



Are you ready to create a structure that works for you?

One of the main reasons people become entrepreneurs is that they discover that *nobody else's structures will support them in the way they need them to*. They don't want to work the way other people do, they haven't found a place where they fit in, or, ultimately, they can imagine something better for themselves — something that can only be achieved by starting their own business.

One of the greatest opportunities of being an entrepreneur is that you get to create your own structure to support exactly the kind of life you want. Yet it's also one of entrepreneurship's greatest challenges. How well you structure your business and your life to suit your needs will have a major impact on your success and your quality of life, yet rarely does anyone teach you how to do this or even mention that it's important. So, quite naturally, despite all their talents and creativity, many entrepreneurs find that their businesses are not creating the foundation for the quality of life they want. In fact, the stress and complexity of running a successful business may be what's getting in the way of that life. The greatest opportunity facing any entrepreneur in this position is the chance to transform their support structures so that they can have the time, energy, and creativity to grow, thrive, and enjoy life in exactly the ways that matter to them.

The first step to capturing this opportunity is to realize the extent of the freedom you have. When you made the choice to go out on your own, you made it possible to experience freedoms that are unique to an entrepreneurial career in three areas: *time*, *money*, and *relationships*.

- **Freedom of time:** You have complete freedom to choose when you do and don't work, and how much time you spend working.

- **Freedom of money:** No one else decides how much you can earn. Your income is determined solely by how much value you create for others.
- **Freedom of relationships:** You get to decide who you're going to work with, both in terms of your team and your clients and customers.

A life that works for you.

These three freedoms provide the raw material to realize any vision of a great life. However, making the most of them is no easy task. Entrepreneurs are accustomed to innovating for the marketplace, but most aren't naturally inclined to spend the same kind of energy innovating for themselves.

This is largely because of unconscious assumptions we adopt about how business is done. Many of these assumptions come from expectations created in the bureaucratic world that have nothing to do with what makes entrepreneurs successful. They include, among others, the ideas that more time and effort translates into greater success, that you need to be there all the time to serve your clientele, and that things need to be done a particular way because that's the "successful" way. Other notions are developed in starting a business, such as the idea that if you want something done right, you have to do it yourself.

There are hundreds of such beliefs in every entrepreneur's mind, shaping their decisions and actions without ever consciously being questioned. Out of these notions, business methods are created. Structures form without the entrepreneur even being aware of them.

Yet the most successful entrepreneurs, the ones who have the best quality of life and the most freedom, are the ones who consciously and proactively create structures in their business to support the kind of life they want. These are the people who love their business so much, they can't imagine ever retiring, the ones whose spouses and children are incredibly grateful because they're so present. They see endless possibilities for growth, both personal and professional, and look forward to the enjoyment this will bring to them, their families, and others. They have a kind of confidence about the future that frames all of life's challenges as opportunities for new growth and value creation. We've seen this transformation take place thousands of times over the past 18 years in The Strategic Coach® Program, as entrepreneurs gradually put structures in place to make their businesses work better for them.

Starting with time.

In our Program, one of the first areas in which entrepreneurs are challenged to question their assumptions is around the freedom of *time*. The other two freedoms are equally rich with opportunity, but we start with time because it is the foundation for all enduring success. Time well spent increases energy, creativity, and confidence. Entrepreneurs often have trouble getting their heads around the idea that how much they work is *up to them*. The idea that taking more free time will lead to more money and capability is counterintuitive. They imagine all sorts of disasters that could happen in their absence. It's often only experience that changes their mind when they realize how refreshed and creative they are on returning, and see how their team has handled things on their own.

There are some common restricting ideas entrepreneurs have about time:

- They should be available to clients 24/7.
- They should be working every day.
- "This is just what business life is."
- At some point, they will have to retire.

This is what they imagine is expected of them, but none of these restrictions has to be true. These conventional expectations can be managed and changed — first in the entrepreneur's head, then in their clients' and cus-

tomers' minds. Two basic ways of achieving this are *delegation* — having your team handle things so you don't have to be there personally — and *training your clients and customers* — putting a process in place that makes them feel taken care of and produces results for them, but does so with less of your direct input.

What becomes possible.

Within your business, the ultimate purpose of freedom of time is to liberate you to do those things you love and do exceptionally well. All the delegations and structures are in place so you can spend more time doing what creates your best results. Besides giving you time to do things outside your business, this increases your income, creativity, and confidence, and your team's capability to support you.

A client of ours recently took a day off to go on a field trip with his child. Not only did he enjoy that quality time, he also talked with a teacher and found out that she was going to leave the school, and had a background in bookkeeping. He hired her as his office manager, figuring if she could handle eighth graders, she could certainly handle his team. By doing his bookkeeping, she frees up 10-15 hours he used to spend doing something he hated.

Because he was focused on building the structure he needed, he could recognize and benefit from this person's talent.

This example highlights a few important truths about building your own support structures. One is that it's a gradual process — a process that is as central to the success of your company as growing revenues or profits. In fact, it may be one of the most effective things you can do to bring about that growth. Another is that there is tremendous leverage in every bit of progress you make toward improving these structures. Even a small change that frees you up can multiply your productivity immensely by replacing a draining task, obligation, or relationship with something that generates energy, confidence, and enjoyment.

The ultimate rewards.

If any conventional structure would have worked for you, most likely you would have taken advantage of it.

Instead, you've embarked on an entrepreneurial career, which is an evolutionary sort of process. When you take advantage of the freedoms inherent in this process and build in structures to maximize them, you can enjoy extraordinary growth, increasing income, and an exceptional quality of life that allows all your dreams to be realized — even the ones you haven't had yet.★

The Entrepreneurial Time System® is a structure that can help you get the best results and most freedom out of your time. This system is outlined in our book, *The Time Breakthrough*.
<http://private.strategiccoach.com/store/product/16>

Many successful entrepreneurs have used The Strategic Coach® Program to help them create structures that enable them to work less, make more money, and do more of what they love. Click on the link below to read more about the Program.
<http://www.strategiccoach.com/workshops/index.shtml>

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