

UNLOCKING ENTREPRENEURIAL PRODUCTIVITY: THE POWER OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL TIME SYSTEM[®]

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STRATEGICCOACH.COM



THE TWO ECONOMIES



RESULTS

OPPORTUNITY

No Guaranteed Income
(Entrepreneur)

RISK



TIME & EFFORT

SECURITY

Guaranteed Income
(Job)

The Two Economies.

There are two ways of looking at the world—through the lens of time and effort, and through the lens of results. Most people find security in the guaranteed income a job provides, and they don't have the desire to take on the risk of owning a business. For entrepreneurs, they've chosen to cross "the risk line" into what we call "The Results Economy." In this economy, there is no guaranteed income—only the opportunities created. It's all about maximizing results while minimizing the time and effort involved to produce them. The Strategic Coach® environment and tools are designed specifically to help entrepreneurs and their teams maximize their results and opportunities. Don't forget to let others know that what excites you is opportunity, not security. Surround yourself with a community of people who think the same way.





THE ENTREPRENEURIAL TIME SYSTEM®



FREE DAY™ GROUND RULES

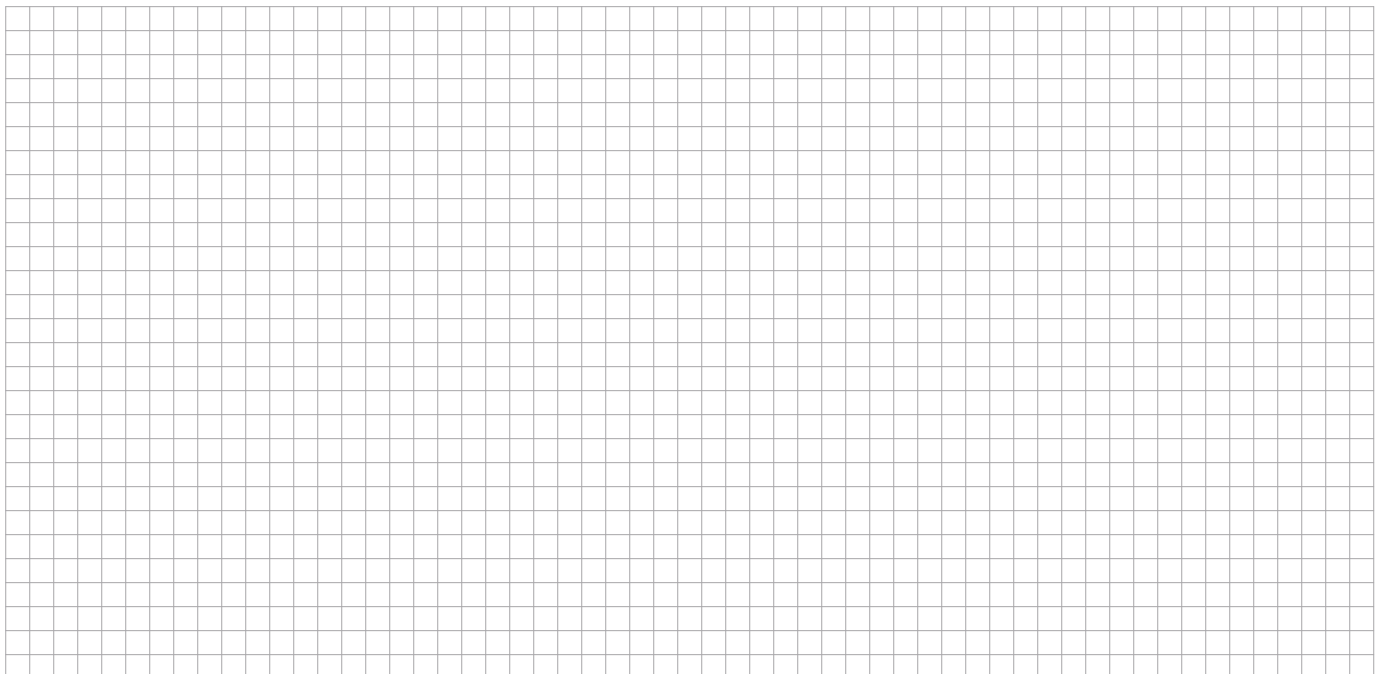
- A Free Day is a 24-hour period, from midnight to midnight.
- No focused business-related thinking or reading.
- No communication with the office.
- Schedule your Free Days ahead of time.
- Plan vacations one year in advance.

FOCUS DAY™ GROUND RULES

- A Focus Day is a 24-hour period.
- The focus period is 80% of an average workday.
- Each Focus Day is devoted to your top three money-making activities, as well as anything to do with your Top 20 Club™ & Farm Club™.
- Plan your Focus Days 2 to 3 weeks in advance.
- Review your three Focus Day activities at the end of each 90-day period.

BUFFER DAY™ GROUND RULES

- A Buffer Day is a 24-hour period.
- Use these to prepare for Free Days™ and Focus Days™.
- There are three specific uses of Buffer Days™:
 1. Cleaning up messes
 2. Delegating “stuff”
 3. Acquiring new capabilities
- You may do Focus Day activities; they are a bonus.





STRATEGIZING THE TIME SYSTEM

STRATEGIZING THE TIME SYSTEM			
TYPE OF DAY	ACTIVITIES	OBSTACLES	ACTIONS
FREE DAYS™: REJUVENATION			
FOCUS DAYS™: PRODUCTIVITY			
BUFFER DAYS™: PREPARATION			

 A large grid area consisting of approximately 45 columns and 30 rows of small squares, intended for detailed planning or notes.



HOW TO HAVE GREAT FREE DAYS™

Develop the skill of never being fatigued.

As Vince Lombardi said, “Fatigue makes cowards of us all.” When you’re tired, you stop creating, taking risks, communicating, and delegating. How do you prevent fatigue? Regular Free Days™ keep you constantly refreshed, creative, and energized. Smart thinkers are well-rested—they have the brain power to think differently. Free Days make sure the “best you” shows up every day.

Rejuvenation generates creativity.

In The Entrepreneurial Time System®—designed specifically for high-achieving entrepreneurs—Free Days come first. Why? Because they’re a necessary precondition for periods of high achievement. Think of an investment model—you’re investing in your most important asset—you. The skill of taking great Free Days is developed over a period of years, but each step will produce immediate results. The big payoff for developing this skill is rejuvenation on all levels: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, creative, and visionary. As a result of this rejuvenation, you’ll experience increased productivity and enjoyment at work and at home, along with deeper and stronger relationships with everyone in your life.

Free Days lead to strategic urgency.

Schedule your Free Days in advance and “take them off the board.” This will create a sense of strategic urgency. Because you’ll have less time available, you’ll be forced to be strategic about which activities you do and which you don’t do. Those activities that creep into your day or take up all of your time now need to be filtered so you’re focusing on what generates the most revenue and the best results. Ideally, schedule your Free Days one year in advance. You can always shift things around, but keeping these days available is a crucial step to making Free Days happen.

Let your team take over.

Another huge payoff of taking Free Days is that you grow your team. What if you weren’t around for them to ask for help? Consider this: Maybe your going away is the best thing that could ever happen to your team. They’ll have to figure things out and make decisions without you. Use The Delegation Filter™ to train them how to use your best judgment while you’re away, and you’ll develop “partners” rather than dependents. They’ll learn. They’ll take on more responsibility. They’ll make mistakes, and then they’ll learn some more. But in the end, your clients will be better served, and you’ll be freed up. It’s a win-win from every angle.

Struggling or just starting out? Here’s a trick.

Think in terms of four different types of Free Days. If you’re a Free Day™ beginner, start by taking “structured away” Free Days. In other words, go away, and make sure you’ve got lots planned. For example, buy a non-refundable ticket to Club Med and sign up for all of the activities available every day. You’ll be away and so busy, you’ll barely have time to think about work. Once you’re good at this kind of Free Day, still go away, but have your days less structured. Wake up, read a book, play volleyball, and have a few plans, but have some flexible time as well.



HOW TO HAVE GREAT FREE DAYS™

After you've mastered these "away" Free Days, start taking Free Days at home, but make sure they're well-structured. Book the spa, lunch, golf, dinner, or a show, and stay busy so you can't swing by the office. Finally, you'll reach the ultimate Free Day, where you're completely comfortable taking unplanned Free Days at home. You're free to spend your time however you like and can easily resist the temptation to work.

But what will you do with your free time?

Start by listing your favorite non-work-related activities. What do you love to do most when you've got free time? If you're out of touch with this, start small. Maybe there's a favorite restaurant you enjoy. Or maybe you like going to movies, shows, or sporting events. Start booking some fun activities to do either by yourself or with others. Over time, you'll get back in touch with more of the personal activities in your life that you most enjoy.

The Olympic model of Free Days.

As we all know, not all Free Days are created equal. If your ideal Free Day involves being with your kids, having a nice lunch, playing golf with friends, and then going out to a movie, the day you spend mowing the lawn or doing errands won't feel like a Free Day at all! If you're still doing a lot of Free Day activities that you don't really enjoy, consider the Olympic model, where a Free Day is either gold, silver, bronze, or the dreaded "tin foil." Look to put some golden activities in each of your Free Days and try to get the tin foil activities done at the end of workdays. Better yet, hire someone and delegate personal tasks that you don't find fulfilling. You won't regret it.

How many should you take?

Many people want to know how many Free Days to take. This will vary per person and depends on your starting point, but let's do some simple math. If you look at taking 150 Free Days per year, that's actually not very many. Here's a breakdown: 52 weekends = 104 days; statutory holidays = 10 days; two weeks' vacation = 10 days. Total = 124 days. That leaves only a few more weeks to reach 150. Set your goal based on how many Free Days you're currently taking and set a realistic target to aim for.

Preparing for Free Days.

Always plan a few Buffer Days™ before and after Free Days so you can get ready to go and caught up once you return. Before you go away, make sure you set your team and clients up well. Update your team on projects and empower them to take charge while you're away. Also be sure to communicate your Free Day plans to your clients. If they know in advance, they're usually very supportive and willing to deal with someone else on your team. Once you book some "no-kidding" Free Days (like a non-refundable plane ticket), you'll also see how productive you can be!

FREE DAY STRATEGIES

1. Schedule a year in advance. Make sure to book Free Days before periods when you know you're going to be busy or productive.
2. Don't be tempted to take work along "just in case." It will distract you and occupy your mind.
3. Look at each experience as learning. As you go along, figure out how to proactively eliminate any possible Free Day interrupters or obstacles.



HOW TO HAVE GREAT FOCUS DAYS™

Recognize their importance.

To achieve true freedom as an entrepreneur, it's important to get a handle on your time and money. The place to start is with your Focus Days™. When your Focus Days are working, this gives you incredible confidence about your ability to generate revenue and to be in control of your time. When they're not working, it becomes tempting to cancel Free Days™ and postpone important clean-ups, delegations, and new capabilities. Every day becomes a Buffer Day™, you feel drained, and your momentum stalls.

Fine-tune your activities.

If your Focus Days need recalibrating, The Focus Day™ Booster will get you back on track. Take the time to get really clear on the activities you do that generate revenue. If you have a direct relationship with the marketplace, your Focus Days will involve selling, prospecting, and client appointments or calls. Keep in mind that your clients are paying for your expertise being applied to their issues, so the time you spend doing client problem-solving is also a key Focus Day activity. If you get your results through other people, your activities will involve meetings with those people (e.g., your sales team). Time spent with them, strategizing and solving problems, will be one of your main Focus Day activities.

Get your team to help protect them.

Whatever your Focus Day activities, it's important that both you and your team know what they are. Then plan and organize your time in order to spend 80% of your day doing them. Have your team help you. Be rigorous about interruptions, use signage to let people know when you are and aren't available, and postpone non-money-making activities until your next Buffer Day. Doing this will get you back on track and feeling on top of your work rather than feeling like your work is controlling you.

Work with your Top 20 Club™ and Farm Club™.

Remember that you want to be connecting with your key relationships and opportunities on your Focus Days. If your list isn't up to date, make it a priority to get it current. Keep your Top 20/Farm Club™ list handy, with contact information, so you can connect with these key relationships while you're on the road or if another meeting falls through.

Focus Day activities = Unique Ability® activities.

Ideally, your Focus Day activities will align with your Unique Ability activities. However, that's something to work toward, not something that happens right away, and it can fluctuate with changes in your marketplace and industry.

FOCUS DAY STRATEGIES

1. Designate someone on your team, like your key assistant, to be responsible for scheduling and protecting your Focus Days.
2. Plan your time at least three months in advance, blocking off your Free Days first, then scheduling in Focus Days. The remaining days are Buffer.
3. Distinguish between Focus and Buffer Days. Each type has a distinct purpose and requires different kinds of energy from you. Separate them so you can stay in either "productivity" or "preparation" mode.
4. Schedule time with your Top 20/Farm Club.



HOW TO HAVE GREAT BUFFER DAYS™

Buffer Days™ create the foundation.

Within The Entrepreneurial Time System®, Buffer Days are often the most overlooked and least appreciated. Yet Buffer Days are crucial because they allow you to put structures in place to support your future success. Without this “buffer” zone, it’s challenging to build a foundation that will lead to greater revenue and free time in the future. When you first start the Program, you will most likely need to schedule more Buffer time to clean up past “messes.” This is normal. Don’t be too hard on yourself. One by one, as you clean up each mess, you’ll feel a burst of energy and freedom. Going forward, you’ll need fewer Buffer Days, and they will become more strategic and future-focused.

Buffer Day™ activities.

Overall, Buffer Days are about clean-ups, delegations, new capabilities, and preparation—the activities that set you up for great Focus Days™ and great Free Days™. Just like an entertainer or athlete who needs to practice, rehearse, and get organized, so do you. For those entrepreneurs who have a direct relationship with the marketplace (clients or prospects), Buffer Day activities can include:

- Cleaning up messes, organizing
- Delegating, training
- Scheduling, routine paperwork, filing
- Planning for your own business
- Learning new capabilities, business reading
- Hiring, orientation
- Communicating with your team and suppliers

Client preparation: Buffer or Focus?

Many people only consider time spent in front of a client as Focus time and everything else as a Buffer activity. However, if you look at it from your client or customer’s point of view, the time you spend applying your expertise to solving their issues is what they think they’re paying for. By that definition, creative problem-solving becomes a Focus activity, as is preparing for a client meeting or proposal that you’ll be paid for. Parts of the preparation might be delegated, but the part that only you can do is Focus. It may be helpful to think in terms of work that you’ll get paid for as Focus Day activity and work that is non-paid as Buffer Day activity. Following this thinking, then, when you’re working on your own business, it’s a Buffer activity.

When your primary “clients” are your team members.

The one case where your Buffer activities will look a little different is if you don’t have a direct relationship with the marketplace and your primary “clients” are your team (company leaders, sales team). In this case, your team members become your Top 20/Farm Club™, and working on your business and leading your team will be Focus Day activities. Your Buffer Days become days where you’re getting yourself organized and delegating, freeing you up to give direction and clarity to your team.

Clean-ups.

Let’s review the six main types of messes that add to the complexity and frustration in your life. Messes can be administrative (paperwork), environmental (office space), financial, health-related, legal, or relationship-oriented. Some messes are more important than others, but all can be a burden that dampens your energy and distracts your focus. Over time, not only will you clean up past messes, you’ll get better at not creating new messes. Your time will be better structured, you’ll have more support, and you won’t commit yourself to activities outside of your Unique Ability®.



HOW TO HAVE GREAT BUFFER DAYS™

Delegations.

There are a number of activities you're currently doing that are likely not the best use of your time and talents. These activities can often be delegated to people who are more interested and/or skilled in these areas. Consider delegating activities such as administrative details, bookkeeping/accounting, project preparation, research, routine problem-solving, and scheduling. Start with a key assistant. Step by step, build a team around you so you can be free to focus on your top revenue-producing activities.

New capabilities.

To grow your business, you constantly need to be putting in place new capabilities. These can include learning new knowledge and skills, developing new markets, hiring new people, building new strategic alliances, and bringing in new technologies. Often, we don't feel as though we can take the time to invest in learning because there are more urgent items that need our attention. However, having Buffer time to put these new capabilities in place is crucial to becoming freed up and leveraged.

Draw the line between Focus and Buffer.

It's essential to get very clear on the types of Buffer activities you have in your business. While you might spend 20 percent of your Focus Day doing Buffer activities, you truly do want to keep Buffer activities distinct from Focus activities. Because Focus Days and Buffer Days each have a specific purpose, they require different kinds of energy from you. By keeping them separate, you can stay in a "productivity mode" or "preparation mode" as appropriate.

Scheduling your time: Start with Free and Focus.

First, schedule your Free Days and "take them off the board." This will create a sense of urgency and force you to use the time left more strategically to get your results. Then block off your Focus Days. You'll need to be selective about which activities and relationships warrant your time and attention. Your remaining days will be Buffer Days.

Structure your Buffer Days and package your projects.

Ask yourself: "How can I make the most of each Buffer Day?" A well-structured Buffer Day can dramatically improve your Focus Day performance. This is where your key assistant can be a real help. Many people leave these days as an unplanned free-for-all. Instead, package your messes, your delegations, your paperwork, your learning time, and your other Buffer activities and have your assistant schedule them into specific time blocks. Schedule an hour for correspondence, an hour for a catch-up huddle with your team, a half-hour for cleaning your desk, an hour for emails (perhaps a few times during the day), and so on. Find a way to have each day flow so it works for you and leads you to a real feeling of accomplishment.

Communicate your plan to others.

Be sure to communicate your plan and purpose to your team and ask for their support. Also, have your voicemail and email reflect how you're spending your time so your clients and team members know when you are and are not available. Arrange with people to be available to them on specific days or at specific times. If you describe the benefit to them, you'll often get their buy-in and support. In return, they'll get you at your best.