I reduce this down to something extremely simple that I can think about in just two sentences?" -- whatever task I'm dealing with.

So if I'm getting this overwhelm "What do I do next?" -- stop. Describe to yourself in two sentences exactly what needs to be done next. That's forcing yourself to be simple. Then once you do that, just take the very first thing and start moving forward with it. Whatever that sentence is, work on that first part of that sentence, second part, all of the sentence, all of both sentences -- whatever the case may be.

So you stop and reduce what's causing your overwhelm right now into a simple one or two sentence statement that will give you information on what to do next.

These days I never say "What do I do next? What do I do next?" I can't remember the last time that's popped in my head as a worry symptom. It's usually "This is what to do next," because I'm never overwhelmed anymore because I just break stuff down to its simplest form.

The next step to organizing your business to get the most done in the least amount of time is developing a regimen.

Develop a Regimen

In a normal day, what does your schedule look like? This is one of my favorite questions to ask clients because it usually baffles them. I say "In a typical workday, what are these tasks that you do day in and day out?" They're like, "I don't know." I'm like, "Interesting. Do you think that if you had a very powerful productivity regimen that you'd get a lot more stuff done?" Yeah, of course you would.

And so first of all I do my three to four most valuable skills -- at least one of those -- every single day in my business. But I know what my day looks like almost every single day. I usually start at the same time. I usually work the same amount of hours, 3 to 4, 3 to 5 in the morning. I usually take a break, come back, work another 2 to 4, 3 to 4 hours, take another longer break, come back, work another 2, 3, 4, or 5 hours depending on how I'm feeling.

I schedule my most important stuff to do first thing in the morning, and I do that as long as it takes. Then I work to what I call my mid-level tasks, and I do those

usually in that middle block. And then I do my low-level tasks -- which don't require a lot of thinking, just a lot of my time -- at night when I don't need to be sharp. I repeat the process day in and day out.

So my three to four most valuable skills -- I'm doing one of those for that first block of time. I'm either writing the copy, creating the product, working on an e-mail campaign, a launch campaign -- stuff like that. I'm just working on something that's going to make me some good money.

The second part of the day I might be connecting with people. I might be fine-tuning my goals. I might be checking my stats and seeing where I'm at there, and I might be just getting ready for new products, whatever the case I have to do that I think is going to set me up so tomorrow I can hit the ground running and doing another very profitable task.

So that's my regimen. And every single day I want to be at least creating something, otherwise I would get depressed.

So you should have stuff you do the same way at the same time every single day in general, otherwise you'll never really get to that unconscious level to where you can work on autopilot because each day will be just like the first time riding a bike. That's going to be the enemy of productivity; so develop your regimen.

Enter Parkinson's Law

The next step here is to understand Parkinson's Law. What's Parkinson's Law? Parkinson's Law states that the task at hand expands to fill the allotted time.

So if you say "I have five weeks to create this product," guess what? You'll find a way to take five weeks to create that product in most cases. You got two weeks before this homework is due. You'll find a way to wait two weeks to get that homework done because you have the allotted time of two weeks. That's why everybody crams at the last second. That's why everybody waits to the last second to do taxes almost except for those people who understand Parkinson's Law and take measures to prevent themselves from falling into that trap.

Now think about this. This is very interesting. If you don't set a deadline, guess what? The task expands to fill the allotted time. If your allotted time is forever or tomorrow and tomorrow never comes, you're never going to get it done. So everything should have a deadline that you do in one form or another.

Now I'm not a stickler for deadlines like my buddy and business partner Robert Plank is. He'll say to me sometimes "Okay, when are you going to have this done?" I'll say "It depends, dude." It'll be done when it's done right, but at least I have a deadline as far as not like an exact time and an exact day, but it's either going to be that day, tomorrow, the next day, the launch date, whatever.

The cool thing that you really want to train yourself is to work with both soft and hard deadlines. What you want to do is say "Okay, when does it absolutely have to be done? It has to be done this time, like a week from now. When would I like this to be done, though? Well, if I do everything right and the cards all fall in the right sequence and I don't have any major unexpected interruptions, I can probably do this in five days. I'm giving myself seven days so I don't stress out about it and I'm realistic because I know life intervenes from time to time, but I would love to get this done in five days."

Hard and Soft Deadlines

So you set the deadline -- I'm going to shoot for five days. So if you miss that soft deadline, you still have not missed the hard deadline and you'll still get it done in that time. But a lot of times by setting this little deadline, you'll get it done even two days faster than you should because things will work out pretty good for you, or you'll find a way to make it work.

I've used Parkinson's Law to really blow my business up. The first time I said to myself when I wanted to create a product, I say "Jason, what's stopped you in the past from creating a project?" The answer was I always just never finished it. I would work on it for a little bit, put it off, work on it for a little bit more, get distracted, and then I'd look at it later and say "I don't like this anymore. I'll just start over again." That's a problem.

So I said to myself "It looks like to me if you're going to finish this, you got to start and finish it all in one sitting." So I went out, and that's what I did. At that time the task at hand expanded to fill the allotted time. The allotted time was one sitting. However long I could work for one sitting -- that was how long it was going to take to create the product.

When I set my mind to it, I found solutions that would allow me to achieve that goal. That's what Parkinson's Law does. It forces you to come up with shortcuts to get the result that you want because you know you only can do it in a limited amount of time. So set tasks with both hard and soft deadlines. That simple thing -- as stupid and simple as it is -- so few people do it. And if you do do it and discipline yourself to do it on a consistent basis, you don't need any fancy tricks. You're going to expand; you're going to get a lot more done; and you're going to be a lot more profitable.

Think Off The Clock

Do your thinking off the clock. This is my next big tip here. I strategize at the stoplight. I plot while standing in line. I determine my to-do list while doing the dishes. I organize my thoughts in the shower.

This is how I typically write copy. Usually it's first thing in the morning because it's usually the most important thing to do. I like to start it off fresh since it's

such a high-level task. So the night before I'll give my brain a command before I go to bed. I'll say "Yo, brain. Why don't you figure out how to write this copy for me when I go to sleep? Organize it and make it all nice and everything so when I wake up in the morning it's all ready." I talk to my brain like that. I don't necessarily say it that way, but I'm very casual. I just rely on my subconscious to do my thinking for me while I'm sleeping. Your unconscious mind can do that.

So I give myself a good command; I sleep; I wake up in the morning, and I already feel like I can just do it. Then before I sit down and write the copy, I like to feel as comfortable as possible and as clean as possible because it helps me focus. Take that shower. While I'm taking that shower, that's when I'm developing the hook. I'm taking all the information my brain worked on last night while I was sleeping, and I'm laying stuff out. "This is going to be the hook. This is going to be how I'm probably going to open this. I'm thinking this is where I'm going to slide the proof in."

So I'm doing all my organizing while I'm doing something else that I don't have to think about -- like taking a shower -- so when I sit down and start taking action and start working on my business, I don't have to do that organizing. I'm ready to go. I'm ready to hit the ground running. I do that stuff all the time.

I typically like to figure out my next plan of action while I'm driving somewhere. If I'm driving to the store or whatever and I got ten minutes to kill, that's when I'm thinking about what I'm going to do next. That way I'm never thinking when it's time to make money. I'm thinking as little as possible, and I'm acting as much as possible. That is a huge secret to productivity. Use your downtime to do your thinking, to do your plotting, to do your strategizing, to organize what you got to do the next day -- that kind of stuff.

Do that off the clock so that way when you're on the clock, your action is central.

Stick With It

Another tip here is find one thing and stick with it and see it through to the finish. I just gave you an example of multitasking, which is funny because now I'm going to tell you multitasking is usually a dumb idea. I mean it by this -- multitasking during profit hours is usually a dumb idea, meaning that when it's time for you to sit down and make your money in your business, you should be taking action as much as possible. And multitasking is usually the enemy of focus because you're switching your compartments from this task, where you're putting on your mind state for that task over to this task, and you got to switch your mind state again.

That usually results in diminished productivity or a lot of stupid errors. So when it's time to write the copy, that's all I am doing. I am not doing anything else. I'm just focusing on that. I'm not like "While I'm waiting for this to format, I'm going to take a quick break." If I take a break in copywriting, I sit down and I don't think. I don't look at the computer. I don't do anything else. I just relax.

I don't say "Oh, it's break time. I'm going to go dick around for a little bit and check my e-mail," because then I'm losing my focus. Even when it's like "It's all done. I just got proofread it," I still don't go check my e-mail. I just take a break, stare out the window, chill in my basement, and tinkle on the keys a little bit -- because I got a piano down there; maybe just listen to some music while I'm just recharging my batteries for a couple minutes. Then I go back and do it. Then when it's done, it's done. I don't have to think about it again.

With multitasking, you're using your RAM in your mind -- like RAM on a computer. You only have so much RAM to devote, and when you split it between tasks, every task becomes slower.

Distraction-proof yourself, meaning try to turn your phone off or put it in the other room. Turn off Skype or go on invisible mode. Take all those things where people can access you and limit your accessibility while you're doing this task. Then when it's done, you'll have more time to be social and to do all those other things that at this time would be considered distractions.

Distraction-Proofing

Then here's some practical tips. You want to get a lot more done in your business? I use dual monitors, and I think everybody should if they're already kind of clocking it on the internet making a little bit of money. If you're not making money, dual monitors is not your most important thing to take care of right now.

Being more productive at making no money still means you make no money. But once you start getting a little successful -- I use dual monitors because it's very less stressful for me to have to hop back between different screens -- one screen, different browsers and all that junk. I just stick one browser over here that I need to get access from and put something else over there. Like right now this mind map is a full expansion on one screen, but the time that it's taking -- so I know what time I'm at -- is on the other screen. So that's all I can look at over there. "Oh, there's the time." Sometimes I do this with webinars, where I put all the webinar stuff on one screen, and just my screen that I want to show the attendees on the other screen so that way I can focus just on that.

I use paper and pen mostly to keep track of ideas. I don't like techie stuff because it's slow. You've got to fire it up; it's not as accessible. I have my paper and my pen within a millisecond's reach of me. Grab it; write it down, put it over there; it's done. Then when I finish that task or whenever I don't need that note anymore, I just crumple it up and throw it away. Super low-tech, super stress free, but super easy to do.

I use as little technical stuff as possible because technical stuff tends to break or tends to act in a way that it's not intended to act. It happens all the time, and it's a headache. So as much technical stuff as I can bypass as possible. That means I

don't use a lot of software. I don't use a whole lot of things where I have to depend on that working instead of me working.

And I keep my environment clean because it helps me keep my mind clean. It helps me keep focused. There's less distractions. So that's another really good tip.

Big Picture Optimist

And finally, I'm a big picture optimist, small detailed pessimist. The example I was told by Dan Kennedy, which I always really enjoyed -- he goes "I'm confident that the plane's going to get there when I'm flying. I don't think it's going to fall apart and we're all going to die. But I'm also pretty sure that the stewardess is going to be mean to me, that my flight is going to be delayed, that my luggage isn't going to show up, and all these things are going to happen to me. I'm going to be sitting next to the woman with the baby who's crying -- all kinds of stuff like that."

And that's true. I'm the same way. I hope for the best, plan for the worst. I know I'm going to make all this money. I'm sure that my server's going to take longer than usual to upload, that 15 people are going to want to talk to me that day, that something's going to be weird in my formatting in my sales letter that I'm going to have to troubleshoot and fix for some inexplicable reason that just happens that way -- all kinds of stuff like that.

So I go in knowing that that stuff's probably going to happen, so when it does happen, it doesn't stress me out; and I can continue to move forward because I've expected it and I anticipated it, and I set myself up to handle it as best as possible. That's some practical tips to mix in with some of this higher-level thinking stuff. Put these together, create your own plan, and you'll be able to get a lot more done in a lot less time.



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