

# Top line Creativity with Bottom Line Revenue: How to Build Business

Are you a creative? Are you a salesperson? Are you optimizing your strengths? Strategies to maximize your assets and grow your business.

*I never dreamed about success, I worked for it.*

–Estee Lauder

## INTRO:

### WHAT DRAINS YOU AND WHAT SUSTAINS YOU?

Introduce yourself, your company and state what is your greatest strength and where are you most challenged in your business.

### PART 1: IMPORTANCE OF GOAL SETTING and TIME MANAGEMENT

*Rowing not drifting.* – Venice High School motto

- Map out big picture: set yearly, monthly, weekly goals and work backwards to obtain them ([see SMART Goals worksheet](#))
- For every 10 minutes you spend organizing, you save 30 minutes in execution. Take a hard look at how you use your time, then adjust to maximize the benefits of organization ([see Time Log worksheet](#))
- Listen to your biorhythms, aligning tasks with your energy levels and find the best place to focus on each task. ([see Time Management Habits article](#))
- In overwhelm? Break it down ([see Quadrants worksheet](#))
- Treat yourself when a difficult task is completed (chocolate, massage, museum)
- Make a DREAM BOARD, a physical collage or a Pinterest board to fuel you
- Share any time management tools that have worked for you

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**PART 2: FOCUS ON YOUR STRENGTHS and TEAM BUILD ACCORDINGLY**

*Building strengths is 8X more effective than eliminating weaknesses*

- Identify your greatest asset, what has consistently brought you success in your professional life? [Strengths Finder 2.0 by Tom Rath](#)
- Find someone whose strength complements your weakness. Employ or make a trade deal for services.
- Reach out to your network or mentor for ideas/solutions. Have virtual coffee.
- Create an accountability group and meet regularly ([see Accountability article](#)) [Stiletto Network by Pamela Ryckman](#)
- Get valuable FREE business advice from retired execs at [SCORE.org](#)
- Hire a business coach to get unstuck or progress quickly
- Enroll in a course, do webinars [Lynda.com](#), [AmyPorterfield.com](#)
- How have you recently cultivated your strength?

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**PART 3: ENGAGE IN THE CHANNELS YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE USES**

*Speak into your customers' listening*

- Identify your customer and how you can uniquely fill a need ([see Target Market article](#))
- What “added value” can you bring to outclass your competitors
- Be blunt and ask how you can improve your service or product
- How is your customer researching your product or service category? Tradeshow? Sales Reps? Traditional media? Social media? Surfing? Be there.
- Develop branding that engages your customer, find your voice
- Develop a media plan with a PR or media consultant – [search WithIt roster](#)
- Cultivate expertise on and offline
- Always exceed expectations
- How do you creatively promote your business with customers' needs in mind?

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# SMART Goals Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Making SMART Goals – Yearly, Monthly, Weekly

S – Specific

M - Measurable

A - Attainable

R - Relevant

T - Time-bound

- Begin by setting 3 main annual business goals. For example, “Net \$100k” or “Hire new reps” (Your yearly goals should not change).
- Next set 3 monthly action steps that are in line with accomplishing the yearly goals.
- Last, set 3 weekly action steps that are in line with accomplishing the monthly goals.
- Refer to this worksheet frequently, success depends on staying focused.

Write down your KEY three goals and three action steps to reach each of these goals. Be specific and brief. Select only those actions which will help you reach the goal.

**Year Goal #1:**

Monthly Action Steps

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly Action Steps

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Year Goal #2:**

Monthly Action Steps

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly Action Steps

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Year Goal #3:**

Monthly Action Steps

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly Action Steps

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Time Log Worksheet - tracking how you spend your time

	activity	daily? weekly? monthly?	did you plan to do this now?	insights
6 - 7 am				
7 - 8				
8 - 9				
9 - 10				
10 - 11				
11 - 12				
12 - 1pm				
1 - 2				
2 - 3				
3 - 4				
4 - 5				
5 - 6				
6 - 7				
7 - 8				
8 - 9				
9 - 10				
10 - 11				
11 - 12				

# Twelve Time Management Habits to Master in 2013

By Pat Brans



# Forbes

Benjamin Franklin (Photo credit: Wikipedia)

Nearly three hundred years ago, [Benjamin Franklin](#) came up with an approach to changing habits that has yet to be surpassed. A young adult seeking to straighten out his act, Franklin developed a list of thirteen virtues, jotting down a brief definition of each. These were character traits he took to be important, but in which he found himself lacking. He knew that nurturing these habits would bring about positive change in his life.

Starting at the top of the list, Franklin spent one week working on each virtue. In the morning he thought about how he would reinforce the new habit throughout the day. During the day he looked at his notes to remind himself of the new habit. At the end of the day, he counted how many times he fell back into the old habit.

While Franklin was surprised at first to see how “faulty” his behavior was, he was so resolved that he pressed on, working through the entire list in a thirteen-week cycle, and completing four such cycles in a year. As for results, he noted in his autobiography that while perfection was unattainable, he could see big improvements.

Modern psychologists recognize three key elements in Franklin’s three-hundred-year-old procedure for changing habits:

1. He started out committed to the new behavior.
2. He worked on only one habit at a time.
3. He put in place visual reminders.

## *Applying Benjamin Franklin's Method*

Here are 12 time management habits for the new year. Tailor these as you like, but whatever you do, work on one each week using Benjamin Franklin's method:

**Habit 1: Strive to be authentic.** Be as honest with yourself as you can about what you want and why you do what you do.

**Habit 2: Favor trusting relationships.** Put your efforts into building relationships with people you can trust and count on, and make sure those same people can trust and count on you.

**Habit 3: Maintain a lifestyle that will give you maximum energy.** Work your way up to doing aerobic exercise at least three times a week, eating a light lunch, and getting enough sleep.

**Habit 4: Listen to your biorhythms and organize your day accordingly.** Make it a habit to pay attention to regular fluctuations in your physical and mental energy levels throughout the day; and based on what you learn, make adjustments to how you schedule tasks.

**Habit 5: Set very few priorities and stick to them.** Select a maximum of two things that are your highest priority, and plan time to work on them.

**Habit 6: Turn down things that are inconsistent with your priorities.** Get good at saying no to other people, and do so frequently.

**Habit 7: Set aside time for focused effort.** Schedule time every day to work on just one thing.

**Habit 8: Always look for ways of doing things better and faster.** Lookout for tasks you do over and over again, and look for ways of improving how you do them.

**Habit 9: Build solid processes.** Set up processes that last and that run without your attention.

**Habit 10: Spot trouble ahead and solve problems immediately.** Set aside time to think about what lies ahead, and face all problems as soon as you can.

**Habit 11: Break your goals into small units of work, and think only about one unit at a time.** Spend most of your time working on the task in front of you, and avoid dreaming too much about the big goal.

**Habit 12: Finish what's important stop doing what's no longer worthwhile.** Don't stop doing what you considered worth starting unless there's a good reason to give it up.

# time management quadrants

{urgent and important:  
crises, project deadlines}

{important but not urgent:  
planning, relationships, projects, opportunities}

{urgent but not important:  
interruptions, distractions, spills, messes}

{not urgent and not important:  
time wasters, busy work, some recreation}

\*based on the principles in Steven Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

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## Join the Accountability Club – Redbook 2012

*These four women are letting us in on the real secret to their success: each other! Their accountability club--think Weight Watchers for work goals--will inspire you to round up your own dream team.*



*Photo Credit: Francesco Lagnese*

It's just before 8 a.m. on a Tuesday morning, and four women are settling into a corner table at an almost-empty New York City diner. The waiter hustles over with coffee and tea before the notebooks and iPads even hit the table--the women come in every two weeks, so he knows their orders. There's five minutes of chatter about a trip to Mexico that Cozy Friedman, the founder of the salon [Cozy's Cuts for Kids](#), just took. Then the group gets down to business.

"Dorothy, it's your turn to start this time, right?" asks interior designer Robin Baron. "I think so," says Dorothy Devlin, who cofounded the events and communications company [DevlinHair Productions Inc.](#) "I made a list of business goals and a list of personal goals." After she reads them, Anne Maxfield, the creator of [The Accidental Locavore](#), a foodie website, asks for copies. "Email them to all of us so we have them," she says. They then start to tackle the first item on Dorothy's to-do list: figuring out how to better incorporate new technologies like the iPad into the training programs she plans.

Welcome to an "accountability club"--where people meet up regularly to share their aspirations and, more importantly, push each other to see them through. The idea is to counter the everyday craziness of our work lives that makes it easy to back-burner our personal career dreams, like starting a catering biz or a nonprofit. These face-to-face meetings may seem like a throwback in a world where everyone crowd-sources their problems on Facebook, but they're catching on. "Since the recession, there's less of a stigma about wanting help with your career from colleagues," says psychologist Lynda McDermott, an executive coach and the author of [The Power of Peer Coaching](#). Examples are everywhere. In Los Angeles, actress Karen Forman has standing Monday-night meetings with four friends who are also in entertainment. Since they began helping each other rebound from the nonstop rejection that's a trademark of their industry, Karen has booked a small role on NBC's *Parks and Recreation*. For Sandra Cohen, a lawyer in New York, the members of her monthly group support one another as they try to make partner. "We're able to help with work questions that no one else would understand," says Sandra.

The same goes for Cozy's group. "All of us own our businesses, so there's no one above us to say, 'Hey, remember that thing you said you were going to do today?'" she explains. "It's easy to put things off, but when you bring a goal to the group, you have to follow up on it. Of course, you don't want to let yourself down, but you *really* don't want to let them down."

McDermott says that's exactly why the support-group model is so successful. "Research shows that if you simply say a goal out loud, your chances of reaching it go up. If you write it down, they go up more, and if you tell it to other people, it's almost a sure thing. These women are doing all three," she says. The clubs may also offer a little extra to women who tend to be ambivalent about ambition. A study from the Center for Work-Life Policy found that only 32 percent of highly qualified 40-something women described themselves as "very ambitious." These clubs are all about putting your dreams out there--without fear.

Back at the diner, over egg-white-and-veggie omelets, each member gets about 20 minutes to talk through her goals or nagging office problems. If any next steps are agreed to, like hiring a Web designer, everyone writes them down so they can follow up. And they collaborate freely, providing one another with resources and references: Anne recommended the woman who is now the COO of Robin's business. "Last year I branched out from doing just interior design, and I needed to hire someone to help me expand," Robin says. "I asked for suggestions, and Anne knew someone. Now I'm selling home decor on three websites, I have two licensing deals, and I'm doing a ton of web TV and videos. I couldn't have done that alone. The group saw what I needed and even found the person to do the job!"

At today's meeting, Cozy mentions that she has opened a braiding bar at one of her salons. "Do the creeps have it yet?" asks Robin, jokingly referring to Cozy's competitors. Anne wants to know if Cozy has copyrighted the idea. "What about turning it into a pop-up shop?" Dorothy says. Cozy scribbles furiously in her notebook as the women throw out more ideas. "How amazing was that?" she says after the meeting wraps. "I had no idea when we started what an incredible resource this group would be." Anne agrees: "They are three crazy-smart women who have my back and want to see me achieve all that I can. There's zero competition. It's business, but a pretty good description of what you want from a friendship, too."

### **Your dream-team checklist:**

√ **KNOW WHOM TO PARTNER WITH.** Pick no more than four people, and make sure you share at least one thing in common: industry, career level, or work style. Some people feel more comfortable with friends, while others think objectivity from strangers is best. What's key: respect and discretion.

√ **COMMIT.** Most groups get together at least once a month, and this time has to be sacred: no missing meetings, and limit rescheduling or things will fall apart fast. After the first few sessions, check in to see how the group is jelling and if the schedule still makes sense.

√ **USE ONLY THE FIRST 10 MINUTES FOR NON-WORK STUFF.** Chitchat can easily take over if you've got close friends in your club. Want to bring up that cute thing your kid said last night? Talk about it while people arrive, but switch to work mode once everyone settles in.

## 10 Questions to Ask Before Determining Your Target Market

April 15, 2013

The better you understand your customer, the faster your business will grow. But new ventures often struggle to define their target market and set their sights too broadly.

"We often overestimate the market size, and in many cases there may not be one at all," says Robert Hisrich, director of the Walker Center for Global Entrepreneurship at the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Glendale, Ariz.

Here are 10 questions that can help you determine whether you have a target market and what it is:

**Who would pay for my product or service?** First, try to understand the problem that your product or service can solve, says Greg Habstritt, founder of SimpleWealth.com, an Alberta, Canada-based advice website for small-business owners. Then, use that information to help determine who would be willing to pay for a solution. "Not only do [your potential customers] need to have the problem, but they need to be aware they have the problem," Habstritt says. He recommends using Google's keyword tool to see how many people are searching for words related to your business idea.

**Who has already bought from me?** To refine both your target marketing and your pricing strategy, see who has already bought your product or service, says Amos Adler, president of Memotext, a medication compliance app maker in Bethesda, Md. You can gain valuable insights by releasing the product in a test phase and letting potential consumers speak with their wallets.

**Am I overestimating my reach?** It's easy to assume that most people will need your service or product. But rather than make assumptions, reach out to groups of potential customers to get a more realistic picture of your audience and narrow your marketing efforts. You can conduct surveys, do man-on-the-street type interviews in stores, or organize small focus groups. "We get so passionate about the idea and how good it is that we overestimate the market size," Hisrich says.

**What does my network think?** As you try to understand your target market, it may be challenging -- and expensive -- to seek feedback from potential consumers through surveys, focus groups and other means. But you can tap into your social networks to get free feedback. Many people in your extended network will likely be willing to take the time to give you opinions and advice, says Bryan Darr, founder of Mosaik

Solutions, a data analytics company in Memphis, Tenn.

**Am I making assumptions based on my personal knowledge and experience?** Your own personal experience and knowledge can make you believe that you understand your target market even before you conduct any research, Habstritt says. For example, if you're a fitness buff and want to start a business related to personal health, you may assume you know your customer. "Don't assume that you can think like your target market," Habstritt says. "You have to ask them and talk to them to really understand them."

**What's my revenue model?** Figuring out how you'll reap revenue can help you find your target market, Hisrich says. Social ventures can be particularly tricky, he says, because without a specific plan for getting revenue it's easy to overestimate the size of the customer base. But if your revenue model is simply selling a product online, it can be easier to figure out a target customer.

**How will I sell my product or service?** Your retailing strategy can help determine your target market, Hisrich says. Will you have a store, a website or both? Will you be marketing only in your home country or globally? For example, an online-only business may have a younger customer than one with stores. A brick-and-mortar business may narrow your target market to people in the neighborhood.

**How did my competitors get started?** Evaluating the competition's marketing strategy can help you define your own target customer, says Darr. But of course, don't simply copy the marketing approach of your biggest competitors once you define your target consumers. "You must have a way of differentiating what you are doing from what the other guys offer," he says.

**How will I find my customers?** As you start defining your target customers, try to determine whether you can efficiently market to them. You'll need to do some market research and study your target audience's demographic, geographic and purchasing patterns. If you're selling from a storefront, you need to know how many people in your target market live nearby. If you're selling from a website, you need to learn about your prospective customers' online behavior. Understanding how to locate your customers early on can help you establish a game plan once you start building a marketing strategy, Hisrich says.

**Is there room to expand my target market?** Be prepared to redefine your target market or to expand it over time, Darr says. For example, figuring out whether you're targeting a domestic consumer or customers throughout the world can be a good start. As the power of mobile mapping has grown in the last decade, he's seen the number of target markets grow at his own firm. In the beginning, Mosaik dealt mostly with wireless operators, but now he also counts cable providers and broadcasters as clients, Darr says.

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# When to Prune a Product from a Line?

by Dave Samuels, Demand Media CHRON

*Products affect your business in several key ways.*

When evaluating your product line, whether a product is profitable is not the only reason to consider keeping or dropping it. How the product contributes to your growth strategy, brand management and production efforts determine whether you should discontinue it. Knowing what to look for in your product mix helps you decide when it's time to prune your line.

## Unprofitable

The most obvious reason for discontinuing a product is that it's no longer profitable. If you have items that produce low margins, reexamine your overhead and production costs as they relate to those items. You might learn low-margin products are actually not profitable. Evaluate the customer service costs, warranty work and return rates on low-margin products to determine if they are worthwhile to your business.

## Drains Resources

Even if a product is profitable, it might prevent you from making more money by producing and selling other items. For example, if the time you spend making one product can be spent making another more profitable product, you might discontinue the product with the lower margin or lower volumes. This should occur only if you know you can sell the extra product you produce. In some cases, decreasing production of one item, rather than eliminating it completely, might be better for your product mix. If a product requires more marketing, sales, information technology and accounting staff time, it might divert those employees from more profitable activities.

## Redundant

If you sell two similar products or customers will buy another of your products if you discontinue an item, it might be time to drop one. For example, if you sell a line of gift baskets, offering four different varieties of get-well baskets, you might be able to drop two of them without a corresponding decrease in sales. This might improve your purchasing power by creating better economies of scale if each basket features different items. If the baskets feature primarily the same items with only a few variances, dropping one or two might make it easier for you in terms of advertising, taking orders, stocking inventory and making the baskets.

## Doesn't Fit Your Brand

As your business grows and your brand evolves, products you launched with might no longer fit your image. An Italian restaurant that has evolved into a fine-dining establishment with an upscale décor and wine list might drop its calzones garlic nuggets, even if they are profitable, if those items make the restaurant look like more of a pizzeria. A salon owner who needed extra revenue from customer impulse purchases of costume jewelry in its early days might drop those items and add hair care products, manicures and pedicures to create a more focused product mix.



## **Topline Creativity with Bottomline Revenue: How to Build Your Business**

Presenter - Jana Platina-Phipps, Home Couture Collective

**Jana Platina Phipps** is well known as a trim designer with a refined vision for the use of trimmings in home furnishings and fashion. She established her reputation by creating a home decor division for the venerable fashion trim house Gelberg Braid in 1997, ultimately growing it to surpass their apparel business. In 2003, she received the Young Leadership Award from WithIt, the same week her daughter Giovanna was born, which motivated her to eventually start her own business.



In 2004, she launched Home Couture Collective, a firm specializing in branding, merchandising and sales representation for manufacturers. Based in New York, she is currently leveraging her expertise for Classical Elements, an innovative global trim and hardware supplier with headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina. Since her clients affectionately call her the "Trim Queen", she officially put on the crown in 2013, [www.TrimQueen.com](http://www.TrimQueen.com), to chronicle how the design community creatively uses trimming, and she credits last year's educational conference for the push to do so.

Jana's entrepreneurial streak started at a Junior Achievement program in high school, selling Gumby hats and customized Monopoly games, and continued through a corporate gift basket business called Life's a Picnic when she was underemployed in NYC. Her romantic Pillowbox concept, which featured hand-made, trim-clad cushions with vintage postcard windows, were both commissioned and sold in a Soho gallery. Today she is happiest in a factory buried in luxurious yarns and vintage passementeries, while speaking Italian.

Jana is currently WithIt's Northeast Regional VP, annually co-chairing the NY Design Tour. She is a big believer in sharing expertise, having benefitted from business coaches, wellness coaches, tennis coaches and birthing coaches for both Giovanna (9) and son Wilton (3).

### Education

B.A. Social Science, University of California, Berkeley  
Ca'Foscari University of Venice, Italy  
Continuing Education: Fashion Institute of Technology  
Parsons New School for Design  
New York University

Jana Platina-Phipps  
Owner  
Home Couture Collective  
1008 Main St. #204  
Peekskill, NY 10566  
Work phone: 917.882.8402  
Cell phone: 917.882.8402  
[jana@homeecco.com](mailto:jana@homeecco.com)  
Facebook: Trim Queen  
Twitter: TrimQueen