

112-Making-Time-to-Focus-With-KosmoTime-CEO-Nicolas-Vandenbe...

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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. ProductivityCast the weekly show about all things productivity, here are your host Ray Sidney-Smith and gousto been out with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks Welcome back, everybody to ProductivityCast the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm Ray Sidney-Smith. And I'm Augusto Pinaud. And we're your hosts for productivity cast and a few times a year we like to bring a productivity expert onto the show and talk about their application or the work that they do. And today we have the pleasure of having Nicholas Vandenberg. Nicholas started selling newspapers in the streets of Paris in high school studied maths at the Ecole Polytechnique, then business at Stanford GSB. He started and sold three technology companies with up to 65 employees and \$11 million in revenues. He ran sales for \$2 billion Telecom. And then he negotiated billion dollar deals with the companies of the sort of like Google, and now he's co founded a company called chili Piper. It's the system of action for revenue teams. We'll get into that. And what we're going to be talking about today, which is Cosmo time, the first focused productivity assistant, welcome to ProductivityCast. Nichols. Thank you. Thanks for having me. Yeah. So what Didn't we say that you did that you wanted everybody to know what what what's, what's the essence of Nicholas Vandenberg? No, no, that's about right.



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I grew up in France.



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good at sales. So always that's why I started selling newspapers that there was a way to pay for my studies in a very fun way. And then I came to Stanford. And when I arrived on campus, my plan was to travel around the world and go to Asia. And in the first weeks at the Stanford Business School, a classmate of mine invited Steve Jobs. And Steve Jobs told us what he was up to, at the time, not much actually had been fired from Apple, and he was working on this company called next. But yet it was so inspiring. I thought, This is what I want to do. When I grow up. I went to be an entrepreneur, I want to create software and try to impact the life of people. So ever since that's what I've been doing. So you started cosmic time, in parallel with this other company, chili pepper, can you tell us a little bit about chili pepper? first syllable? Yeah, that's going on. And then what prompted you to create Cosmo time very much. So it's actually not quite parallel, I started TD paper with my wife. It's a bit unusual, but she's a has a strong background in software product design, we bootstrapped the company t pepper, we target sales people, as I mentioned, I love sales. So we thought that the SAS technology was due for a revamp, and we were going to do it. That's not be correct. There's a lot of opportunities to sell software salespeople. And so as companies started growing, I found myself busier and busier. And I thought, okay, now now



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is a time to really optimize my time. So I started using a to do list and,



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and my to do list went in the wrong direction. So it kept growing and growing. So I thought, okay, I'll try another to do list. And so I tried to do a separate things, I tried Trello, I tried, remember the milk, all sorts of it to see if something will work better, and it didn't. And eventually, I thought, you know what, I'm going to solve that problem myself. And my wife thought I was crazy, it looks to be so busy, you're too busy, you're not going to take on another company method. Look, if I have this problem, I must not be the only one who has this problem. And we're also going to resolve it. So. So I did, we started a company on the side to help people busy people be productive. And as I said, the problem I found was that these two lists were really good at capturing the things to do, but not very good at helping you actually do them. And so my, it's been a super interesting journey, because my,



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obviously, early on, we figured so I should mention my co founder Matta, who at the time was working at Facebook in the artificial intelligence group. So with this idea that artificial intelligence was meant to solve the problem. So that's an interesting starting point. And the idea was say, look, we need to reserve time to do your tasks, right, your list is good, but you need to do assign time. So our initial idea was to have the computer work as an executive assistant and plan your calendar. So compute where you should do this task. And it was a beautiful idea. And actually, when I told my friends about it immediately, we got



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interest in got some other people invest in a company to get started. So we did we met as a brilliant engineer, we built a system that would take your list of tasks and schedule in the calendar.



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compute where they would say to say this call with you guys. And then that's from 11 to 12, New York time, and free boom, it with three tasks in there because you know, two of them 15 years winter in this. So we went live at those, it was super excited. And



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guess what happened, it didn't work at all.



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It was a nightmare, because I never got to do the task that the computer including my schedule, he was like imagine we finish the quality level. And he doesn't have time to do three tasks. But you know, I want you to get to an espresso right. So I want you to check the pictures of my new baby. And so it didn't work at all. And then these tasks, he would reschedule and reschedule and reschedule it felt like the system was almost felt like the computer was getting angry at me, you know, instead of



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instead or imaginary is going wrong. It was another computer getting angry. So circulars that is fascinating because it sounds like such a good idea, right? It's like a German executive assistant done by artificial intelligence, because executive assistant exists do a job, it seems to work, you think the computers can do even better.



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So it doesn't work because your life is too predictable. And your mood is in predictable. And so what do I, what we discovered is that



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the problem is a lot more complex. Because there are times when you want to do something, there are times when you're not in the mood to do something, you don't schedule you just based on time and things, you also base it on what what you know is more important, what you feel like doing what you know, is going to take too much cognitive load, and you want to leave for Saturday, you know, when nobody bothering you. So we restarted



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we were pretty much a waste, even change the name actually. Then we just went we started calling in the customer on time. And we thought okay, the idea of blocking time is a good idea. But what are the most difficult things to do. And we kept the concept of scheduling time. So we have a good calendar integration. And then with the two other things that are missing, so three of the things that are missing, one is distractions. So you want to help the user be motivated, but you don't want to take any chance on a distraction. So what is a distraction blocking feature that we didn't have at the beginning, we can go into more details, then we thought that a way to be more efficient is to minimize context switching. So we came up with this concept. At the beginning, we call it sprint, but users got a bit confused. So we call it a block, where you put tasks of the same nature together. So say, I need to work on the product. And I have three things I need to do. And we need to put them together and put a block that says work on product and then



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execute the three tasks at the time of the block. And of course, the block can be scheduled

in the calendar. So that's the second thing. And the third thing that we're working on we'll talk about is what I call being not only efficient, but also being effective. So it's helping prioritize. And the way we came up with it is with this concept of goals and commitments. So the idea to say this month is super important that



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say we improve the usability say, right? The onboarding, because the usability is good with the onboarding. So I have a goal that I spend at least eight hours on onboarding. And then I have tests that are relevant to that. I have a commitment level suite eight hours. And so the software can track that I'm actually spending this time and report on Hey, you mean monsuno tracking to your goal or you midweek and you're tracking to your goal. So it's not the approach to help achieve by having a nudge on what you promised to do for a promise yourself to do actually promise, weekly planning to have a social aspect where you can promise and commit to somebody else and say, Hey, Ray, helped me. I said eight hours if I don't do it, if I do it, give me praise. And if I don't do it, I don't know, send me or send me a Cosmo hat



09:04

focused. So so the application itself has this web application. And you have a Chrome extension that, in essence helps you in that focus mode part, which is being able to put you into an environment where I'm working on this. And so everything else is is blocked out. What are the other components of the application other than the web app and the Chrome extension so far? So. so far?



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It's a web app and the Chrome extension we will do the mobile version later. You exactly right. The Chrome extension does the distraction rocking so it's not only good waves from many tools to block things like Facebook, but what I found that by the time I was running chili Piper had already given up on Facebook, it was not my problem, right? I wasn't doing a completely unproductive things. I was just moving around not doing the right thing. So what it does is that it close closes every tab the thing when you



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residual except the W working on



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this application targets, you know, professionals. So most of the tasks on the web is a Google doc or it's an email or something to read. So it's in a tab somewhere. So we give the tab that you wish to work on. And then we close all the other ones. And at the end, we keep the list of what we've closed, and you can reopen them all or you can select the ones you want to reopen. So that's the main feature of the of the Chrome extension, then we found that, as I said, because most of the best, actually a URL somewhere, the Chrome extension is used also to bookmark. So you see something. So it happens all the time on slack. Somebody says, Hey, original Google Doc, can you review it, if I start reviewing it, then I'll be distracted, because I'll be not doing what I'm supposed to do. So what I do the book market, and I save it for later. And then later, I'll schedule it as part of a block and do it in a batched effective way, we can also add several URLs to a given task. So typically, if I have to work on some research, right, and we put five different URLs that are part of each task, and when I click Start with a stop button, it will reopen these five tabs, and close all the other ones. So it's, it's a super effective way to organize your work. So it's not only this one goes beyond just listing just pizza, it's actually a productivity tool to better structure a particular task and get organized. We have the concept of time tracking also sessions. So it's part of the web app, we record the time and we have a time report. So you can see how you spend your time a project. And that's what we're going to use



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for the goals and commitments. Actually, there's something super powerful from this Chrome extension is that we know that we have the time tracking, we can we know how you spend your time, assuming that you press a button to perform a Chrome extension, we also know your navigation. So as a goal, you can have additional behavior that you want to keep an obvious one that's pretty relevant to me is how many times a day do you check your email? So you guys all know, right? It's everywhere. She do not check your email every five seconds, right? So people say once a week, some people say three times a day. But nobody says you should check it every every minute of your life. And we know when you check your email, because of Chrome extension knows where where you are. So that's the next stage also said, Hey, if you want to set a goal and say no more than, say, five times a day, that seems reasonable, then we'll track and say, Oh, you've got to check your email three times. Are you sure you want to use your silver bullet? Because you have a little left, right? Say yes. So I want you to go back to check it or no good point, I'll go and go through it later. So the way we're finding that is Chrome extension,



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is actually helped helping us do a lot of powerful things. And it's integrated with a couple of other tools. I see a slack integration and an Asana integration. What was the choices in in connecting with both slack and Asana in terms of helping people facilitate work into cosmic time? Yeah, that's a great question. So I forgot the second dimension. The second dimension, that was one of the first things we did. So I should have mentioned it, because that's a big source of distraction slack. You get this pop up to say, hey,



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Amanda is calling you, oh, chilly winds. Were you in the deal? Check out what deal did we then you, there's no hurry for that. Zero will still be one at the end of the day. But it's so tempting to click and see what they are. So that's the first thing we did, we did a slack integration that blocks the notification while you're in focus mode, right? So you say starting the session, okay, then we stop the notification. And we also write on slack that you are in focus mode, so people know that you're not going to respond immediately. So that was very early on. The reason why we did that is because it's like a substitute this such power to distract, right, in a way that feels good. It's like, candies is good. When you did at the end of the day, you think what do they do? As far as I know, it was a it's more recent, actually, we just released more a deeper version. We found that a lot of our users on Asana and the user center to organize their teams. It's a big source of their tasks as a task list, right? A lot of that has to do it comes from a seller. Internally, we also use that chili pepper. So but g pepper is now close to 100 employees. And all marketing team decided to standardize on Asana. So that's kind of operating system for the marketing tasks. So when I get assigned task or to review task, it's very important that I can get that in customer time and they don't have to copy and paste. So it was a bit of a own bias that because we're biggest users, we integrate with it.



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A lot that in the Asana community there, the time tracking application is actually a big request. And then we found out that the



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calendar scheduling blocking calendar is also the request is not well served. That's the reason why we A second reason why we chose Asana, silica has a lot of people here, we need what we have. And let's do it. We just announced the deeper integration today,

where we really sink projects and tasks in in a more detailed approach. Yeah, so that was one of the things for for me as time went into, cost more time and configure and test one of the things that was really, really interesting, you know, the tracking time, because I, I have a lot of clients, people who listen to the show that are in the ad need to track their time or want to, so they know where their time is going. And it was cool to see it in one. And then the new integration with with Asana that people is working on the application is working, and they need this thing like Cosmo time to really be more effective to ask you said, they have the to do list, okay, they now need help, actually doing the to do list I really like that way you say, because it's true. You know, we, a lot of people have really good systems for collecting for organizing that to do lists where they needed more help in the doing where I think is where what I was able to play with cosmic time was really cool, being able to do the tracking of those things that you need to track for future reporting, being able to do the focus, being able to do that extraction. So I think that was really powerful, and obviously will get better. You know, over time in AI. One of the things for me is I have some of my world leaving Google, so my world leaving Apple, so I know it's coming, because this is coming soon, you know that the integration with other calendars, but knowing for people that that is coming, you know, you will be able to have your personal and your work, and everything else integrated. So you can sort but So, obviously, from there has been a lot of research into and a lot of thinking and one of the things I love when the people who is developing the applications are eating their own dog food. Right. You know, that is really, really important, because I have seen both sides. I have seen the the software's where, you know, yes, we are developing, and we have all these great ideas, but nobody really use the software. And you can see and you have the software where people the improvements that you are saying are the improvements that you need that the team that is using this niche, and that is really cool. But so internally, for those users and even for other users of cosmic time. So what reports of greater productivity they have you have get, because they are using cosmic time how cosmic time is helping them moving from what you said, you know that having that to do list, to actually doing that to do list and really being able to



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create a flow and movement in that to do list. Yeah, so it's a question we asked ourselves.



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Because actually paper, we have sales people. So we have something really nice that we can measure how much revenue they get from the 14 paper and after cheap paper, because we actually doubled conversion rates on the inbound. So we add customer, it's

much harder, I mean, I can tell you that.



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I feel like a new man, actually on the website. That's why that's why I put version 2.2 of yourself is not available, because it feels it feels like once I mean, obviously, I'm an advanced user, of course, my time. So I use all the features to the maximum, I can tell that will not be able to do the level of productivity hybrid without it. So it's just like, I've easily doubled my productivity, meaning I do twice as much during the day. But as my feeling, how do I measure that is very difficult, right? Because if you if you take a list of tasks, you don't know



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when to do it, for example, this concept of karma. And the karma is you can tell it just to the you don't.



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But that's super easy, right? Because if I could pour myself a glass of water, I can tell them right?



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Like if you say that right war and peace then then maybe, maybe that just gets a bit harder. So a task is not a good unit of measure of productivity, and it's very hard to do. So. Two questions are good too.



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We don't have an exact measure. So we have to go with a qualitative report that our users diverse which which is that they love it that the that they spend



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All this time with a lot more use in I spend all my time in customer time I organize my tasks just to my desk, and I stay focused all day.



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So it's not exact, but for sure it's, it's the improvement in the output is.



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For me, I think that is the ballroom at least it's in the range of plus 50%. What you can do and by getting more focused, more organized, and and by using all our features. Yeah, no. And I think it's something difficult to measure because it's something personal, as you said to do is do the karma. And for some people, that is the way to measure Hey, I did 15 yesterday I did 16 today better for for other people that it's actually produced the opposite. It is like, I don't want them to tell me that I marked one or two, because exactly what you said yesterday, I may have done five low priority today I did one high priority for me, that's more important than than the opposite. But yeah, I think that's something that is really personal.



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And really qualitative, more than quantitative, that as you, as you said, and I agree with you, it's really challenging. But I also believe that one of the keys to success in in this task and the task management and solutions, like cosmic time is a stress, you know how this solution is helping you lower your jury stress in the day to day of what you have, number one, and number two, when, when a stress pick, and I always tell people, you know, stress will pick it up and down, okay, there are moments, it's the reality of this, but how this system can help you. When that pick comes in, you know, when suddenly you got a bazillion of things, how this can help you and that tend to be a lot more effective, as you said that, that measure of five tasks or 10 tasks or 20 tasks.



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And focus, for example, when that that feature of the focus, okay, let me enter into focus, I think is really, really important that I for years in 10 people use two browsers I want to play want to work? Because exactly because of that you don't you will you lose



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that concentration, your brain doesn't know the difference between writing war or peace or drinking the glass of water. Okay, for them, it's just a check mark. Yeah,



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it's really important to have that, but



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on that integration, and on that, on those, you know, on,



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on that, on that producing a focus our users coming to here to, okay, I need focus more times or, or overtime using Kuzma. time you start craving more those pockets of of?



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That's interesting. So first of all, I want to pick up on what you said about stress. fascinating, because the whole bunch of features on how we display tasks that we rethought for that very reason. It's that it's, it's more important to reduce stress than to be precise, right? So that's, that didn't happen when I explained the first version where the computer would tell you what to do. That was super stressful, right?



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Is that and if it is you get the better we come back to this and say, well, that's not at all the way to what the way to combat stress is the sense of power. Right? And freedom, right? So



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look, we still have a lot of work to do in this thing. But the power, we have this view called plan by week, where you see all your week or your tasks or your blocks, and you move things around. And that's a big deal too for power. So you can say I have too much to do. You go to plan my week and say, Okay, look, take a deep breath, move things this I can do we move into tomorrow, this region next week, and so on. So it's actually very empowering to super easily play with your schedule like that rice with you. Because meetings, you can't move right here every meeting, if our call is at 10am. This morning, I can just say, oh, that I'll move it Saturday. But the blocks that you have for your test, you can decide and that's very liberating to be able to play with a schedule that way. So that's

a big thing around stress. The other piece that we focusing on is positive reinforcement. So I don't know if you noticed that but by default, when you complete a task or you spend time on something which we call a session, we write it in your calendar, so we write in the decal. So for example, last night I did something after dinner, like



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10:30pm boom, I see that just spent 45 minutes on that task at 1030. It is very good say okay, it's almost like my calendar is telling me well done Nicola, you know, you did some work last night and Luke is here we aware of it. So we want to do more of that. One of the



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things I mentioned is goals and commitments, that's where we want to be a bit of a have a bit of a social aspect to say, look, if I'm really my goal, maybe I can get somebody to share with me not only my calendar, but also somebody else to say, okay, that's great. My partner, Marta, you know, when we agree on what our priorities should be, we're very eager to be able to report on it. So it's just a matter, you need to spend



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half your time on the backend, right? If we can clock in at the end of the week, we say, okay, spend half the time I can say Awesome, well done. And that's goes further into this, this positive reinforcement. But it's a very interesting thing. And then the other question you had is around what what we finding in how people use the app? There's no question that



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it's very personal, and different people have different systems that work for them. Our challenge is to do something that is powerful, and yet respectful of how people would like to do their work. The people, when I when I talk to friends,



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and say, tried the people who do not want to try it, those who say I've set up my system, I don't want to touch it, like I have my inbox, I put tags, labels, and then I write that in my apple notes. And that works for me. So I respect that. Suddenly, those who, like me will

start working then should try something different. So it's a it's a fine balance between something very powerful that enables you to do a lot of things and letting people get organized the way they want.



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saw the results, we found that not everybody uses all our features, right? That's for sure. Some people swear with all distraction rocking, and it's awesome. Some people don't use it at all. There's no question that most of the very large majority of users use calendar blocking. So putting a task in a calendar, that thing that seems the obvious thing, actually, I'm even puzzle that that's more common in other applications. I'd use an application called since summer this year on calendar. And so some people say, Well, isn't that like some summer? Well, what I find is that you criticize fellow entrepreneurs and federal fellow developers. But it wasn't as it wasn't done for me, he wasn't right, he didn't integrate with my existing calendar or multiple calendars, I need to know when I have meetings, I need to know, you know, if I can do if every time available, I need to be able to synchronize. So if I go, I just did this morning, I was in my Google Calendar. So block for stuff for customer time. And I moved in Google Calendar. And of course, we synchronized which was moved. So I need to have this freedom to go to wherever I feel like operating and doing it. So that piece is probably the foundation of customer time blocking and moving things in calendar. I think it's really important that every task manager slash productivity, task management, project management software understands that if I have a system, and I'm using that system, if you're going to level up that system, the integrations are one way to get people like me, I don't I don't want to leave, remember the milk. I don't want to leave Asana for your tool. But I do want the value of what you're bringing to me in terms of being able to connect these tools together. And that's what I really like about cosmic time is because, yes, I happen to use Asana and I happen to use, you know, Google, and the Google suite. And so I'm in Google workspace all the time. And integrating those two pieces together provides greater value on top of that, and and that's really the value to me of us to have a tool like this kind of moving forward. I'm curious, what do you have on the horizon? It sounds to me like more integrations, maybe some more pieces that connect social and team based collaboration in that sense. What does the future look like for cosmic time? What would you like cosmic time to really be for people when they are working both individually, maybe with their family, and or with their friends, and then of course, in a corporate or a company environment? It does become apparent to us that well, people think of task management as the same thing like Trello, Asana. They're two very different problems to solve. One is teamwork, and one is personal productivity. It's actually so teamwork is reasonably well served with solutions like Asana. I shouldn't say reasonably because I'm launching integration with them and we're all excited about it. It's a good solution. We use it



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It parents are sad because one time, it does a good job organising the workflow for teams for personal productivity. As I mentioned, we felt that there was an empty space. So we feel that we have a lot more work to do on the personal productivity before we address other needs. We are focused on professionals. So while simple solutions like to do list are used by many different people in many different use cases, right? So you can be a mom taking even your shopping list.



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That's not our target shopping, we really going after busy professionals who have a challenge



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juggling all their tasks. And we think that there's a lot more to do on what we've done, like integrations for sure that both of you have mentioned it, you know, the integration with that portal integration with other tasks with this big next project around goals and commitments, as I mentioned, right, so these, and the interesting part about goals and commitments, it's another dimension, I mentioned, efficiency, which making sure that you don't waste time and you're very,



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you your high rate of production, is also effectiveness, making sure that you're working the right things, right. And then there's also the goals and commitments are very much on effectiveness, make sure that we track that it's your goal, because it was your priority, and we help you do your priority. And then the only other things around because I've been thinking about what is



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what is causing us not to do something, basically, where you can just not do what you're supposed to do. The next level, you can do it but takes you too much time, right. So not do is procrastination, not to take too much time is lack of efficiency. Or they can do something which was the wrong thing that was not the most priority. So we're looking at all these aspects of productivity and how we can help each of them. Ironically, not doing something is probably the hardest one, because so we have distraction rocking. So make

sure that you're



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not doing your task, because you somewhere else, you said the reason, but we still have a lot to do to help you. And that's part of this positive reinforcement to get people to, to feel good about it and and say, you know, I can do my goal, or I can



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read the news. But if you might go well, I'll get NATO, I'll get ready to say Awesome, well done, and it just the body actually moves in that direction. So that's, that's why we are. So we feel we have a lot more work to do



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in that space. So it's obviously always integration and more like technology related. So like doing software that will connect, but the



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things around motivation, and positive reinforcement is more of a research. So I suspect it's going to take a few generations to get it right and get something very compelling. It's a more I know, I've been software for 27 years, and the more I do so Furthermore, I'm reminded of the I guess what's famous writer said, I wrote a long letter because I didn't have time to write a short one, Mark Twain. That's right. That's right. It's exactly what it says in software, I did a bloated software because I didn't have time to figure out that shit and get this order, right. And so, so we need we committed to spending a lot of time to get our software. simple and beautiful. Yeah, but in you know, from from the listeners, there are a couple of things that for me are, you know, really powerful. The fact that you can play you know, when you think on time blocking and you can come to cosmic time create these blocks automatically block them in your calendar in a different way. But you can now put your task inside of that. So if you leave it for listeners who have not seen that cosmic time, you know, when you create what is called a focus block, you can put now inside of that, what is what you hope to to accomplish during that time that will block your calendar, but he will show you what is inside. So when you come to do this focus session, you will be able to see what you did what you done or what you have not done. And that part works



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incredibly well in my opinion. And you can also as we mentioned before any of these tasks, you can put the timer and as Nicole said get the reports later. So it will really allows you to plan the day or the week and more from what Nicholas was saying at the beginning. You know, you have already your list of task of to do's. Now this may allows you to really move that from the to do list to an execution point in a really in a really clean way.



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I even that they are, you know, for my particular set of circumstances integrations that I want, you know, if you have a son, if you live on a son and you live on Google, already everything is integrated with that I need work will work really well for you. So that that part was really interesting to see how easy it was to create those blocks of time, because one of the things I have seen with time blocking is, you look at your canvas, Okay, great, I have an hour one to two, and you block it in your calendar. A lot of people do that, you know, already. But what we don't take sometimes a two step for next two steps are okay. But what is what I'm going to do in those in that hour, what are the 535 tasks I'm going to do, so that way I can, I can really be effective. Because the problem is, when we get to that block, our now can block this, you know, focus one block of one hour and you get in there. And as you said, Now you're tired now you're now you need to deal with all the emotions of I've been beaten up all the morning, and I have this blog at one eight at 1pm. Now I'm going to get espresso



36:18

book that has to happen. And I always tell people you need to go with, even with meetings with a plan B on hand, what are you going to do if you get to this meeting, and the meeting is starting 15 minutes late? Are you going to waste those 15 minutes or you have Plan B already thought so you can execute? What I love about those sample blogs is that if you take the time to make that end, make also the thinking of what you're going to accomplish, what are the tasks that you're going to try to accomplish on that hour, you have already not only the plan to use the hour, but actually an execution guideline of how to make it effectively. And I think that it's really a powerhouse from my perspective of what Cosmo time bring today. Bring to this



37:14

delighted to hear your feedback. That's exactly how we thought of it the executive, he said block time, you want to make sure that if we plan which test you you aiming to complete, and of course, you also make sure that as much as possible, to make sure they're related so that there's less of a context switching, right. So you can group you you're testing is actually



37:41

a secondary benefit from these blocks.



37:46

Around stress, currently, I must have about 100 tasks to do probably and you guys, you're lower the only stats, the zombies, you know, they come in and say, I know I should do it someday. But that's you know, I'm not going to delete it because I should do it. It keeps pushing, pushing, pushing. And with these blocks, you can you can batch right, so you can add zombies together. And because it shows that it just happened, if somebody says something else, just delete the unit, we can't do it, but just happen. That's happened like one day, I mean an airplane, I have Wi Fi and anyways, zombies, right. So these blocks, they enable you to carry 100 tasks in amongst everybody 11 blocks, something like that. So maybe 15. So it's a manageable thing. These things if I open them, I see there's a lot of stuff there. But when I look at my if you see list all tasks, they block us, okay, my bed is 15 blocks, and some is for today, some is for next week. So it's for Sunday, it makes it a lot less stressful. And because if you have to schedule 100 task in your calendar, one after the other is going to take a lot of drag it up. And as we discussed earlier, most likely, you're not going to do it to the time when you expected at least a lot of portion of them. So then you have to remove them again. And so that's why these blocks are so effective or so is because you can say okay, I'm moving seven tasks in one shot in the thing. So it's a w bar for that reason. I wanted to I wanted to underscore I wanted to underscore an important point you made earlier, which was that many times it's not about not doing it's the fact that we are always doing something, even if we're not doing the thing that we are focused on as our goal or our project or task for that particular moment. And I call it procrastinating in a way. Oh, I've never heard that before. That's a great word. Yeah, I wrote I did a podcast episode on prod pod many years ago about this idea of doing Yeah, it's procrastinating. You're doing something. It's just that you're not you're not goal direction. Is is shifted whether that be internal or you physically doing something your attention is is doing something or you are physically



40:00

Doing something, it's just not what you plan to do. And and so that's a really great point that and something that as Cosmo time is trying to solve for that that's really important. And it frequently comes down to some kind of stressor, right emotional stressor, conflict with someone, there is some issue going on that is causing you to shift gear from doing the thing that you planned to do, versus what your procrastinate doing. And that's, that's really key. And I like that function. It just so happened that this weekend, I read a blog post by Marc Andreessen, the founder of Netscape and Andreessen Horowitz. And he mentioned another article, I'll find it, this is this has changed my life. It's exactly what you said. But the positive side of it, the idea that sometimes you procrastinating it frustrating, but you actually do something super valuable. It's just not what you wanted to do. But it's super valuable. So that's something



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that denial, we say, look, if you if you have any work on something else, just turn on the session and see that you've done it right, and you'll get the reward in your candidacy. I've done something actually, it's not what I was meant to do, but it was something beneficial. And I can see Marc Andreessen says he's changed his life. And I can see that because the other guys were saying, it's all about managing stress. And when you feel good that you've actually done something even though it wasn't what it is, it was it will help you continue your day and be productive. So I wrote down Pikachu doing this a great way.



41:28

As we come to the close of our conversation today that I have a couple of questions. One is, is there anything that we didn't ask you that you wanted to share with folks who are listening? And and then we can close out with kind of how people can learn more about cosmic time and how to really get started with it. So let's start with Is there anything that we didn't cover that you wanted to cover in our conversation?



41:51

You guys are very thorough, and done your homework. So only thing maybe that I really love in the app, and it doesn't get emphasized is bookmarking. So that's it we have I mentioned it, the women talk about it. Because it's an amazing way to use the blocks. When you bookmark, you can attach it to a block. So you can say, as an example of



42:16

a blog called stuff to read. And whenever I see something interesting to reading, I bookmark into that block. So with a Chrome extension you can send to a block. And then it was too soft to read. And then I moved myself stuff to read to maybe Sunday, Sunday evening. And that's a very powerful feature. We I'm finding, you know what you were saying earlier that I eat my own dog food. I'm finding a lot of features a lot of jokes, because is that when you're the only user but you know, if



42:46

I want to change something, say earlier, it's actually because you're the only user. I think if I'm the only user that can be some other people like me, we think it's it's a useful thing. So that's the only thing. And maybe you deserve a bit more coverage. Yeah, no, I think establish this, it's been a collage of, you know, some of the things you can do now this Cosmos time right now in one little lab and and extension could be done. But then now you're using four or five things, places to check later. I really like the idea of corral them all in one. So if people want to learn more about cosmic time, get up and running with it. What's the best way for them to learn about cosmic time and get themselves inculcated in the cosmic time application. So obviously, it's free right now and free signups. So they should come to customer time.



43:39

And try it out. And then we have a call to action in the app to join our slack group for the customer time. So you guys should join



43:48

is I'll make sure that you have the link.



43:52

It's a slack group where we discuss we love feedback, we love ideas. We want to hear what people like and don't like sexually. See your slack workspace called friends of Cosmo. And in the so after trying the app, you can come there and share the feedback. Fantastic. Wonderful. So that's at Cosmo time.com at Keio smotime.com, you can sign up in the application, it's currently free to try and test out and yeah, I recommend people to check it out. Because I've been playing with it and really been enjoying the experience

myself and I I can see where this is going. I can see where a lot of the pieces here can really be useful to people, especially as you get that goal orientation component kind of built out. And so thank you Nicholas Vandenberg, for joining us on the show. Thanks to you guys. That was awesome. That was Nicholas Vandenberg, CEO of cosmic time. You can learn more about cosmic time by visiting our show notes and clicking on the link from there. If you have a question or a comment from this episode, and the discussion with Nicolas, feel free to head over to



45:00

ProductivityCast dotnet forward slash 112. That'll take you to the episode page. And there you'll find our show notes with links, but you'll also find our comments section for you to be able to leave questions and comments about the episode. If there is a productivity question that you might have, check out ProductivityCast dotnet forward slash ask, we have an upcoming ask productivity cast episode, where the team is going to tackle questions and answers from the audience. So we've done this before, and we're trying it again. So if you have questions, feel free to head over to ProductivityCast dotnet forward slash AFK and fill out the form and hopefully we'll answer your question in an upcoming episode sometime I think in June, I want to express my thanks to a gousto pinout for joining me on this interview for ProductivityCast. You can learn about him and his work by visiting ProductivityCast dotnet and clicking on the about page with that I want to express my thanks to you for listening and the ProductivityCast team for always helping us put together ProductivityCast and with that, here's to your productive life. 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.