113-Productivity-Potpourri-Numero-Dos-ProductivityCast

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SPEAKERS

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

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👤 **00:00**

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better

👤 **00:02**

to live a fulfilling productive life,

👤 **00:05**

then you've come to the right place. ProductivityCast

👤 **00:08**

the weekly show about all things productivity,

👤 **00:11**

here are your host Ray Sidney-Smith and gousto been out with Francis Wade and Art

Gelwicks

Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:17

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

Augusto Pinaud 00:22

I'm Augusto Pinaud.

Francis Wade 00:23

I'm Francis Wade.

Art Gelwicks 00:24

And I'm Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:25

Welcome, gentlemen, and welcome to our listeners to this action packed episode of productivity cast. Today, what we're going to do is do productivity properly. numero dos, we are going to be doing our episode where we take four questions, one from each of us, and we discuss them in alphabetical order. So we're gonna go round robin, and take each question and discuss the question that each of us has brought to the table. And so because we are doing this alphabetically, aren't you? We're up first. And so go for it. What's your productivity potpourri question for us. All right, I'm

Art Gelwicks 01:04

going to start us off with a thinker here. This is we always talk about retrospectives, whether it's a daily retrospective, weekly, monthly. So I'm going to throw this out to you guys as a six month retrospective. If you think back over the productivity choices you've made over the past six months, is there one that you would change if you had the opportunity to? And how would you change it? Is there something that you decided during this time period that you thought was a good idea, but after executing, and it turns out, maybe not so much. And I'll give you guys an opportunity to think about that. I'll throw mine in there. And it's actually a two parter. For me. My challenge was over this past six

months, I decided to do more testing of whether or not I could capture notes digitally and analog pen and paper and make that system balance. The mistake I made is I did that with my actual system. If I had the opportunity to do that over again, and I do and I'm going to, I would do it in basically a dummy system, because what I found is the value of testing that process of trying to see could I do it digitally as well as analog, disrupted my own productivity solutions. It disrupted my note taking a disruptive my note organization. And I'm still in the process of backtracking and recapturing things the way they should be. It's, it was an idea at the time that had merit and I did learn a lot from it. But I would definitely not use my own day to day operational system as the guinea pig of that, that catalyze changes to my to do lists and other functionalities that again, I, I took the core, and I made it the guinea pig. And that would be the one thing I would go back and change is I would duplicate the system and test on the duplicated system. It's more work. But I think in the long run, I wouldn't be behind the eight ball like I am right now in some areas, you bring up a great point, which is that if you're going to test new tools or new systems, it's usually helpful to run that concurrently, while you are still maintaining your prior system in whatever fashion you need to,

Raymond Sidney-Smith   03:31

I know that because I test so much productivity software, I always actually set up a singular project in that system to then run it through it. And that's how I test is kind of just, you know, slicing off a piece of the work into that system for that timeframe to see if it can actually do what I want it to do. And you know, many projects are tailored for particular types of software, particular types of systems. And so I'll usually do that. But I very infrequently, will move my system, I will set my system completely up in another tool to be able to see how it works to get the enough experience with what it will do for me and how it will work. But it's it's absolutely a good idea to not move your system completely until you're comfortable. And that means maintaining the current system, which can be a little bit difficult, which is why changing tools is it's never my first choice for people, you know, it's usually trying to make do with what you've got before you switch to another tool because there is that loss. There's that productivity hit that most people if they really thought about it are not probably excited about So my question to you aren't is after the change. Did you learn enough? And is there enough of a benefit on the other side that made it worthwhile?

Art Gelwicks   04:52

I think after looking at the change, I learned a lot of things I don't want to do. That's and that's one of the things doing that kind of testing as you determine the wrong things as well as the ways to improve, I have found that there are some things that I'm going to

change by not doing them anymore. And also finally galvanizing in my head that what I've always thought might be a viable alternative, really just does not have the opportunity cost tied to it. I like using my pens, I like using my paper notebooks. But the downside of being able to organize and recall that information for certain types of work, it's just not worth the effort. I have to categorize now. And this is part of what I put into my processes is where is the best place to do the work not only what is the work that needs to be done? So and I'll give you a practical example of this. I do work woodworking on the side as a hobby. And I was looking at as part of the processes, could I do designs online? Could I use a CAD tool? Can I use something else for that? And I absolutely could, the problem I get into is, it's not the best way for me to do that type of work. So I've made the conscious decision in my system to say, if I'm going to do that, I'm going to do it on pen and paper and rollers. Because I know that's the most efficient and the most effective. So putting that kind of decision making into the beginning parts of my process, I think are going to help a lot. And that's the direct learning I got from this experiment

A Augusto Pinaud 06:34

during the pandemic. And, you know, there were a lot of things that evolved for me, that were then revised to be changes, who would you know, the context were one of those, obviously, as context disappear, I require to update some of them. And same thing with the hard word. Because again, as I move a lot less, and spend more time in the in the office, and some things, you know, are going to stay that way, then the changes, you know, we're quite, quite interesting. So for me was, you know, I modify for certain notetaking activities, as you were describing art, I'm now taking them on a different application, especially on those meetings that require me to process the notes during meetings that I go through, I just take the notes, and if I need them verify, in many cases, I just need to file them. But there are other meetings that I go that the result of that meeting will define what I need to do. So in those cases, those meetings are those notes are taken on a different app. So that way, I process them before they go into my system. And that has make a productive changes. Same thing, as I said, was a context. And I'm right now currently working into hardware updates, and not necessarily to acquire or eliminate anything, but to make sure that what is right now hardware base, is doing what it needs to do or not.

F Francis Wade 08:09

This is a very simple one, I think maybe lots of people are already doing the same thing. But I've almost eliminated the use of the phone and replaced it with the use of video. And I know lots of people are doing that because video is the new sort of invoke way to communicate in real time. But what I've noticed is that my video calls are more productive

than my just mere phone calls. And I think it has to do with the amount of information I'm able to gain by seeing the person and vice versa, I find them the cause shorter, more productive, more focused. And if I need to move them along, I think I can move them along a little better. Because I can transmit my need for urgency, for example, without having to say something I can non verbally do it. But I'm finding them way more productive. And we're more useful. So it's, I don't that I'll go back to doing voice calls when I can do video calls. The of course is the exception when I have to take a voice call because the person is on the road or they don't have data or whatever it is. But video calling is a change that I made. That is the opposite of what I asked for actually, because this one has been a great change for me. And I think that

Raymond Sidney-Smith   09:32

what you're seeing is change is going to probably take hold in the rest of global society. I mean, now that every major technology company has created some kind of video meeting software for people to be able to connect, whether you're on low bandwidth or high bandwidth and being able to make this accessible to everyone. Now that it's here, it's kind of become a mainstay and I'm with you. I really like being able see people when I'm when I'm talking to them in, in work situations. And the goal is to determine when and where that's necessary. But for me, actually, in most meetings, clients don't need to see me. But I need to be able to see their facial expressions, I need to be able to see them respond to me in a training. And they need to be able to usually see my screen if I want to demonstrate something, or if I'm presenting slides or whatnot. So the value is not necessarily in them seeing me but means me being able to see them and what they're doing on their systems. And so that's actually been really, really helpful. Because many times the work that I do, I'm seeing people in a training environment, as opposed to them in their real habitat, doing the work that they're doing, and being able to now come into their work environment means that I actually see more about what's causing potentially problems in their, their work in their life, and being able to say, Okay, well, this is, this is what I'm seeing, is this, what you're feeling, I'm getting some feedback there. So that's been actually really, really helpful. So for me, I went and changed the way in which I socialize, which is very strange for me. But up until this point, kind of on the heels of Francis, I really don't like being on the phone, usually, except with maybe my close family. And my work required a lot of phone calls. And now, that doesn't happen as much like I think, unless I've scheduled a meeting, and this is part of my own, you know, professional world, which is that I really don't take phone calls. In real time, I just ignore all phone calls and have them go to voicemail. And if someone doesn't schedule time with me, then they don't get time with me. And there's a very good reason behind this. There's like a productive reason behind this, which is that, if you call me and people call me randomly throughout the day, that distracts me, that interruption driven kind of mindset, then

means that I can't focus on real work. And by forcing everyone to schedule time with me, I'm able to even if it's just later in the day, it allows me to then look at notes, find the answer to what their problem is, and then have a real conversation about that thing. And there's nothing wrong with them leaving a voicemail message. And, you know, walking me through what the problem might be, and me deciding that I need to talk to them in order to really understand the problem, and then sit down together and have that kind of, you know, response, there are times when I do want to talk to someone in real time immediately and consult the problem. But most often than not, I'm going to say 80 to 90% of the time, it means scheduling time, and sitting down with that person to have that conversation once we're both prepared to have it. And so I've moved to that environment almost exclusively. And it has really skyrocketed my ability to focus on the work at hand. Now, flip that which is my own, like well being and my own mental health went in an environment where there's such a dramatic change in the way in which not traveling as much for work anymore. spending a lot of time in the same environment, right? You know, if I'm working from home in my home office, then I'm here all the time. And that means creating a sense of social order. And what does that mean. And so I've been working very, very hard to figure out what those components are. And as a an uncle, I wanted to be able to connect more with my niece. And so I have been very thoughtful and pushing my brother and sister in law for you know, just like opportunities. And so in this whole pandemic situation, I made the suggestion to my brother and sister in law to do these coloring playdates. And so I'm really, really pleased with it all. That's just really, really great for me for my, my own well being is very family oriented and very connected to my family. And so I'm just so happy to be able to like, get on video, she has the same coloring book I do. And I purchased the two of them so we could have the same ones. And just having time to connect, you know, she told me, I think we spent two hours together her just talking, you know, and telling me all of her interests and showing me all of her drawings and artwork and that kind of thing. It was just incredibly fun and a way to connect with her when we couldn't, you know, physically be in the same space and enjoy time. So I want everybody to remember that there are these new technological ways in which we're learning how to socialize and be better connected. Even though You might think of that as being strictly outside of the personal productivity space. Really socializing is just such a huge part of our mental health and well being, we need to remember to keep doing that, in order to stay productive. We are up to Augusto Augusto, what is your? What's your question for us today?

Francis Wade 15:20
What's

Raymond Sidney-Smith 15:20

your productivity potpourri item,

Augusto Pinaud 15:23

I want to start with a quote Bruce Lee quote that says one does not accumulate but eliminate, it is not daily increase, but daily decrease the height of cultivation, it always run to simplicity. And the reason I picked that quote is one of the things that over the years I have seen with productivity is that as we get more productive, and we begin from, you know, not having a calendar to now having a calendar, not having a task list to now having a task list, and you see clients and people who start getting into the productivity getting more effective, and getting being able to do more. But this parallel of that is that as they get better at certain things, and he started discovering more time, that time tends to be fill up, not necessarily with the things that will fill them, but with other things, and then suddenly, they come and get back to that point of I broke the system. When I do coaching a lot of things, a lot of things I do is to look into that, you know, great, now you are getting more effective, and you have discover how to gain this time. But what are you going to do with this time, and the only way to gain out of that time is to eliminate to start discovering there are things that I don't want to do you know, as I for example, years ago, discover why I'm picking this call for telemarketers if I don't know the number, so if I don't know the number, I don't pick the call, you can leave a voicemail. And if you're real, I'm happy to give you a call back. But if you're a telemarketer, voicemail is fine. But that was you know one thing that I eliminate doing in order to gain more time. So as you guys look into your system and the evolution of your system, how much are you looking into? eliminate things? Well, because they are obsolete? Or because you need really to eliminate them to graduate to to the next level? Or are we just allowing to get better at managing the complexity and we just get to that point where now what was really complex gets easy, and we stay there

Francis Wade 17:47

I am it when my time My turn comes I'm going to be talking about email. But that the the essence of your question is how I'll be thinking talking about email, which is that you don't scale up your complexity to deal with more items you you in instead, you bring a level of saw discernment and hard triage. And that allows you to live a life even though you might get 10,000 emails a day. So that's that's one example of what you're talking about, I believe.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 18:23

I'll slightly go off on a tangent to see if I'm answering the question, which is kind of a hybrid approach of, of what Francis just said, which is that if you are in a space where your world is transitioning, that is an appropriate time to think about the complexity of the new chapter in your life. And so that is the time to think how complex your system needs to be to meet the needs of your daily life. I'm always concerned about people attempting to create more complexity for outlier things, for example, projects that may be happening, a big project in your life doesn't usually warrant you changing your entire system for it. It just means that you need to respond differently for that specific project. And yet, I see people saying okay, well this big project is coming up. So I've got to shake up my system. And that is not the time to shake up your system. So it looks eliminating, in order to get more productive, for me means that there's a transition in progress. And if there's a transition in progress, then the least amount of change, to be most productive is the best order of business. However, we need to take the context of what's going on to heart. So if you are, you know, just purchased a home And that's going to be a huge environmental change. So that's not only a transition, but also a big part of how you are productive, where you do things, how you do things, what the flow of your day is going to look like, is going to be very much dependent upon you moving through that environment and learning that environment well. So for me, it really depends on the situation. And if you're going into a state of just heading out into the world to get a new job, that's going to be increasing usually complexity from school, if you are retiring, if you're having a child, if you're getting married or divorced, all of those beget different levels of complexity. And that needs to match your needs at that time. So my answer is, it depends. But But you should really think thoughtfully about how much complexity you need. And your system should match that complexity. I don't disagree with Francis's thoughts about cutting, right in the sense that you should be triage, seeing and thinking about what is absolutely necessary to be done in any circumstance. For me, my standard is going to be different than the person next to me versus the person next to them, and so on and so forth. So what is your standard of excellence, and then the simplicity needs to match that.

Art Gelwicks 21:29

I agree that the idea of eliminating is key to a lot of these things. But for me, the elimination process has really become elimination of bottlenecks. And I use the analogy of a heavy rainstorm starts coming down, and there's more and more water backing up, and it's backing up behind the dam, you have two options, you can either leave the floodgates open the way they are and allow that water to continue to backup and backup and hope it doesn't overwhelm you. Or you can open the floodgates more, allowing more to flow through and recognizing that the stuff that's flowing through is going to come through

faster, and it's not going to get the same level of attention. Can you do that? Well, when I look at my systems, if I've got a big project coming up, or something that has a high sense of urgency, like I have one this week, that is an absolute fire drill for the week, I need to make sure that my system is not going to slow down the execution of it. So what floodgates, can I open? What restrictors, can I eliminate in my process to still get to the same end result. But to increase the flow for this time period, I'm not saying blow them up. I'm not saying completely tear the dam down. What I'm saying is have the tools or have the limiters in your system to be able to eliminate those restrictions when you need to. So it may not be an exact answer to your question a gousto. But to me, elimination of complexity is probably the most important thing. There's you know, I can ignore tasks, I can ignore phone calls and things like that, that that aren't important. And that's, that should be part of anybody's system. But for me to have have a system that can flex, depending on what's going on is more important than anything else. And part of that flexing is eliminating of restriction.

Raymond Sidney-Smith   23:32

And I know I recently came across an application called via negativa, I'll put a link to this in the show notes. I know nothing about it. So there's no guarantees there. But the whole application is designed around a not to do list. And I know this is something that you've talked about before it gousto. The whole application allows you to kind of list things that you shouldn't do things that should be off your to do list. So it helps you do less. And so this idea of of the name of the company, I think is called addition by subtraction. So kind of an interesting flavor of productivity app there. All right, here we go on to Francis. So Francis, what is your question for us? And what are your thoughts behind it?

F   Francis Wade   24:16

The question is, how do you scale email? And how can you take the direction email management is going in and actually start to apply today using automated thinking. So the inspiration for this actually comes from the hair. He pay inbox or hey.com. It's a new app that was just released the other day by Basecamp. And imagine something called an inbox in in with them at an M not an N and different ways of triage an email. And what they've done is come up with some really interesting ways of managing your email once it hits your inbox, they have a screen, they have a place where you can put receipts, they have a feed for casual information, they have different ways of assigning importance to different senders. It's pretty interesting. But anyway, it got me it got me thinking that imagine a time where we get 10,000 emails a day. And part of what got me thinking along this line is a, I'm trying to implement this program that allows you to accumulate different feeds from different sources. Oh, boy, I can't remember the name of it. That should have

Raymond Sidney-Smith 25:46

unroll.me

Francis Wade 25:47

on rolls, right. Okay, I think it's on a roll. Great. So unroll. Right, unroll reports to me that is found that I have 500, or 600, subscriptions, something like that. And that's mind boggling to me. Until I went in and started to eliminate, try to eliminate them. And I realized that, okay, actually, I signed up for these things, for good reasons. I don't necessarily want to see 500 emails in any given day or even in any given week. But I want them to play a particular role in bringing me a certain amount of value. So I thought, Okay, well, if I'm going to be managing tons and tons of email at some point in the future, and maybe by five years time, I'll have 1000 subscriptions. I obviously can't use the methods that I use today. Because they just won't scale. So hence my interest in the hay app, hay.com app, and what they've come up with. And I thought, hmm, they've come up with some interesting ways of dealing with email, but there's something missing at the core of it. And as we were making notes for this call, I thought, I thought I wonder if we could use the jobs to be done construct which says that you hire a an app, like email, in order to do certain tasks. So you set hiring, hiring a cab, or hiring a taxi to take you from one place to the other. And if you don't like the taxi, you could hire Uber instead. Because you would hire Uber, because it fulfills a role that a normal taxi doesn't fulfill that, okay, well, what do we hire email to do. And I started to make a list and and realize that this list actually could be automated at some point in the future, so that I'm not spending more than the time that I spend right now on email, I think the nature of the time that I spend needs to be very focused, not casual. And it's not something that I can allow it to sort of slip between other tasks, it's not leftover time that I should be spent doing email, it should be my best time. Because of the number of ways in which I'm hiring email to do these different jobs. And in the future, what I would want from what I have 10,000 emails coming in, is some kind of upfront automation that matches my needs. So well, and so perfectly, you know, AI and, and that software would allow me to only be able to only have the focus, the same amount of time that I'm focusing right now. But I'm being just as productive. Because the automation works so well. So having said all that futuristic stuff, I brought it back to today and and I asked, okay, how do I need to almost think about automating the way I manage email each day. And the first thing I came up with is what I just mentioned, which is I focused my best time on email, not my worst, and not the spare time. It's always time blocked. It, it's when I can give my my most attention, and I never allow myself to become distracted by any given piece of email. So I never go down the rabbit hole. I'm always

during the hour in which I'm processing. I'm almost only processing. I'm not enjoying reading looking up or look, I'm not chasing squirrels. I'm only processing like kind of like a in an automated kind of way. But anyway, that's just one practice. I thought of almost automating my email today. So my question was long winded question. What are some ways that other ways to automate email today?

Art Gelwicks 29:46

I'm terrible with email, I'll readily admit that fact. My inboxes tend to get cluttered because of winding up in development conversations where 14 people are talking back and forth about this Same thing that you wind up with 30 emails on a given topic. So, for me, the automation pieces or the tools that you have available, I don't really have the option to run out and find additional ones, especially when it's client related. So I have to use the tools that are there, such as the rules capabilities within Outlook and my own processes. I think automation could be extremely beneficial for me in a lot of areas. I have to admit, I have to dedicate some time to doing the analysis level on the email, to be able to say, Okay, what are the commonalities in these emails I came in so that I can automate them, because that is a requirement. You can't automate for every one off, you'll just you're not automating, then you're just building extraneous systems. So you're right, dedicating time positive thinking time, deep thinking time, to be able to say, this is how this process should work, can make a big difference. I have found a challenge in some of my automation structures, though, and you have to look at this carefully if we're thinking about email automation, is that you don't automate, because that's how the tool says you should automate, you still need to go back and say, Look, this is how I need this email to work. And if this automation system will allow me to do that, great. But just because the tool says this is how it should automate, doesn't mean that's going to work for you. So don't allow it to dictate your work structure.

Francis Wade 31:34

If I could jump in a bit, I think that's that's the danger of head Comm. Is that they they've already figured out the way you should automate. But they don't give you any sort of insight into the principles behind their thinking. Which means that you could easily get trapped in thinking that this is the way to automate my email, and then you end up just doing it the way that they're telling you to do, which may not work for you, and it may not scale. So if you don't understand the principles, you could just lock yourself into something that ultimately get you into more trouble.

Art Gelwicks 32:09

Yeah, I'm not a fan of the black box approach that just worries me with things like automation, because that I'm assuming, then they're going to do things the way I think they should be done. And I can guarantee there's going to be a mismatch at certain levels. And that just that makes me uncomfortable. I like to see the wiring inside and know exactly how things are going to route.

A Augusto Pinaud   32:30

My issue with email. And automation is I set off 10. That productivity, it's about habits, tricks, and using technology to support my problem with services as hay on the people who did not work doing good habits tricks before is that what is going to create? is we are hoping that AI is going to make the job and it's going to do a good job. I don't know, I don't see it. I think what he's going to do is to temporarily reduce the noise until the first thing explode on their on their world. So unless you really have previously, the ability to manage your email really, really well. I don't think things like this really are a solution for for anybody.

Raymond Sidney-Smith   33:28

So to answer your question, Francis, I think there are two things that come to mind. One, is what he is doing. And I'm not. I think that I have some cognitive dissonance with regard to something like hey, right, hey, is a fairly opinionated piece of software, but it's also a new email service. And in essence, you now get an@hey.com email address. And in essence, you have to switch gears. And I know some people did that back when Gmail came out. And you know, people do that every time they get a new job, you know, they have a new email address if they move companies. But for me, there is something very important to me about being accessible. And this is not only an issue of inclusion, there is also an issue of security and privacy and also protecting individuals like myself where I receive hundreds and hundreds of emails a day. Because of the nature of my work, and the public nature of my persona. In my work life. I get all these emails, and they need to be managed in both automated and non automated means. And so there's there's something that really bothers me about the idea of somehow blocking people from the right people from accessing me and the overhead necessary with something like hey, which in essence says you need to screen each No email, like you would screen phone calls. I've already enough problem screening phone calls. And what ended up happening is that I've made the decision to in essence, not answer any phone calls, unless there's a scheduled time associated with, like I talked about earlier in the episode. And that has created downstream effects, but not to the level that email would. And the other part. And so like set aside that cognitive dissonance between being accessible and protecting the

individuals, right, like protecting from spam, and from malware and other kinds of things. But then on the flip side of this, email is a part of the internet. I think that people keep forgetting, or maybe don't know that email is a foundational component aspect of the internet, it is not just some fun, nice to have component, the the idea of an open, accessible internet requires the email to be a part of it, you can't just take email out of the equation. So the World Wide Web, and email were developed to have these open protocols, they open source these options for us to be able to have accessibility to other people on the planet. This has helped both established democracies, it is also probably helped delete some democracies off of the Global Map. From a productivity perspective, email is here to stay, I don't see email going away, ever. I think that email is this powerful communications platform. Because it's an open protocol. Anyone can access it, anyone can build on top of it, Hey, calm is building on top of the email protocol, even though they're doing some fancy things on top of it. Inherently, email is just still email. So in terms of automating, I think of, for me, the concept of email inbox one. And I think I've talked about this before in episodes, but forgive me if I'm repeating myself, but I really believe that you should have one inbox. And the one inbox means that you funnel as many of your inputs into one place as possible. And because emails email, you can then tie automation and integration through that inbox. And so I have my voicemails are transcribed and sent into my inbox. And then they can be processed and moved from there, I have text messages coming into my inbox, that allows my system to then again, call through the messages and filter them from there. There's so much happening from that one centralization of the inbox, for me both on the personal side and professional side, that I can't, I can't think of any better way to do it today. Because so much of email is an open protocol that allows for that to happen, you're not going to get that with, you know, Apple messages, you're not going to get that with even Google messages now on their RCS platform, you're just not going to get that from any one particular technological company, because of the very nature of them wanting to control and persuade you to stay with their platform. You can't do that with email, because email is open. And that's the power of open protocols. So I don't know if I answered your question. But that's kind of where my mind and my thoughts are. Yeah, I

Francis Wade   38:29

think the challenges that we we we will all be having to contend with more messages in the future. So there's not there's not the future, given the nature of what you said, right? There's not a future in which we're all people are all gonna collectively decide to send everybody else less email, there's just more messaging in the future. And whether it's actually email or any other electronic messaging, digital messaging isn't going anywhere, and it's only going to increase is my my thinking and doubling tripling quadrupling 10 times saying it can't we just can't do it at that level with the level of tools and the personal

habits that we have today. So maybe this is a topic for like a whole, a whole call a whole podcast on its own. Because I think if we think through some of these things, it would give a hint as to why For example, He is good and he is bad. It has some good. And then it has some that's not so good. But then we will be able to illuminate why and what what a scalable solution would look like even if you're getting 10,000 emails a day. So maybe that's a whole nother topic.

Raymond Sidney-Smith   39:43

Yeah, I like that idea. I will capture that as a future topic for us to discuss. Let's rapid fire. Our final question which is mine, and it's in the project management ecosystem in space. And my thoughts are really around the idea that I see a lot of people having to manage work on different projects. And they have several large, large projects in progress at any given time. And I'm just curious about how you are, how you manage multiple projects and moving those projects forward on any given project timeline? How do you think about the movement of projects in your world, I think that can be sort of illuminating and educational for everybody.

Augusto Pinaud   40:26

When I those projects require the interaction with other people. And when those projects are just, you know, manage mostly by me. So, I do a lot of double entry with the projects, because I like to keep my stuff in OmniFocus. And when I interact with other people, then I go outside of my funnel, and sharing with other people something similar to what you see on agile. So that said, that requires, you know, in my case, a lot of double entry, I need works because the number of projects I have that interact with other people given is limited. So that said, that's, that's the first question people need to revise is how many of these projects are going to be interacted with other people versus how many of these projects can leave on a silo? If you can leave most of the time on the silo doesn't matter. You know, what you do, but it matters if you need to interact. Because if you're interacting with people most of the time, and you try to put it in a silo, you are going to drown. So I don't not sure if that answer your question of how you manage on the different projects. Again, a lot of my work is client base, so happens that I need to interact with two, three or four different project management software for these small projects that interact with other people. And when that happened, again, it's a lot of double entry, when the project is managed mostly by me, and I just need updates of particular stuff. Again, it's managed inside of OmniFocus at this time, and that has worked well for four years. So but again, not sure that answer the question you're looking for,

Francis Wade 42:21

I guess I could take a simplistic point of view on this one and say, it kind of doesn't matter what how many large projects or like you have several large projects, what what matters is that you have a certain number of hours per week, to to dedicate the tasks related to those projects, and you have a certain level of focus, you can't do probably won't be able to focus on 100 different kinds of projects in a given week. And I think every week comes down to that regardless of the size of the project. So you could be able to make a project and that week, you could only have one task, which is to make a phone call in in that sense, if the challenge that you're focusing on is how do I decide what to do each week? I think that's the same problem from one week to the next, it doesn't really matter how many different projects you have going on. If the problem that you're focusing on is has more to do with the like program management, like am I choosing the right projects to work on? That's a different question. But I think you're maybe you could get us a little bit are you focusing more on the execution week by week or on the choice of which projects to focus focus on on a programmatic level? Maybe you could? I don't know.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 43:46

I think I think either way. I mean, you know, it really depends for you and the type of work you're doing whether or not you're attempting to manage on one of those levels at first or second, right, you're gonna have to deal with both of them at some point. So I'm, I'm open to either of your set of suggestions for listeners,

Francis Wade 44:04

right, that I'd say that that on a week by week basis. It's the same activity every week is in a week review. You know, what, what am I going to focus on this week? What am I planning to do, which projects Am I going to execute what's the element of each project that is going to occupy time make sure that I'm not trying to switch between too many projects within the week or so it'll end up in chaos, I need a certain quantum of activity for for I don't want to like I said I want to focus on 100 projects. And then at the higher level, it's what projects Am I focusing on so I keep I keep a log of the high level projects and I map them out basically month to month. So I have January, February, March, April and each month going along the the top of the screen the top of a sheet I track or I predict which projects are going to start when. So they always have a 12 month horizon that I'm looking at. And that's more or less the program level. And from time to time as just as Augusto said, you know, you cut things out or you delay them, or you, you decide to move things up or move things forward. But at that program, at a programmatic level, it's a little bit like chess in a way or checkers or moving around pieces. And I take that look maybe

once a month to see where my programs are going.

A Art Gelwicks 45:36

Yeah, I'll agree with the program management. Thinking around this because when you've got multiple projects going on, not only do you have to take into consideration when things have to be done, but you have to consider the fact that you have a limited pool of resources. In this case, just yourself, you often have interrelations between the tasks that are happening between multiple projects, you're able to consolidate it work, if you look at being able to aggregate across the multiples, and how they interact on the camera, or on the calendar itself. So when you have a lot of projects, it's actually even more important that you're dedicating time to non project work that you're slating time during that week, to do the project management portion of this, it's easy to fall for that to fall by the wayside, because you're trying to get the real work done. But you have to consider the project management part of the real work. And, and to use a terrible analogy. If you're if you're trying to throw one ball up in the air and catch it, it's pretty easy to focus. If you're trying to juggle six of them, it's really important that you focus on the process of the caching, not just the throwing. So you've got to dedicate time in that in your week cycle to say, for each project. Let's say I've got five projects I'm working on right now, I've got to dedicate an hour each week to just making sure that project is managed, not even getting done. And then scale that accordingly. And when you commit to those projects, you have to take that into consideration to say, Okay, I'm going to lose four hours each week, because I've got four projects in flight. So I only have 32, or 36 available hours to work with. And accommodate that part of the equation, it's easy for that to fall by the wayside. It's kind of the same thing in development where testing falls by the wayside, because you're trying to tick boxes on a to do list. But it's critical that that time for administration functionality and operation are part of the project execution. If you don't do that, you're gonna find yourself down a hole really quick,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 47:54

always great to get everybody's thoughts. And I really enjoy these productivity property episodes where we get a chance to kind of kick the tires on different topics in this short period of time. And just in the conversation. This has spurred a whole bunch of new topics, I think that we'll talk about in future episodes. So thank you, gentlemen, for that. While we are at the end of our potpourri discussion, the conversation doesn't stop here. If you have a question or a comment about what we've discussed during this cast, please visit our episode page on productivity cast dotnet it's just productivity cast dotnet forward slash the three digit episode number. So there on the podcast website for the episode page. At the bottom, you'll find a space for you to be able to leave a comment or a question, you

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That's it for this productivity cast,

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the weekly show about all things productivity with your hosts Ray Sidney-Smith and

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Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks