

7 Simple Ways To Supercharge Your Business

Surprisingly straightforward business tools that clear the clutter and stop your overwhelm so you can focus on building a business with **real** impact.

As entrepreneurs, there's always a ton on our plates. We have clients to serve, products to make, teams to manage, and content to post. And then the cycle repeats, and our businesses feel more like hamster wheels than the change agents we know they could be.

It doesn't have to be that way. Your business can be a source of joy, inspiration, and healthy revenue. **Read on for 7 tools that will get you out of overwhelm and 'busyness' that you can use right away!**

A note about links: none of these are affiliate links. Neither Backbone Business nor I personally receive compensation or commission from the companies mentioned. I just really like their products!



Oh, and in case we haven't met, I'm Jess Joswick.

I'm the founder of Backbone Business and I help brave entrepreneurs create calm, profitable, and scalable businesses that they were born to lead.

As a business coach, I work with founders to master the skills, mindsets, and habits they need to build a bold company that creates ripples of change in their industry and world.

Follow us on Instagram @backbonebusiness, where we share tips about entrepreneurship, mindset, and building calm businesses.

Ready for more? Find out how to build your business with more ease and profit:

www.backbone-business.com

1. Decide On a Destination

One thing's for sure: it's hard to have a fun roadtrip if you don't know where you're going or where the best sights are along the way. Begin with your destination in mind by setting some goals so you can figure out the rest of your route (you don't want to miss that fun beach town or the world's largest pancake, do you?).

Why It's Important

Goals are powerful—in fact, our brains have the same chemical response to something we've already accomplished as they do to something we have already accomplished. So goals orient our brains (and the rest of us) to what we really want—and rewards us for it!

How To Start

Put your answers to these questions in a really visible place—near your desk, your phone background, or your bathroom mirror.

Over the next 90 days...

How much do you want your business to make?

What's one new program or product you commit to launching?

What's one habit you'll adopt to take care of yourself?

2. Plan and Prioritize

If you're anything like me, your Google Calendar (or iCal) *runs* you. It's pretty handy for reminding us of events and tasks, but it's not great at prioritizing them. That's where a good ol' analog paper planner comes in handy. And not just any planner—one that requires you to rank your tasks.

I love the Productivity Planner—I create a short list for each day and week, and the structure combines a few time-tracking theories to maximize my working hours. There are lots of planners out there, though, so choose whichever speaks to your style—and gives you some space for sudden inspiration and free thinking.

Why It's Important

There's always so much to do, but it doesn't all need the same amount of energy, attention, and urgency from you. Without hierarchy, we fall into overwhelm fast. Also, according to a 2014 study at UCLA, we remember something better when we write it than if we type it (what was true in school is still true now!).

How To Start

Check out a few planners and find your favorite:

The Productivity Planner

Savor Life Planner

Day Designer

Full Focus Planner

3. Stay on Task

Nothing's more frustrating than having a list of work and for some reason, you're just. not. getting. it. done. Distractions abound—notifications, emails, coworkers or coworking mates, sudden inspiration about an Amazon order you need to make *right now*.

Fortunately, there's an app for that. Music helps our brains focus—but it has to be the *right* tunes. Studies have shown that mid-tempo songs (think old-school funk) have the right amount of bounce to keep us engaged with our work and not too tempted to break into dance. There's also research that lyrics pull us away.

Why It's Important

Willpower is exhaustible. Give yourself a hand in getting things done with the genre that helps you power through your to-dos.

How To Start

Try out one of the following:

Focus@Will, an app that uses simple demographic data about you to find the songs and genre that will help you focus the most.

Video game soundtrack radio

Brain.fm, which develops “functional music” for your brain

4. Track Projects

It all seemed so straightforward—you had one major launch or new task on your list. Then you realized that what you thought was 2 steps is going to take 8—and you're already behind on 3 of them. What gives?

Mushrooming projects is a huge part of entrepreneurial overwhelm, particularly if we're doing something new and can't anticipate how long particular parts of the project will take. Don't keep all of the bits and bobs in your brain. A project tracker app helps you think through it all, add notes and files, and assign tasks to others. Best of all, they work for any and all industries, and many have premade (but customizable) templates.

Why It's Important

There's a lot to remember—don't let important things like client work or internal projects slip through the cracks. These apps are a good place to capture everything pertaining to one project or initiative so the info doesn't get lost in email.

How To Start

Try a few digital project management apps. Here are our faves:

Asana

Monday

Basecamp

5. Less Typing, More Doing

Just checking in on the proposal...

Here's a little more info about me...

When are you free for a quick call to discuss...

If you're growing your business right now, you're probably sending a lot of emails that sound like this. The good news is you can do the outreach you gotta do and save time with text and email shorteners. Save things like your company pitch, URLs and links to events, and your bio to a code in a text shortener. And for extra credit, use Gmail's canned responses for common emails like the above, then add flair as you see fit.

Why It's Important

Saving a few seconds here and there doesn't sound like a big deal. But you know what happens—those seconds turn into minutes, then hours, then days. Give yourself more time (and give your wrists a break) by using free or low-cost add-ons to tools you're already using every day so you can spend time thinking about the content that really needs your energy.

How To Start

Install a text shortener like aText

Set up canned responses in Gmail

6. Ignore Your Phone

We're living in an age that's flush with content, news, and information—the problem is our technology is designed to help us consume and aggregate, not prioritize and inform. Our phones send us the same notifications for breaking news as we get for an acquaintance's wedding photos.

We need time to do what researcher Cal Newport calls 'deep work'—when our creativity helps us create connections across material and helps us think of new conclusions and ideas. And that time *isn't* found when we're scrolling.

Why It's Important

Our attention is finite, and our willpower drains throughout the day. A phone or device that's constantly pinging about cat photos will always take us off a slightly drearier, but important, task (say, finishing a financial spreadsheet).

How To Start

A few basic ways to be the boss of your phone:

- Hide all notifications except for phone calls and text messages
- Put your time-draining apps like social media in a group on the second screen
- Add an encouraging or inspirational background and lock screen
- Enable Time Limit on apps that eat away the hours

7. Break The Mold

It's easy to get stuck in the rat race of working long hours, keeping your nose to the grindstone, and ignoring personal lives and hobbies. How to get out of that grind: get some calm role models. Look no further than Basecamp co-founders Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson, who advocate passionately for their counterintuitive, mold-breaking approach to business.

Why It's Important

The loudest voices in business theory and 'startup culture' today usually say that overwork is what it takes to be successful. But overwhelm and burnout are real threats to your business and should be treated that way. Your business needs **you** in it. Learn about the other way to build a successful business from people who have been where you are.

How To Start

Read *Rework* and *It Doesn't Have To Be Crazy At Work*, Basecamp's manifestos on building calm and happy businesses and decide on 3 things you can implement in your workflow and mindset right away.