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SPEAKERS

Art Gelwicks, Voiceover Artist, Raymond Sidney-Smith, Francis Wade, Augusto Pinaud



Voiceover Artist 00:00

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 00:21

Welcome back, everybody to ProductivityCast the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm Ray Sidney-Smith,



Augusto Pinaud 00:27

I'm Augusto Pinaud.



Francis Wade 00:28

I'm Francis Wade.



Art Gelwicks 00:29

And I'm Art Gelwicks.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:31

Welcome, gentlemen, and welcome to everybody who is both watching us live but also listening in the podcast. Today we're doing something really interesting and I think it's gonna be fun. We are actually live at remote work productivity conference 2020. And if you missed it, you can head over to [remote work productivity.co](https://remote-work-productivity.co) and check out the video replays. But what we're going to do today is we're going to have a conversation both as the panel here but also with live audience about remote work productivity. And I'd like to move it in three parts, as I've done in actually a panel discussion this morning that we had, but as well in just any discussion, I like to talk about strategies to the technology, and then collaboration, all three sets of practices that really pull together the functions of remote work productivity. And I'm going to start off with some of the my own thoughts here in terms of whether or not I've gotten all the pieces. So I asked this of the panelists this morning, and I'm actually curious what you gentlemen have to think is, as I said, strategies, technology collaboration, Did I get it right? Is it all the pieces and or are they the right buckets? Or, you know, what are the other ones? Now note that the panelists actually agreed with me. So I will start off right now.



Art Gelwicks 01:56

You know, that's not how this works.



02:00

All right, so what were the buckets again?



Raymond Sidney-Smith 02:05

disease, technology, collaboration. All right,



Art Gelwicks 02:09

I would add probably a fourth one. And I don't have a really good name for it. So I'm going to call it psychology. Because it's it's the mentality and the mindset that has to go along with it. So you can lay out all the strategies you want, you can have the tech, but if

you're not sensitive to the emotional and dq layer of it, the rest of its going to fall apart, because you're going to have a bigger issue.



Francis Wade 02:40

I would add well being as well, I think, I think the ones we're adding could be probably collected on the strategies, different kinds of strategies. And that's how I really got all encompassing.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 02:51

And that's what I really tend to think is that you know, strategies is a pretty large encompassing broad category of all of the productivity and organizational and biological strategies that we use toward having really performance, high performance in a remote work environment.



Art Gelwicks 03:08

Now, are we talking about it from the standpoint of as an individual working in that environment? Or are we looking at it from the perspective of a team of people working in that environment that you're part of, or a team of people that you're responsible for? Because to me, there's three different perspectives there.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 03:28

Yeah, I would put all of the other things that are team based under collaboration, whether that's management or, okay, pure, pure, you know, pure leadership in essence, but you know, modeling yourself and that kind of thing. Yep.



Augusto Pinaud 03:43

That's, that's how I understand it, you know, the part of, of the strategies is more closely related to the personal productivity, the part of collaboration, it is more to that team environment. As I said, the problem with technology is that technology is really a support tool. It evolves way too fast to be anything else than support. And, you know, if you look at the technology you were using five years ago, okay, versus what you're using now there's, in most cases, not even a comparison. So if it is more how you really set those strategies on can adjust doses, try to choose how you can in embrace collaboration and use the technology as a support for all those.



Francis Wade 04:31

Yeah, but I would, I would, I would also add almost a caveat or a warning, which is that as new technology comes in, it disrupts people's concept of support. So a lot of people who are using zoom, for example, never used it before, who didn't want to you never wanted to use it before, who are being essentially forced to use it. And they've had to go through a learning curve that they didn't anticipate ever going through. And so technology for those people who are already requiring a certain level of support is a nuisance and an imposition. And it's a new learning curve. And I've got to adapt to it. So it's not, it's not support, it's a challenge. I will add that



Art Gelwicks 05:14

caveat. And I'm going to build on that. Because when you are in a non remote working environment, you have, for lack of a better term, a level playing field. Everybody has the same conference room, they have access to the same materials, the same resources if they're working in the same building that type of thing. In this type of remote working environment, we're not on the same playing field anymore. I'm in a very comfortable office that I have set up with my recording gear and multiple monitors and I'm in my happy place. Other people are sitting at the dining room table with the dog chewing on one leg and the two year old chewing on the other. So we have to be cognizant of the fact of where we have previously assumed that everybody was operating at the same level. That's nothing The case anymore. And that has to be taken into consideration as one of those best practices to to be more empathetic and sympathetic to people's situations that they are trying to accomplish the work in that they were they were previously doing next to you, in many cases,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 06:18

I have a real difficulty with the poor internet of people who without my meeting, you know, I just have that difficulty of like, Oh, you know, I can't understand you, I can't whatever. And you're absolutely right aren't that you have to like, take a step back, and like, take a deep breath and understand that it's not their fault. It's not a moral failing of the individual that their technology is failing them. You know, it's really just a fact that it's an imposition for them to have to work from home. In many cases, as France noted, no one prepared for this. We're going to get to a point though, I think as we make our way through this, where some of these pieces are going to be expected of people that you know, it's not their fault now. And john is noting here actually in the chat that sometimes it is their fault, bad Wi Fi, bad placement, no hard line. You're absolutely right, john. And but at the same time at this, at this kind of juncture people haven't really been educated

about that. And I think it behooves all of us who are productivity minded, who are who are peer leaders, and are capable of helping people understand that these things exist, that the technology is actually rather difficult. You just have to really get over the fact that it's difficult and then move toward helping people understand that you know what Wi Fi, your Wi Fi router, is what connects you to the internet, if you are going to have a meeting, you need to make sure that you are potentially plugged into it physically like I am, I'm always physically plugged into the internet when I'm having a meeting like this because I don't want to deal with internet connectivity issues with the Wi Fi going down and otherwise and I actually have a fairly strong mesh network in my in my home office in my office in general. So you know like, we have to We're gonna I think we're going to go from a place of being okay with it to a place of being not okay with it. I'm curious if, if all of you think the same about that, or what do you think will happen as people start to feel like, okay, we've been in this for a while now, even after this lockdown is over and folks come out of, of a remote work environment and start going back to the office and are working preferentially from home on occasion, there's still going to be expected or are we going to get people attitude?

A

Augusto Pinaud 08:31

Well, I think there's a couple of things you know, one is we many people discover how poorly is the residential side of things, okay, because people always used to be using the services on their work without considering how really weak are on the residential side. Even some of us who have worked home longer, that has really tried to Find more robust systems and struggle with finding them. Find actual connectivity that is solid that is speed and all those things. So that's one thing that is now going to change. I remember at the beginning of our, our pandemic, people saying why the internet is down all the time well, because it was never designed for everybody connected during the day. So although things now are going to get better, and people, for the first time taking into consideration how much bandwidth all the devices consume, and used, you know, we used to come home and as well watch a movie, play the games, read the news, whatever it was, but it was not a pressing need to have the speed and the connectivity as required. The work part. So I think that's now a realization people he's having and saying, Okay, this need to improve somehow in the residential area. And the other part is People were used to device they get, okay. And I'm talking about on the cases where you can have options I get there are many environments where it's no option A standard that but on the on the ones who have the option people have never explore unexpanded options and the resources and the limitations they have a lot of families found that Well, now that the computer needs to be used during this time for the school, so I need to figure out how to do my job on the phone or the iPad or the tablet, while all these things were happening because everybody has limited resources. So there was not an unlimited number of machines. A lot of people I

seen have come hands on into their tech support issues because now that tech support guy, it's not at the end of the hallway, you cannot go and don't think on the problem and just dump the laptop. So There have been a lot of good things out of this that I think are going to change a lot of the things and make it really better for everybody.

A

Art Gelwicks 11:12

Well, we also have to appreciate the fact that this is something that we've always trusted our IT departments do. Now at home, we are the IT department and if the internet hiccups when you're watching a Netflix film, okay, a hiccup, not a big deal. If it hiccups, when you're in the middle of a software build, that's a whole different conversation. And at work, you would go yell at the IT guy. Well, I used to be the IT guy got they got yelled at for infrastructures. I can appreciate the fact that this is not something that people are prepared to handle. And when we think about our virtual teams, we have to understand that people are dealing with things that are outside their comfort zone outside their wheelhouse. They don't know process. They don't know procedure. They don't know the tips and tricks to make things work like hard lining to a router. Those types of things are something that we have to document and share. Because it impacts productivity directly. I mean, if you can't connect, you can't be productive and many things when you're working remotely. And that becomes a key measure for all of this. And it has to be

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Francis Wade 12:22

somehow brought into the equation because if you're an employee who was super productive at work, but at home, you don't even have Wi Fi, or can't afford Wi Fi or you live in a location where internet doesn't go as far as where you live, where I live right now I'm live in the hills and when or we don't have data, pretty much, we don't get data. I have to use Wi Fi and if that goes then I mostly look but then companies and schools actually because I've heard that you're in Jamaica school there are some students have just gone missing since the pandemic it was schooling for them. Education for them was a Step up, it was an opportunity to take their circumstances to the next level, you take that step up, and they go back down to chaos, no access to technology, no access structure, no access to teachers, and no hope of ever getting them in the short term. So there is no schooling for them at this time, because there is no access to the internet. So how do we assure a level playing field for employees who are disadvantaged by this pandemic? And throw in students as well? No, it was our hard stops. Um,

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Augusto Pinaud 13:37

you know, it is interesting you said that on John Chen is put it on the on the chat.

Something interesting, I like to say is a wild west, where everybody right now is creating the best practice on the etiquette and I ended up he's, I think he's referring more to the business world, but he applies to exactly what you're saying right now. You know, say, work with certain international clients, and they say well, when can I do this I say Wait, wait, wait, understand this is the first time on history that I'm aware of that the world has to stop and close. Okay, everything you know, I described this is the first one of the few times if not the first that the Internal Revenue Service in the United States has moved April 15. Tax Day that has a massive implications on everything so so I agree to a certain extent with with John on we are on the Wild, Wild West. The question is the people who experienced some of that and now can go like our claim is what because we were there before. I know how to ride a horse. How can we help the people who are subtly found themselves here but they have never ride a horse and I think that's where things like this conference has the ability to give Some of the clues are what that etiquette is unburying. Also, those problems that you are referring to how we level the playing field between the people who, like art has an office like me have an office, and the people who are know, working on the dining room table on one side, they have a kid, I don't do all this side is the husband, okay, and the dog is playing around the table driving them crazy.

A

Art Gelwicks 15:29

One of the things and I want to talk to John's point a little bit about having checklists and having procedures and guides a lot of the things that are natural reaction in the productivity space is, is around things we can directly affect To Do List tasks was tools, those types of things. But I think one of the biggest things we have to take into consideration is this entire new suite of soft skills that we have to learn and that people are having to learn that they've never had to deal with. Before, for example, that not everybody works on the same time schedule when they're at home. So do you expect somebody to be there at 9am and be off at 5pm? Is that reasonable? Is that even productive? Do you get more productivity by splitting the day up? Well, if one person on your team does and another person doesn't, how are you balancing that? The one of the teams I work on currently I have a person in Arizona, I have a person in Malvern, Pennsylvania, and I have a person in Hyderabad, India. So our time schedules all over the place. And one of the soft skills is to figure out how to transition work between ourselves to take advantage of that difference. There is no checklist for that there's no best practice around that. And there's certainly no specific tool that does that exceptionally well. We have to work within those spaces, but it's that soft skill of learning and understanding. And I'm going to use the phrase, being compassionate about the struggle of doing That, that makes effective teams and ultimately makes everybody on that team more productive.



Francis Wade 17:07

I don't want to give up my midday nap. I just took one.



Art Gelwicks 17:11

I love naps. naps are a wonderful thing. I could do a whole episode just on naps. Which



Augusto Pinaud 17:17

we have no DONE How we have not never done I don't know.



Art Gelwicks 17:21

I don't know because I love my naps because



Augusto Pinaud 17:23

during that cap during that right now people oh man



Art Gelwicks 17:27

that that 20 minute 30 minute targeted nap. Yeah, man, I get so much back.



Augusto Pinaud 17:33

I want to bring a something. So another question we have we have in there I'm Mike Mike is saying okay, how much time daily Will you recommend allocate into exercise, meditation, socializing, working, cooking, reading, etc, for optimal performance. And I may say that we should have nap to that list but but no but in the in how those schedule work because he tied up with what you were discussing Don't swing. Now that adds you know another layer of complexity because what your optimal performance schedule will be may or most likely not match with your husband or wife match with your kids match with all that family dynamic that happened around. So how'd you build dose limits those walls so all that can flow in the best way possible.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 18:29

So I'll start in the sense that I used to travel quite a bit. And I had a lot more control over my time when I was on the road than when I'm at home. And that has caused quite a bit

of rejiggering of my system I've needed to recreate the schedule. And just going back to fundamentals, what is your routine, what are the what are the hard coded parts of your day that you know you're going to do and, you know, down to are you going to go to the bathroom in the morning You know where you're going to eat a meal throughout the day, those are hard coded into your day you're going to do those things. And so tying to those pieces, the parts that then are self care, and proper hygiene, and so on and so forth are then going to get kind of coupled to that. And that's going to help you create some level of grounding. And then in those discretionary spaces, determining what else needs to happen is how I think about it. What are the parts that need to happen in terms of your work role? And really necessity? Right, not not the all the frills of what you do with the office, but really the the core parts of your role, especially and I keep talking about this? I'm kind of on a soapbox about this lately, which is that we're in an economic downturn, global economic downturn, right. And I'm hearing lots of conflicting data from, you know, there's politicians out there who who have every interest in doing that I don't have an interest in muddying the waters with that discussion, just to know that there's an economic downturn, I happen to work in small business, small business economic development, so I See it live in real time, business is failing all around me. And my job is to help them. And it just shocks me that we are all not really taking into account that if you work for a company, especially a small business, there are struggle ahead, or their struggle right now imminently, people are losing their jobs, people are having to tighten their belts. So when you're thinking about how to be high performance in your job, it's not just so that you can do a great job. It's also that you can keep retain your job that you want to be able to show the vitality and the vital elements of why someone should keep you over getting rid of someone else. And this is important for us all to really take heart to is what are the vital components in your day that are going to provide the most value to the people who have the decision to keep you or get rid of you. And then of course, there's the nice to haves, the things that are you know, parts of your day that you enjoy and make a you know, make your work interesting. Make your life interesting and putting those pieces in. I know that for me and I'll I'll turn it over to you Gentlemen, I know that I've actually been able to add a few things into my world that I wasn't otherwise capable of doing because of the commute, travel, everything else now that I'm really here almost all the time. It feels like, you know, I'm able to do things like I was going to a yoga class, and now I don't I do it at home through a virtual environment. And it's actually been really quite wonderful. I don't, I don't think I'm going to go back to a yoga studio after this because I actually like doing it and not that I'm not going to go out and take classes and that kind of thing in other capacities. But in this particular capacity, I was taking time to travel and get there. And sometimes I wouldn't go because it was just too much of a hurdle to do and so works out for me that I really enjoy just doing it by myself with a with a with a guide. And that's virtual. And it's been great. So how about you gentlemen in terms of mastering your your routine for optimal performance,

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Art Gelwicks 22:00

It's interesting, you mentioned that because I worked from home full time for about five years. And after that, I was working on client site all the time. So I had about a 45 minute commute each way. And I modified my system in my structure. So that 45 minute commute became my quote, thinking time for the day. I couldn't do anything else. So I would just think process through voice record things capture things to deal with them later on. Well, when this shifted back to being home, I lost that 45 minutes at either end of the day, I lost my thinking time. And in the first two weeks, I realized that was the biggest impact, because I get up in the morning, go through my morning routine, and then jump right into work and I realized, I have no idea what I'm doing. And it's because I hadn't, I had lost that piece of my routine in my equation in my process. So I had to work that back into the process I actually have in my schedule, focus time blocked out in the morning so that it has to be there. Because, to me, that was a critical impact of on my productivity. But the only way for me to identify that was through self assessment. I had to figure out what was going off the rails, what had changed and killed I adapt to that change, or did I need to get back to the way things work. And in my case, I needed to find some way to get back to the way things were for that particular one. And, again, I stress that for when you're working with teammates, I have a teammate. One of the best developers I've ever worked with. She's fantastic. And now she's at home with her two year old son. In the office, she can crank out code like nobody's business. at home. She's chasing the little guy around. So her net her schedule now starts at like 11 o'clock at night. Well, that also means that she's tired. She's dealing with problems that I don't have to deal with. My kids are all grown so I have to take that into consideration when assigning tasks, working with tasks, taking responsibility back. And understanding my process has changed. I have to be cognizant of the fact that absolutely Hearst is good as well. Oh,

A

Augusto Pinaud 24:14

well, I want to tie to that, you know, one comment that is there is there on the chat, you know, from from Joseph. And he said, you know, with all that is happening, you know, we have to provide compassion during this unique times and encourage, you know, before to do to have that compassion and to follow checklists and, and maximize and see how, you know, cases like that can be helped and what resources can be provided, and the resource may be a more like to use to provide this much on right now. This is what you can provide, how can we support you because that part is going to be really, really important. You know, regarding my Mine same thing I needed to win. Like you went back to the drawing board and, and I share actually on your show Park. I had a client who he was really struggling because he was used to his corporate office with whiteboards. And he was working on the dining room and he said, I want to keep my marriage therefore I cannot put whiteboards in there. Okay. But what he did is he went to to Amazon and bought

marker that he can draw on on the windows so he using the Windows as the whiteboard during the day and then when the day is over, he cleans so the wife doesn't kill him, but it's solved that problem. So it is also look into what can you do in a creative way. So you get those solutions also ahead. So you get that time that you need it. That was important for you. It may not be in the same way as you You may need to get into the shower, you know, get into the into the bathroom, close the door and hold it, the tube of the shower so you feel that you are in the subway again for 20 minutes listening to your music fine, do that if you need to find what needs to work for you to be able to accomplish that.

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Francis Wade 26:18

Phone that I have fewer big meetings with clients, which is a kind of a good thing because it means no traffic. And also none of that. You know it is with clients, you sort of have to give them extra time for them to understand you you understand them. So So agrees at the end, they want to talk and so the inefficiency that came from these long meetings like one meeting could take a whole day just because it takes a long time. That's gone away. But what's replaced it is lots of smaller tasks. So I found myself managing more task number four, have a shorter duration which means I've had to make more choices and more decisions, and time blocking more than I think I've ever had before. And I will. So I'm actually using something from the impact journal, straight from the episode that we did on the impact journal had us read the book. And the I took bits and pieces of your morning and evening routines, specifically those and put them into my morning routine, because that's where I do most of that kind of activity. And sure enough, it's made a difference. So I've had to become more rigorous, a bit a bit more disciplined because I'm managing more tests than I had before. Time blocking more as a result. And I think it's just because the nature of my work has changed. And also because we're, of course in a recession, I'm trying to do more new things than I've tried before. So I've added my fingers in lots of different holes in the deck, so to speak, than I ever had before. Way more granular Sort of my experience?

A

Art Gelwicks 28:01

Well, and I think you're bringing up probably one of the most important points there, for instance, is the fact that we're all trying to do more. And we have to, we have to take that time to say, are we doing more of the right things? Are there things that we we should be getting rid of that we have been doing that or not contributing to those end goals. And if you look at the impact journal, and if you look at other methodologies and approaches, that type of a pillared approach really becomes critical now because that's the only way for us to maintain focus, because it's so easy to get distracted. I mean, I sit and I look at all the post it notes and paper notes and everything else I have around me. Why because

it's just the velocity of the work that's going on at this point. I have to force myself to back up and and focus on these things. And John brings up a good point. This has been a great opportunity for collaboration and creativity in a corporate investment. If I sit there, I'll work at my desk, work at my cube, maybe lean over and talk to the person next to me for a minute or two on something. I've actually had sessions since being home, where I'll run a teams meeting with one of my teammates, and we'll leave it open for two hours. And we'll sit there and just literally talk back and forth. As we work on individual projects. We'd have to tie up a conference room to do that we'd get interrupted. This is it gives us a unique opportunity to focus and collaborate at a level that we never could have before, especially since he's in Arizona. So we have to start to look for those opportunities. But we also have to start to look for the chances to trim the tree and really help it grow the way it needs to grow.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 29:46

Also note for folks that Francis noted, the episode we recorded about the impact journal, this doesn't normally happen, because I edit those things out but that episode is not yet out. So, so it will come it's coming. If you You're listening, Dre. That's called



30:02

a teaser.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 30:05

I just want to make sure people don't email me that you know, I get the emails of I don't see that episode in the feed. It's coming. It's coming



Augusto Pinaud 30:13

the correct way intro for every three miles right get you get we get another tickets for the raffle?



Art Gelwicks 30:20

The correct answer is it's in one of the episodes, I don't remember which one so you'll have to listen to them all.



30:26

That's the correct response.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 30:28

Okay, so what I want to do is talk a little bit about the technology and how we can get a better rein on the technology as it relates to remote work. We can obviously note that we have to be dependent upon the internet and the World Wide Web generally for the applications that sit on top of the internet architecture that allows us to be able to communicate, I'm really curious about there is so much new software being peddled in, in furtherance of you can be more productive I'm curious about everyone's thoughts in terms of what we do, as the technology becomes kind of more rapidly changing than before. And at the same time, there is more variety of those tools. And again, I think most people are going to stick to the big few companies that managing these pieces. I think Microsoft Teams, zoom has come to notoriety, Google meet within the enterprise environment, we have Facebook and an apple producing their own levels of technologies for us to be able to meet. But there's all of these other tools that are out there, slack and Trello, and so on, so forth. You know, so so many tools, how do we, how do we control that so that we don't get overwhelmed with the number of tools that everybody's using, so we can actually focus and stay productive on our goals.



Art Gelwicks 31:46

We all know that that's one of the biggest problems with tools is that that's one of the key things with productivity people is we're tool geeks, most of the time. We want to try the newest coolest thing out that Yeah, totally. I mean, I think about all the different ones that I play with With no load and play with for a half hour and then unload, and honestly, that's a half hour that I'm not getting back to work on something else. Now, is that a bad thing? Well, I had to think about that a little bit. And I quantified this in my head a long time ago, that if my evaluation of a new tool helps me understand my process better than it's time well spent. If it's purely for the sake of just learning that tool that I will never use again, then it's not time well spent. So I help I use that to say, Okay, how would I apply this particular tool with the way I do things, not trying to get it to redefine how I do things? It's not the easiest thing to do at times, but it helps me rationalize playing with so many tools.



Augusto Pinaud 32:51

Yeah, I need to I need to, I mean, it is good that we are going to get this this is getting record. I need to listen to that again. So I'm going to build this tone argument. I'm going to

attach to the permission asleep. I asked for test by new software and artwork every time I need one. Yep.

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Francis Wade 33:08

I become more of a Luddite ethic. Earlier this year, you guys convinced me to switch over from Windows seven to Windows 10. belatedly. And it's been it's been an awesome, awesome experience. It's windows 10. This, as you guys said is way better than Windows though. But in general, the reason I say I'm a bit of a Luddite is unless I can know it is unless I can envision the improvement I can get from a particular kind of software. I dismiss all of them I become sort of completely, not completely, but very much. Let me make sure that it will in my head, I know that I need that improvement before I go looking for the software that would allow me to have the improvement. So in Windows 10, I couldn't see the improvement clearly until I think Ray told me that someone could hide it. My computer in Windows seven, if that got me going for exam day, that was it, that would do it. But I become I can't envision the change. I'm not going to switch. I'm not going to experiment that unless I've already thought through the change. I'm taking more of one. I need to know I need something before I go looking for something and someone offers me something doesn't look like anything that I think I already need. I say no, I don't have a way to actually need it. So check it out. But

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Art Gelwicks 34:31

just to go back to something in the chat that john brought up, which is something that I'm actually doing tomorrow. He mentioned that a library holds office hours by running zoom from 9am to 5pm. And always have staff available for people. We're doing the same intern. Same thing internally at the corporate client I'm working at where we're trying to get people comfortable with a migration that's happening. So we're having open office hours, no scheduled presentation, no scheduled demon demonstration or content. It's we got people in a virtual room, come ask your questions. And if nothing else, you can leave feeling more comfortable, even if you're not feeling more informed. So I think when we look at these tools, there is a market space. This is gonna sound pessimistic. There's a market space in the productivity realm that has said, ooh, this is an opportunity for me to sell something new. Or to repackage something old as something new and still sell it. My argument to everybody I've talked to has been really, really simple. Simplify. boil it down, look at the stuff you're doing. First, look at the tools you're using first. And only if it absolutely positively is not cutting it, then start making the law. There's nothing wrong with with browsing window shopping is great. But don't dive into the deep end. It's just you're just asking for trouble if you're not doing it in a prepared method, or methodical manner.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 36:00

I must say, I'm really so glad that this has caused Google to step up Google meet. You know, I really do. I'm so thankful that this has really pushed the envelope offer Google meet they've been they've had to, you know, their competition is teams and zoom, and they've really just started to iterate on the product, even in the most recent iteration, at least within G Suite, you now have noise cancellation coming into the technology, I'm just really the stuff that is capable if these you know, larger tech companies just focus their efforts on the things that really help us make productivity happen. Like when they make us more productive, they are going to be better off and it comes down to your point or it's focusing on products that actually help us as opposed to these fringe products that they keep putting out there. Someone recently I was just a Microsoft that you know, they have this whole, you know, planner turned into tasks Microsoft to do from the Wunderlist purchase, and you know, they just keep on throat now they have Microsoft lists. And they're just confusing the market in terms of what they're trying to do in the world. And I really would wish that they would just say, you know, what we have outlook we once upon had, you know tasks and outlook that worked really well and or didn't work really well, depending upon the person. But we're going to really innovate in that space and make it solid and then connect it to teams. And but for some reason, it seems like these tech giants just have a tendency to throw things at the wall and hope something sticks and then run with it in that capacity. And it just really,



Art Gelwicks 37:30

I think Trevor's raising a good echo to that question. He Trevor's asking, how do you look at pure tools versus tools that enforce specific processes? And I think, for me, that's where I draw the line. If somebody tool says it solves this problem, I always look at it askew, because I'm like, how do you know you have the problem defined in a way that's going to be applicable to me and to somebody else, whereas tools that are designed as platforms? That can be adapted are much more successful. They do require you to learn more about them and become creative and how to apply those. But when I look at things like Evernote, OneNote, SharePoint notion, all of those different, you know, coda air table, they're open platform type of structures not truly open. But you know what I mean? They're things that you can configure to match your needs set. So the challenge, yeah, they have that innate configurability to find solutions using that platform. And I think that's where we benefit the most by looking at things through those glasses. If we're trying to find that tool that solves that specific problem. Trevor mentioned, that new email service that's out Hey, or whatever it is.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 38:53

I don't the same folks who the from the same folks who build Basecamp Hey is being produced by DHH who is actually the progenitor of Ruby on Rails?



Art Gelwicks 39:02

Yeah, I saw the the price tag and kept scrolling. So yeah, but that's it. That's the type of thing. My system should be able to be technology agnostic, agnostic, I should be able to build my system in Outlook in Google Mail in wherever doesn't matter. If I haven't done that, then I am trusting my systems implementation to someone else. And that I have yet to find that and well



39:31

know what I



Augusto Pinaud 39:34

sorry, I said a lot that people tend to over complex productivity. And there's really nothing complex to the mystery of productivity. Because really, it's as, as you've been saying about the principles, the tricks, and the better avid habits and really use technology to support the problem sometimes is that people want instead of principle tricks, and better habits that I get it is a challenging part, okay, they want the technology to solve the problem, technology will never solve it will just can support that and can support that really well. But it will never be the solution.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 40:18

I was going to say that the goal for us is to think about tools that serve a specific process, as Trevor was talking about, in terms of how it actually integrates into our other tools, I generally do not choose a tool that doesn't currently integrate with the other tools that I'm using. So if it does have a specific process, then I'm not going to, I'm not going to likely adopt it into my own system if it doesn't already fit into the other tools that work in my ecosystem. So for me, I am highly targeted around making sure that my world the tools that I am using in my world, work very, very well together and so to bring in a new Sort of family member into that environment requires quite a bit of courtship for me and I'm happy you know as art was talking about earlier you kind of justifying playing with tools I play with all kinds of tools all the time, but that they become a part of my kind of family

of tools. That is few and far between. You know, you don't have children every day. That's why biology gave us nine months.



41:24

Okay.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 41:28

Nine months of gestation



Augusto Pinaud 41:29

is where we got the explicit mark on the podcast. So hard not to go.



Art Gelwicks 41:34

You know what, though? That's not a bad best practice. give any new tool nine months, it was only



Raymond Sidney-Smith 41:41

me I was I was productive. Boom. I was I was waiting. re



41:47

imagine.



Augusto Pinaud 41:48

I never we have not experienced



41:52

that at all. No.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 41:55

But the point is, is that we really want to make sure that we can give him Enough time with something before we really decide to adopt it into our systems. And, you know, I've played with all the current social media darlings, I've played with all the current productivity darlings. And, and none of them have met the the standard yet for me to say you know what this is going to become a part of my world, because I need to just I need to feel that I'm going to want to open it up every day. So that's one side. The other side actually is is kind of completely the other avenue, which is that if it's a tool that I could turn on, and then it just like fades into the background for me, and I never have to think about it. And it does something for me that I'm very likely to choose that tool to do what it is, especially if it has a good business model. Please just if you are developing productivity software, it's a good business model. Because the you know, I know that I get up on the soapbox all the time, but there was an email application Newton that formerly cloud magic and that really burned me because it was one of the first times I thought you know what, I'm going to go to this other email software, it's beautiful, it works really well. And and then it had these fits and starts, shutdowns start up again. And it really made me understand that for something fundamental for me in my own productivity system, the amount of havoc it caused because it disappeared and then came back and it disappeared again. I was like, forget it, there's no way I'm going to do that to myself. So this model integrates, or you can set it, and it just becomes a part of the background, and it's doing something really wonderful for me. And those are the pieces that I really enjoy about choosing those, you know, tools that are going to be specific, you know, use cases.



Art Gelwicks 43:36

Yeah, I always tell people, whatever tool you have, make sure there's an exit strategy for it.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 43:42

Precisely, precisely. Yeah. We are coming up on the end of our time together. And I wanted to make sure that I caught any questions that were in the chat panel. If anybody has any questions or comments, gentlemen, if you want to go ahead and toss this in there. And then otherwise, we're We're gonna start the process of wrapping up. And anything anything. Wonderful. All right. Well, thank you, gentlemen, for this conversation. Thank you to our live audience this week. Maybe we should have a live audience all the time. Not quite sure we could do that. No, no, no, there's not going to be a live audience all the time. But while we are at the end of our discussion, the conversation doesn't stop here. If you have a question or comment about what we've discussed during this cast, you can go ahead and visit it, visit our episode page on ProductivityCast. net, there on the podcast

website at the bottom of the page, you can feel free to leave a comment or question. We read them all and we respond if we need to, to every question or question or comment that we put our way. Lots of people send email and I try to get back to everybody as quickly as possible. If this is your first time with us, you can consider adding us to your favorite podcast app they call it subscribing, but it's free, you can just go ahead and go to productivity cast dotnet and click on On the subscribe tab, you'll see all of the various places where all the places were in all the things. And you can go ahead and get the episodes downloaded for free every time when a new one comes out on actually came up this morning. With that, if you have a topic about personal productivity, you'd like us to cover on a future cast, feel free to go to ProductivityCast dotnet forward slash contact, you can leave a voice recorded message, you can actually press a button on the site, it'll open up your microphone, and you can just record it and send us a voice message. Or you can type a message and then hit submit and that'll send us along a typewritten message. And maybe we'll feature it in a future episode. So you never know. I want to express my thanks to a group and Francis weighed in our galaxy for joining me here on ProductivityCast. This and every week, you can learn more about them and the work that they do by visiting productivitycast.net as well. So I'm Ray Sidney-Smith. And on behalf of all of us here at ProductivityCast. Here's your productive life. Take care everybody. Thank you



Voiceover Artist 46:01

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