

Voiceover Artist 0:00

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling productive life, then you've come to the right place productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity. Here, your host Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:17

And Welcome back, everybody to productivity cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm Ray Sidney Smith.

Augusto Pinaud 0:24

I am Augusto Pinaud.

Francis Wade 0:26

I'm Francis Wade.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:25

And we are going to be talking this week about personal outsourcing. And this is the idea of how do we actually create more of ourselves? How do we get more done in the same amount of time, as we've talked about many times on the on the podcast before, really doing more in less time is not really the ultimate definition of productivity. For many of us here on the cast. We really do believe in being able to get the right things done with the right effort, the right resources, and so on and so forth. And so it's about having the right direction yet there is a reality that we all need to figure out how to get more done in the time that we're given the same 24 hours per day. And so how do we do that? And one of those ways, is through personal outsourcing. And so what I wanted us to do today is to first define personal outsourcing what it really means to outsource ourselves. And then the other parts are figuring out what types of services are available to us what kinds of things can we outsource to professional professionals and to professional services. And then finally, a little bit of discussion about technology and technology's role, replacing ourselves in getting some things done that we may not need to do ourselves physically, mentally, in the course of our days. So let's start off with defining what personal outsourcing is. I'm going to start with some of the characteristics of determining whether to use personal outsourcing one of the first ones that I think is one of the most important and also the one that people have to become the most aware of in their everyday life is what I call emotional landmines. And emotional landmines are really, when a task has a, a strong negative emotional resonance, some kind of negative response that you have to that thing. And many times it's that thing that's been sitting on your list for several days, maybe weeks, maybe even months, and years. And so if it has some kind of negative negative attachment emotionally for you, it's going to kind of it's a landmine in the entire task list or projects list. And it may just blow up the whole system, you may avoid your entire task list your entire projects list because of this one

particular potential landmine, and many times what you could do is you could just have someone else get started on that project. And that can be a huge relief for you in being able to move forward and getting things done. Next up is what I call the knowledge, skills gap characteristic. Is it better to have someone else do this thing? That is? Do they have better professional knowledge or skills to handle that project? Or is it better for you to learn the knowledge or skills going forward? Is it something that you're going to have to do on a regular basis and it's just best for you to get the education now, to be able to do that thing so that you can go ahead and get it done. The third criteria are typical characteristics of personal outsourcing. You know, tasks or projects are repeating chores. Is it something that is repetitive and rote that you can easily hand off to someone else with proper instructions, and they could probably do it as good or better than you and remove you from the process which can be really a huge time saver. Fourth, the mundane and while in getting things done proper GTD method We frequently talk about handling the mundane. In reality, if a project is or task is so mundane, you're unmotivated to start it, it could be really helpful to outsource that item to someone else, so that they can handle that for you. And then finally, I talked about the time is money characteristic and time is money is to the effect that is your time. If you take your own personal personal billable hourly rate, and if you don't have one, it's time to come up with one then what can you use? What How can you use that time better on something more strategic, that is if you have a project that is revenue generating and you could be working on that as opposed to something that is not revenue generating and therefore is is taking up your time? It's it's basically a time for money trade, you can you are going to have a cost benefit and the plus by doing the work that's strategic and billable versus the work that is not strategic and not billable, but is going to cost you less money to have someone else to do it than for the time that you need to be billing. So even if you again are not handling billable hours, you should absolutely create a billable rate for yourself, how much are you worth per hour? And once you determine that, then you can have some basic schema for being able to determine if I outsource this to someone, i X dollars an hour, and I'm worth this dollars per hour. Can I do something else with that time? And is it going to be more worthwhile than doing this other thing, and that's the time is money characteristic.

Augusto Pinaud 5:42

In top of what you said there is a couple of other important things I need, how much clarity you have on what you're trying to use the service for, you know, one of the biggest barricades I found when I when when people start getting into the service and getting into the workplace. assistance and getting into this kind of delegation is on really an understanding of what it is, as you were saying sometimes is, did you need to find out more before you can get there. And it is hard because the people who normally is looking into these solutions is people who's already doing a lot. They tend to be overworked and

already and tend to make the mistake of slowing down to think to see what they're going to delegate, you know, when I, when I coach with people, or one of the mistakes I see with delegation is they start delegating little, little, little more and more and more and more, but they actually have don't have necessarily an idea of what they're delegating, or what happened if the person they're delegating, disappear or change, stop working with them any of those little resources. So, all those elements are also important to take into consideration is not only what The reasons emotional obstacles, but how prepared are you to do that?

Francis Wade 7:06

I like your for your four criteria. It sort of helps me organize my own thinking. I've used quite a bit of help from different people, mostly online to do single jobs. Know when they get out have someone repeat a task, depending on the nature of the task. And right now I'm actually looking going to be start looking for someone to do some data entry. I got some information from a client, a spreadsheet, a printout of a spreadsheet, which has approximately 900 data points in it. The minute I saw it, you know, my, my eyes just glazed over and I said, Well, I hope I'm not the one who has to go into this so it falls right into that mundane category that you mentioned. And to know find someone I mentioned the service in a few minutes, but find someone who I can trust Probably be someone I haven't used either lately or have never used because I haven't done any data entry. I have delegated that recently. So I have to describe the job, I have to go through a few steps or two quality checks to pick the right person. And then there's the verification of the job, that they did a good job after the fact. So there's a few different steps that I believe we're going to be discussing. But getting all the steps done is a big part in delegating. Because it's, it's not finished until it meets my criteria for satisfaction, which means I need to put some pre thought into what my criteria are, how much time I'm going to spend checking the final work product, how rigorous it has to be. These kinds of things need to be sorted out before I even log into the site to find someone to do the job.

Augusto Pinaud 8:58

I was going to say On top of what you said, Francis also gets to be really important. How you are going to when you get to that point how you're going to, to delegate, but it's faster for me to do it because I don't need to explain it. That is true. And what I tend to advise people is, write down the explanation done. You know, don't say the explanation, put it right down. And then after you write down all those explanations follow you, step by step, forget about that you know what to do or how to do it, and you can do it faster. Go by your own script. Step one, open the browser, step two, go to this ad step, step three, this is the password. Because what happens sometimes with those allegations is we know the steps on the head, but don't consider the factors. That was my experience. When when I had my first virtual

assistant. I was really, really Frustrated, I wasn't asking difficult things I, you know, I needed plane tickets, I needed hotel rooms, I needed cars. And I said, where I want my two rooms when I want, what kind of car I wanted. And this person came back with questions that frustrates me incredibly, and I couldn't understand what it was until I wrote down the steps by steps and I say, oh, okay, now this makes sense when you get here. And you get all these other three variables that I did not put in there or did not explain this person need to go back and ask and for me, the answer was obvious, but not for this person because of the lack of explanation I was doing with that. And he's where I see a lot of problems with these things.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 10:48

I couldn't agree more that there is an importance to providing all of the resources necessary for any tasks that you're going to outsource personally, and that way, they are empowered to Be able to get through the task without you having to be involved as much. In my case, I'm very involved with my, my assistant. And so the the goal is to be able to be available for the things that need to be available to that person so they can get that work done. But then also for the things that you don't need to be available for, make sure they have everything necessary to get the job done. And that includes, as you mentioned passwords, but it could also include just basic information profiles. So in my case, my assistant has a profile of me and so she knows my basic preferences, if you want to call it that. And so when something happens, there is no question about well does Ray like blue or does he like red? You know, is he gonna want this particular day of time to have this Kind of meeting or that. And so there is all of that kind of personal nuance that you have to provide. And you can do that over time. And we'll talk about that a little later in the episode. But the idea here is that you really want to make sure you provide all the instructions as to giving instructions, I always liked the idea of recording, like literally screen recording with audio, what you want to outsource, if it's something that can be written screen recorded, and that is so much more helpful to show someone something once visually by doing it, and then they can just literally watch you do it. I do like written instructions myself personally. But I also like the idea of having a video recording of whatever it is that is I do this all the time with clients and if a client needs something fixed on you know, and they they're, they're not sure what's going on, I'll usually say hey, can you screen record the problem you're experiencing and or what it is that you want fixed and changed and if they can kind of show that then we can Have a more thoughtful discussion about it, because I can actually see what the pain point is that they're struggling with. And so I like to do that with any outsourcing that I'm doing, especially if I'm hiring a, some kind of Freelancer virtually to handle something for me in my personal life, I absolutely will record just a two minute three minute video showing them what it is. And if it's a repetitive task, I can do that one time, show them what it is I want to be done. And then going forward now they know

exactly what it is, what the outcome is on the other side and what all the variable steps are to getting there.

Okay, so I did want to just very quickly mention some tasks that you might want to outsource personally, just so you have an idea about what they are. And then I'll give you a little resource to some, some more suggestions that people do. One, for example, is waiting for utilities or other kinds of service providers to do services. On your home, so you have someone who needs to come clean the gutters, someone who's coming to replace the water meter on your on your home. So you have some kind of the Cable Guy, for example is the is the typical example. And if you don't want to sit there and wait for them and or you need to be at work and it doesn't fit your schedule, you there are there are what we call personal concierge services. And they are specific professional service providers who come into your home and are and can do those kinds of things for you. They can take your dry cleaning to the dry cleaners and bring it back home or the laundry services bring them to and from home. They can, you know do other kinds of things around the house for you that are of management sort. They're not actually doing the service but they're there to help liaise between a service provider and you and they are very, very helpful. I used to have one in what I lived in Alexandria, Virginia. And she was amazing. She would, she would be able to just deal with all of those kinds of mundane tasks and also house management tasks where, you know, I couldn't afford a butler. So, so it was really nice to have this person who was able to, for a small fee every month, be able to just you know, deal with the dry cleaning and picking up and dropping off the laundry services and meeting so and so at the house to pick up keys before we went on vacation and just things of that nature that were just so so helpful. And I really wish there was a service where I live currently that did that but you know, I'll keep looking. Then also, you know, you have the virtual assistant types where they can make appointments for you and make dinner reservations and all kinds of other fun things. dog walking services are absolutely in that realm of outsourcing services. There are now all kinds of grocery shopping services, meal prep and cooking services. And then of course research, you know, for if you need to buy a product and you're not sure what to buy mom for Mother's Day are present for dad on Father's Day, you can go ahead and have a service research products and services that might be useful may be of use to them. I will put a link to this in the show notes. But there is an article that's like 100 personal outsourcing ideas. And so I'll put a link to that in the shownotes. So you can look at other ideas for being able to do that. Let's continue to move along in not just the types of outsource services, but some of the specific services that are available out there for outsourcing. And so I wanted to start with the the food aspect of things because I know a lot of people have issues with being able to get their grocery shopping done and their food prepared and those kinds of things. And there are actually a whole breadth of services that are kind of out right now. And I think it's a prime time

to take advantage of them for a very good reason, which is they're all startups that are there. Have lots of VC money being pumped into them. And so they're all offering these dramatically discounted rates to get started. And if you want to play the game, you can like start a service for a month, get a really good deal, cancel that service, then start the next service, and so on and so forth. And you could probably get maybe like five or six months of these meal prep services for a really dramatic discount right now. So it's just, you know, it's worth it to kind of play the game and see whether or not any one of them is the right service for you and your family to kind of help reduce the overload and the overwhelm at least that I feel in my household with regard to meal prep, and just grocery shopping and so on, so forth. So I'll offer a few and then I'll turn it over to you gents, if you have any other suggestions. So there is, as I said, like kind of grocery delivery and food and meal prep. And so the grocery delivery service that we use is called instacart. And instacart allows you to go into the app and basically schedule your grocery deliveries. So it goes to the grocery store picks up the particular items that you want, and then it brings it to your home. And that's pretty much it. It's pretty fantastic. And I used to use another service that was in when I lived in in the DC metro area. And that was great because it would go to the grocery store, pick everything up, you schedule the delivery time as well. And in that particular case, they would come to the front door and my front desk concierge would like take them up to my unit and open the door for them. I've gave them permission to do so they would actually like put the groceries away for me, which was like super, super helpful, because you know, like the eggs would go into the fridge and the frozen food would go into the frozen food bin. And it was just really, really phenomenal. I wish that that service existed here, but it doesn't. And so and then of course take that to the next step. And then you have the the meal prep services, which are a series of The services that allow you to go ahead and have, they're not pre made, but sort of pre prepared, it has all the right ingredients and the right amounts already packaged for you. So all you have to do is open it up. And maybe you have to put a few other little things in there, like milk and eggs and whatnot. But the The goal is to have all of the the ingredients sort of kind of ready for you to cook. And I'll put a link to several of them that I've found over time. And again, like I said, they all have these startup pricing packages, so you can kind of get them at low discount to start with, but there's freshly hellofresh and Blue Apron. And if you listen to other podcasts, Blue Apron, I think is like the biggest of those that are doing a lot of podcast advertising, so you'll hear them on a lot of podcasts as well. gents, do you have any other thoughts in terms of other

outsourcing services or professionals that you might use?

Augusto Pinaud 20:00

Sometimes I tell people with those services, you know, there is service also plate and Blue Apron who will send you basically a whole

meal in the box or a couple of meals and you you have everything basically measured to go and they're a little bit more expensive than what you're describing on the groceries but also

Unknown Speaker 20:23
they're great for

Augusto Pinaud 20:27
that meal. That is difficult during the week. You know, a lot of households have couple of meals that are Piece of cake a Monday and fresher. I don't care I can cook coming the end of the week that I'm now tired that week has run over me comes Friday, and I don't want to cook or I don't want to think about the cooking. Let's make you know the bad decision or at least that's what I called, you know, I will I will readily go out for a good decision. So, but he's worked those services, you know, come to be really handy. Did you say you know what, I'm going to go to this service and then quarter the whole meal, but I don't need to think about the meal is going to come home all measure, I just need to just prepare, you know, maybe open a bottle of wine and go and that give also the sense that you are, you know, outsourcing the process but also you are getting at the same time a better treat than what I particularly will buy if I go out to the streets to try to get something

Raymond Sidney-Smith 21:35
Yeah, like that idea that you're making a better decision by having a healthy meal, you know, on on the you know, at the end of the week that you otherwise would have an unhealthy meal choice for so I really liked that.

Francis Wade 21:47
On a non food related note, I outsource the what? Not that outsource that I couldn't do it myself. The translation of my book to a company called Babel cube. And it's for those who are authors. It's a really interesting concept and it works, which is that you hire someone who speaks whatever language you want to translate into. And they take a percentage of the royalties of the book when it comes out in the foreign language. So I've been able to get my book out in Spanish, French and Portuguese. And I got halfway through Italian and then something happened to my translator and she fell ill so didn't quite complete that one. But that's it's outsourcing in a way, but it's really hiring someone because it's a job that I couldn't do. I couldn't even check it. The final product myself. I forget someone actually to do that. But um, that's one of the companies that I I like for a company like for small jobs is fiverr.com fi ve RR and I've had pretty good results. We've been 90% of the time there. Back to \$15 in price, so it's really about small jobs. But I've been able to develop a couple of relationships that have been pretty fruitful people who kind of know what I want. respond very, very quickly. I think speed is sort of their, their big value added and found pretty useful. It's not

that I've had to do a lot of prep work myself, it's been okay to know. Simply just sort of tell them what I want, then they come back with a draft, then I modify the draft and then and then they do the work and then we're done. So it's been it's been pretty seamless, very, very easy to use. And they cover a wide range of mostly online services or graphic arts. They also do try. They also do translations but not not book length really. But that's that's the those are two companies that are I'd recommend

Augusto Pinaud 24:01

on the meal plan, you know, you can make the meal plan more flexible or less flexible depending on the dynamic on the house. You know, we we as a family have had a meal plan for four years the problem for my wife is she don't like to repeat meals if you eat steak on Monday cannot be a steak on Tuesday. So what we did instead of thinking okay, Monday will be steak with potatoes Tuesday will be chicken with rice, is we just pick the days. Okay, so steak, chicken, you know, pizza and so far so on every day so that way, he doesn't feel for her the idea of that you're going to eat steak every Monday. It's a problem. But when you put just a generic you know what is the protein and you'll just find the surrounding for that protein. For her it doesn't feel as it is repeating. number one number two, it's Then a lot easier to plan, I know exactly what we need to get. But number three, for families, you know, it is really important that the person in charge of that menu is the person who cares the most about what we are eating. Okay, they're in every finally there is a person who cares about data structure, okay, knowing you know that at 6pm, or at 5pm, there is not going to be a stress about what we're eating today. But instead, that's already, you know, at least set plan in a certain way. And that's the person who needs to take the quote unquote control into that menu, then what tend to happen is that person tend to give away that control of that menu and what it produced is a lot of distress in in the family. So it's something that is quite interesting to see from the outside and by the way, do I I said that you know not as a database for many years, but look into if you are the person who cares who is trust you the fact that you don't have the menu that you need the menu, then take care of planning that and make sure you know the basics are there for you to have the menu even if you don't share it, you know, in again, in many cases the other person don't care so and we tend to make the mistake of try to make it you know, a team activity. There are some family activities that are team based and work great. There are some of them that are not menu planning one of those, at least on my experience,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 26:41

anything that is a meal preparation service is not going to satisfy every meal of the week. I'm just I'm don't have that kind of money to have someone making food for me and delivering it to my front door every every day of the week. But it is great for for what Cousteau was talking about which is having kind of one or two two meals per week

that are pre prepared. So that you know, on a Saturday evening, you don't have to think so hard about having to make a meal because it's already prepared for you. And then having at least one other relief pitcher during the week, so that you can have kind of a night off and in terms of mental energy regarding what you're going to eat, and then for the rest of the week, having groceries delivered, yeah, once in a while, they're going to pick the wrong avocado, you know, or the wrong tomato or whatever, but you satisfice you get over it and you have a great meal. You know, the reality factor is is that for that one particular negative, all of the time saving benefits of that, you know, it saves me countless hours and countless arguments at home by having this taken care of. Cousteau knows this intimately from our from our personal discussions. He actually helped me very much in in prompting me to reinvigorate my own Dinner schedule, because in my household I handle that and I, I just was losing my mind in in a way because there was there was a struggle over what what we were going to have for dinner every evening. And having having these pieces outsourced was one piece to it but the other was creating a dinner schedule a meal plan so that I could just do it and it doesn't matter if nobody else in the household cares that I'm planning but I'm planning in the background and having these pieces taken care of allowed me to be able to rest my own anxiety as it related to the wanting some order some control over the workings of my every day. You know, I have a busy work life. I don't need additional stress around something that happens in my life at least three times a day. You know, I eat three meals a day, and I want to have less stress related to that. And being able to use these two services has been Really a godsend, but then that that tertiary key was creating a meal plan and actually structuring it. So I knew what things I needed from the grocery store, not just our normal staples of you know, I'm a big peanut butter fan. So I buy lots of peanut butter. And that's already like Amazon, Subscribe and Save for anybody who doesn't use that, you know, for those kinds of non perishables as well as some of those, you know, kind of prepackaged foods. That's just a godsend for me because I can set it up with Amazon. And Amazon has it delivered on a schedule and I never have to think about that again. But then for the things that are fresh fruits, fruits and vegetables and meat and dairy and that kind of thing. The grocery delivery service then really takes it home for me. And then as as Cousteau said, you know, then the meal prep is kind of a nice, you know, kind of treat on top of all of that. So, again, you have to have the budget for this. You also have to, you know what to do it and it has to work with everybody in the family. But I think you know, it really at the end of the day can be a huge time saver if you can get it all to work. Right. But yeah, there are challenges, and I think there are, there are family family, familial idiosyncrasies that need to be dealt with as it relates to that. Okay, so steering us steering us back toward just generalized services. I did want to make mention of some of the other virtual services that are out there, there are services like fancy hands, which I've used for many, many years. And they actually give you an allotment of

tasks. So say you have five tasks, five requests per month. And they are requests, they're up to about 20 minutes in time length, usually. And you can then set up a request, you can put it in through the website, or I think they have an iOS app, but I don't think they have an Android app anymore. And and so you can do that from you know, your mobile phone on an Android mobile browser, but but not the actual app. And you can actually also record By voice messages to them, and then they go ahead and do that and respond back to you and go back and forth that way. There are services like red Butler that are a little bit more luxury. And so they're more of more of the, they call themselves a concierge service. But they're not actually a concierge in the, in the sense that I was talking about where they're physically on site. They're a virtual concierge so they handle travel, and other kinds of executive level concierge activities. And so they can they can do appointment booking and, and other kinds of scheduling. And they can handle you know, getting passport services dealt with when you're going to travel, they do all those kinds of things. And on their, their lowest plan is, you know, kind of useful to kind of get an idea of what can be used in your productive life. And then kind of scaling up from there if you want more and more services and that kind of thing. But again, they're they're kind of on the luxury end of things. And fancy hands is more for you know, being able to just get little tasks done throughout the week. Seeing if throughout throughout the month that is, and seeing if those are useful to you. And then you can decide whether or not you want to use some other service. There are a whole host of for small business owners, a whole host of virtual services, like longer days. I used longer days many years ago and they're still a fantastic service that does a great job. And so they are there you get an allotment of hours, you can say I need 10 hours of a virtual assistant to do some WordPress updates on my website and I need someone to put together a flyer and someone to answer the phone or answer some customer service emails. And they can do all of those things in the background and there are multiple people who are handling those things for you. Although on the front end, you have a direct dedicated assistant. So you're talking to an assistant and then the assistant then delegates that out to their to the physical team who doing the specialized services behind the scenes, and then reporting that back to the dedicated assistant who then reports it back to you You just pay for the time that's used on a monthly basis. So those can be really, really useful. But But longer days is the one that I always recommend people to there, there are many others that are out there that you can kind of check out. Also, if you check with your local Chamber of Commerce, your local Small Business Development Center, your SBDC, they will sometimes have referral lists of those virtual assistants who may be local, which can be really useful because if you have a virtual assistant, but they happen to also be located in town, that means on occasion, they may be able to do something like a print job, they run it to the local print, you know, send it to the local print shop but then they can actually like you know, run over there, grab it, pick it up, bring it to you that

perhaps a virtual assistant that's in India or in even in Dallas in your New York can't do so you can you can get those kinds of services done and they can be a little bit of a benefit for you. In the time that we have left. today. I wanted to transition over to arts topic about The idea of facilitated technology that can help us with getting things done and outsourcing some of these personal productivity tasks. Today, we have Siri on the iOS platform. And now that Apple's now calling an iPad OS, so we have iOS, iPad OS, Mac OS, all which have Siri, Google Assistant on all of the the Android platform as well as within the Google app on all the devices that do support the Google search app. Then we have Cortana on Microsoft's system, Bixby also on the samsung product line for Android devices. We have Alexa on the Alexa supported echo devices for built by Amazon. And then we have other types of automation services. So those are the voice assistants that I was just mentioning. And now we have automation services as well. ifft Zapier, Microsoft Flow I'll put links to all of these in the show notes, but they can help to really augment outsourcing our productivity. I you Use my voice assistance as well as automated automation services like ifft and Zapier in Confluence. And so they are actually able to do a whole host of things for me that trigger my assistance or other professional services to take care of things. So I can say, hey, big G,

or order flowers for mom for Mother's Day. And that will the word order will then trigger an email that will then be sent to my virtual assistant who will then be able to receive that and then they'll know oh, this is you know, re asking for, you know, something to be done. And, oh, it's ordering, you know, flowers for mom for Mother's Day. So the the idea of doing it is to create different trigger words that can then be picked up and parsed by the the tools. And so the the goal is, you know, orders for one thing, request is for another, you know, remind me is another And so the idea here is to have several different trigger words that when you say it to the assistant that can then get picked up by an automation service that can then use that, that word for for something. And sometimes you have to come up with some really, you know, fanciful, you know, words, to be able to do it. But once you know, your own lexicon for being able to do those things, it can be very, very useful in triggering workflows to be done. And so an automated workflow is something that the the an automation service can do, that then triggers another thing and triggers another thing and so on, so forth to completion. And a lot of people maybe don't know this, but with like ifft, where you want lights to turn on Well, the the triggering of the lights turning on can also be then the the action, which is the lights turning on can then also be a trigger for something else to happen along the way. So you can actually create these multiple movements of things that can then trigger a cascade effect, so to speak, sort of cascading of tasks to be done. So I can complete quite a few different things that if the lights turn on then you also want, say the television to turn on and play music. The the, if you have the infrastructure within the television to do that, you

know, Smart TV that can actually do that. I'm currently struggling with a smart TV that is not so smart. And so, so, so I'm dealing with that reality. But you know, we all kind of work through things. And, you know, I live in a google google ified home where we have Google homes and Google assistants everywhere. And so we I spent a lot of time talking to the the assistants and I find that it becomes very natural for you to just start to one anthropomorphize, you know, you get kind of miffed off or upset when the Google Assistant doesn't do what you want it to do the first time, but it gets better over time as I understand your voice and more, more of the the rules that you set for it. But you also get very comfortable with just talking to it and having things get done while your hands are full of things you know my if I'm walking in and I'm picking up groceries or packages off the off the front porch and I'm walking in the front door I can now say Hey big g Do you know turn on the lights or you know turn on music or play whatever and off it goes. And I don't have to worry about flicking a switch and finding a way to get the lights on so I don't stumble over the dogs, you know, food bowl or whatnot.

Augusto Pinaud 38:34

We try our fair share of them you know, obviously, I live in a pretty heavy Apple ecosystem and we settle for, for Amazon for big a since we don't say the name since I say it in where I'm sitting in here it will start you know talking to me but and as much as we can use both we when unsettled Everything on one platform because it gets messy when you have one area that act in a way or act with one service and then another one and what they can or cannot do so, so it's much much simpler when you start you know, pick one service, whatever it is and then set the other the other element that gets messy is what are you going to buy for to interact with with the lights or defense or whatever that is then compatible with more than one system? That's was it recent we when we when we Thomason was when we started looking into we're with I didn't have I had some of the Amazon products and I have the Apple products. I didn't have any of the Google but what we discover is okay, do you find a product that is compatible with two out of the tree I it's rare to find one that is compatible with a tree On what I found after that was the Amazon tend to be you know, they tend to be the most universal probably followed by Google maybe it's the other way around but I since I buy so much in in Amazon You know, it was easier to for me to find them on us you go into the investment you know to start automating all that the more subsystems you have the Messier it gets, you know, we had my my office at some point was on iOS and what I found was I was getting into my office and start calling the wrong assistant so at some point as Okay, this is ridiculous. Let me go and buy the the Amazon one so I just need to say one name across everything.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 40:48

In our time that's left I wanted to close out the episode with just a quick, actionable items, what what actionable item would you leave for

listeners out of today and while you guys think about it, I'm going to throw out mine, which is my running recommendation for people who want to be able to outsource, as it relates to their own personal productivity systems is to create a home or personal manual. And you can kind of relate this to a business and a business, you have a business operations manual. And if you're a small business owner, and or an executive in your business and you don't have one, now's the time to think about one. And so I invite you to do that. But the idea here is in your, in your personal life, I have a personal manual and I have a whole manual actually both and both actually talk about how to run my household and how to run my life. This is actually really helpful on two levels. One is if I were ever to become physically incapable or mentally incapacitated, I have a written documentation of what I like done and how I like it done. And that gives me some, I don't know, level of of relief that who ever becomes my guardian, the person who has to take care of me, should I become, you know, incapable of doing it for myself has that written down somewhere to be able to do it for, to be able to do it for me. And so in this case, you know, my, my elder brother, my eldest brother is the one who's in charge of that, and, and he lives a very different lifestyle than I do. And so I want him to know that I like things different than he does. He knows that, but, you know, it's written down should for some reason, God forbid, you know, my brother and I are both on an airplane and it goes down and now, you know, he doesn't survive me or he's also, you know, incapacitated, and someone else needs to take care of me. I want someone to be able to have that, that sort of safety in knowing I've given them those written instructions, but also, I'm in the whole manual side a little bit less morbid, is that, you know, I want to be able to hand off, you know, just basically sharing a Google document, in this case, two people who might be helping me both virtually and also on site. They just know the things that they need to know, you know, they have a door, the door lock combination, so they can just access it so that when I change the door code combination, I don't have to keep updating everybody as it relates to the door code to get in, you use this door code, this is the sheds key combination. This is this is how this is the cleaner that I use on the windows, all of those things are in the home manual. And they're all documented. So everybody knows that. So if somebody comes into the house, and they're, you know, going to walk the dog, and they spill something, well, they now know where all the cleaning materials are, and what I like to clean the floor with and that the granite countertops don't get cleaned with the same cleaner as the windows or other surfaces. And I'm a particular person, get, you know, Mia culpa. But you know, those are all documented so that I don't have to have that kind of struggle with the person who comes in to do things around the house and them saying, oh, gosh, I didn't know I'm so sorry. And now they've done something that I didn't want them to do. So it just helps to reduce All of the the conflict that could be present. And also it just makes everything easy because I put all documentation for everything that I want to be done in that whole manual that's related

to the house. Everything that's for me personally, is in the personal manual. And I give those people those access to those items. And voila, we have everything kind of squared away anything that I like, record, I record and then I upload as privately to YouTube and share with those individuals. But those links are also in the personnel manual, so or the whole manual so that they can see what it is that I want to done and do want to be done and how it's done. And it's all there as well. So okay, so do you have an actual item for our listeners?

Augusto Pinaud 44:39

I do. I do. And I my knees are a lot less complicated. But I have a couple of things that you know, I have for example, there is a card on the guest room on our house. Okay, who have all the Wi Fi password, holding that flicks, Hulu passwords there. So in case they get, you know, these configure for whatever reason they can come and login without feel that they need to go and ask mostly because I have learned the guest will not go and ask also, I have a checklist of the things that I want to get to experience when they got here. So we got a couple of things, you know, for the guests to find, you know, it's nothing complicated. It's like a brand new toothpaste, a brand new toothbrush and a couple of other things. Why? Because I have discovered that it makes the experience a little more pleasurable. Also, I use a password manager. And there is a couple of people outside my household who have access to that password, something happened to us. They have as you said, the instructions they can go with his password, and basically access all the universe of things and it is important to have those things in history. important to us even with the morbid part for people to know what it is regardless how junk or hold you believe you are, you know, we did it when, when our first born first daughter was born, we did all this document with all these details, this is what we want. This is the candidate location, and we have updating that and it is important because I sadly have experienced the other side of the people who were not considering that who were not prepared, and then their family has simply no clue what to do, and they're trying to figure it out what their wishes of this person will have been without having any clue. So as you may or may not want to go into that much detail of what this needs to be, I believe it is important to have this kind of documents where people can access things where people can know hey, we have a policy. Hey, we have bank accounts, hey, we have money here. We have properties, stuff that you may have that it's not for anything but you don't you know, you have an investment property, you don't generally talk to the people say, Well, I have an investment property. It's something that it's internal, but if something happened, somebody needs to be able to access that information.

Francis Wade 47:23

Yeah, sure. Do. I think that for people who haven't done any kind of online outsourcing is to just start, I think there is a learning

curve, but I don't think it's all that steep. I think it's more a matter of getting into the frame of mind that there are people out there who can make your life a lot easier, but you just need to start somewhere. And even to say, Okay, let me just spend 20 bucks, just to learn maybe from four or five different people how to do outsourcing and just get into the flow of it. I think just having an experience, even a small one and several of them enough so you can actually build up some some familiarity with how it works. I think that by itself is a great, great place to start.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 48:06

Wonderful. And with that, we're going to close out this episode. And so the Do you have a question or comment about this cast or something we discussed. If you're listening from anywhere other than the podcast website, we invite you to jump over to ProductivityCast dotnet. And there at the bottom of the page, you'll see a comment field, you can go ahead and leave a comment or question and one of us will be glad to respond. Also there on ProductivityCast dotnet. You'll find show notes, links to any of the things we've discussed today. So you'll see them to easily jump to from the show notes. And you can find our transcript, which is a just an automated transcript that's created so you can jump to particular portions and refer to things and you can learn also how to follow and subscribe to any one of us or to the podcast itself. Do you have another question about personal productivity that you'd like us to discuss here on ProductivityCast Feel free to head over to ProductivityCast dotnet forward slash contact, and you can go ahead and leave a voice space message, you can record a voice message directly in the browser, or you can go ahead and type a message to us. And we'll be happy to entertain that idea for a future podcast episode, thanks to a Cousteau Francis and art for joining me here on this cast. And that brings us to the close of this episode of productivity cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm resetting Smith, here's your productive life. Take care everybody.

Voiceover Artist

And that's it for this ProductivityCast, the weekly show about all things productivity, with your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.