

# OWN YOUR TIME

Nearly 90% of the leaders we work with admit that the biggest gift they could have would be a magic extra 4-8 hours per week to do several things that don't seem to be getting done at work. Why is this so common?

Currently, with the shelter in place / remote workforces, time is even more precious as it is often stretched between family and work obligations without clear boundaries. Mostly this is OK- as everyone understands how complex life is right now during the pandemic and economic downturn, but perhaps you feel like Sam (not his real name).

Sam has a growing product and services company that is about 5 years old, financially successful yet not enabling Sam and his development team to realize new products they think will make a significant difference in their market. While the company is stable in this downturn, a bigger paycheck isn't the trade off he wants for more hours of work each week. He built the company to become an industry innovator and forerunner, not just do larger volumes of the current client work. Sam is a confident and smart CEO, open to trying new approaches so we recommended that he track his activities where he spent time for just one week, listing what he worked on for every hour spent. We asked him not to change his usual patterns. As with most leaders who do this assessment, he was surprised at what got his attention and just how little control he felt over owning his calendar. Key learnings included; improving staff training so he has fewer client issues to address, document processes where breakdowns are becoming more repetitive, empowering more senior staff to own client projects and finally, blocking out a defined time each week for longer-term strategy planning which invigorates his commitment to the business. In the past quarter, Sam has also gotten quite good at running better online staff meetings, checking in on key clients through internal project owners and he is starting to build relationships with new product suppliers and manufacturers. What changed?



**SKILL:** Self awareness to make better choices about how his own time was spent.

**WILL:** His willpower to change came easily as the changes created the chance to be innovative and move the organization towards realizing bigger goals he cared about and he also gained more freedom from day-to-day client expectations.

## TIPS

- Self-assess where you are spending your most valuable commodity: your time. Build a system that works for you, keep tweaking it until it does.
- Set 3 growth goals per quarter for yourself and get coaching help to obtain them if you are not realizing them.
- Clarify company "cascade" goals for each direct report and support each of them as they each define "how" to achieve them.
- Create weekly space for strategy planning that invigorates you - whatever keeps you engaged in the reason (purpose) you work.
- Get comfortable with saying four things:
  - "No , I don't have the time for this now
  - "I believe you can fix this and if you can't, be specific about the help you need."
  - "I'll do the biggest priority project first on my list each day when my energy is highest ."
  - "Meetings need to be short and focused, requiring my input for me to be there."



## MAKE IT HAPPEN

**01. Assess** - Do an honest hour by hour self assessment of where you spend your time for at least one week, two weeks is ideal. The more specific you are the better as you will be surprised. Then build a plan that fits you.

**02. Prioritize** - Document the three critical focus or growth areas where you want to and should spend your time, both at work and home. Be realistic, while "stretching" is OK, running a marathon each day isn't. Delegate everything else or only do the "leftover tasks" after critical areas are addressed.

**03. Leverage Your Energy** - Define when your energy is best and work on the hardest or biggest priorities then. For more information on raising your energy during this very challenging time, please reach out to us. This requires taking care of your health, your emotional stability, honing your skills and supporting your personal purpose.

**04. Say "No" when necessary** - Learn to say "no" to others and yourself particularly when you are stepping into projects, commitments or other obligations that aren't in alignment with your 3 critical areas. Saying "no" means saying "yes" resoundingly to your own plan.

If you would like to have a complimentary discussion to talk about creating a plan to own how you spend your time, please reach out to [connect@humanfirstworks.com](mailto:connect@humanfirstworks.com).