

The Small Biz Balancing Act



Secrets to Restoring Passion and Play in Business and in Life

"If you're a business owner who wants to improve the quality of your life, read this book, roll up your sleeves and do what it says. It is full of practical ideas you can use to be a better entrepreneur and a better person."

Mark Sanborn, author
*The Fred Factor: How Passion In Your Work
and Life Can Turn the Ordinary into the Extraordinary*

Victoria Munro
Co-founder of Make-it-Fly®

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Easy Reference Keys



Thought-Provoking Questions

Thoughtfully answering these questions can reveal important truths about you and your business.



Viewpoints to Ponder

Reflections and different perspectives shared by fellow business owners on the topic at hand.



Time Tips

Useful and sometimes challenging tips to help you increase your efficiency.



Take Action

Practical exercises to help you apply the principles in each chapter.



Balance Point Summary

Summary of the chapter's main points and a reminder to reset your *Balance Point*.



Dan¹ had worked later than usual that day. Like most evenings, he came home, sat at the kitchen table and focused on typing an account of the day's events into his laptop. As the owner of a company managing computer-network consultants, this is an essential task for him at the end of each day.

"It's critical that I write down exactly what we've accomplished," Dan explains. "Clients often aren't sure what we've done without this accounting." Dan felt that his children should understand his need to finish this work in the evening before he could spend time with them.

Engrossed in this daily task, he didn't notice that six-year-old Kaitlyn had cautiously approached and stood watching him. "What are those colored boxes on your computer, Daddy?" she asked.

Dan continued typing and, without glancing up at her, answered, "I'm entering what I did today into my calendar. Those boxes are my appointments with people during the day."

Kaitlyn thought about this for a moment, then asked, "How do I get one of those boxes?" Dan explained that people made appointments with him when they wanted to talk to him about something. She immediately asked her dad for an appointment.

"And what would you like to talk about?"

"I want to have a tea party," she said.

This broke his concentration. "You want to what?"

¹ In many cases, we've used first names only to identify our Make-it-Fly® clients and others in order to protect confidentiality while sharing their helpful real-life stories.

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"I want to have a tea party."

Stunned, Dan smiled and stopped what he was doing. Then, turning to focus his full attention on his new client, he asked, "When would you like to schedule our party?"

"How about Thursday night after school?" she quickly suggested.

He checked his calendar and confirmed their appointment. On Thursdays, Dan usually got home around 5:30, and that week he had another meeting at seven o'clock. But Kaitlyn was now on his schedule. "I made sure I was on time for the appointment with my daughter," he recalls. "And we had a wonderful time of tea and toast together. I was late for my next appointment, but that seemed so much less important."

Like most small business owners, Dan feels keenly the responsibility to pay close attention to the business and those involved with the company, and at the same time to be there for his family. Balancing his time between the many demands of his business and the family he loves is an ongoing challenge. "But managing the time I give to my family," he affirms, "needs to become as high, or a higher, priority."

If you're like Dan, as so many of us are, you know how difficult it is to find and maintain that right balance between work and the other parts of your life. When we feel burdened by the pressure of a heavy workload, it's easy to lose sight of what's truly important. Today, it's even more challenging: people in the United States work longer hours than their parents did and have greater concerns about the world around them.

In addition, our world is changing at an amazing pace. Products that were state-of-the-art yesterday have become commonplace today and will be obsolete tomorrow. With ever-increasing amounts of new information to process daily, and escalating demands on our time, many feel they're on constant overload. In addition, if you're in business for yourself, you need to gain and maintain a competitive edge. You can't afford to be inefficient. You must find practical solutions to increase your personal productivity

and avoid burnout. To successfully make it over the long haul, it's vital that you achieve and sustain a balanced lifestyle.

We are all on information overload. According to a 1996 report from Reuters News Agency, the term "Information Fatigue Syndrome" was coined by psychologist David Lewis, who noted that the effects of too much information can include anxiety, poor decision-making, difficulties in memorizing and reduced attention span.

A few years ago, we thought that cell phones, PDAs and laptops would make life easier, but they have given us more to cope with—more information to process and remember. Many of us feel guilty or frustrated because we can't remember everything we think we ought to. Studies show that the average person in the United States now has to handle more information in one day than a person living in the 17th century would deal with in an entire lifetime.

If we want to run a successful business and function in a happy, healthy, efficient manner, we need to understand this, make necessary adjustments and strive to maintain a healthy balance in our lives. Like the toy gyroscope that needs to be started again to achieve balance, resetting your *Balance Point* daily provides a practical way to maintain your equilibrium.

Check Your Balance

You are probably out of balance if you're too busy to:

- Get the amount and quality of sleep you need
- Take time for regular exercise
- Watch your diet and eat the right stuff
- Enjoy regular, quality time with your family
- Maintain a balanced social life
- Continue your own personal and professional education: studying, reading and learning to further develop your skills
- Spend time in your spiritual area
- Take time to nurture yourself, relax and just have fun!

Too Much to Do, Too Little Time—and Too Many Hats to Wear!

“You can’t put more time into your life but you can put more life into your time.”

– Mark Sanborn

Many business owners today are faced with the challenge of too much to do and seemingly insufficient time in which to do it. It is easy to become overwhelmed—there is always a lot to do and *it all seems to need to be done NOW!*

As an entrepreneur you may need to wear the many hats of CEO, receptionist, sales manager, marketing director and janitor all rolled into one, so you can quickly lose focus and become snowed under. In order to maintain our sanity and increase our efficiency, we need to step back, take an objective view of our situation and make plans to simplify whatever we can in our lives.

As our years of working with entrepreneurs on the ideas presented here attest, the principles covered in this book *do work*, but they will require a commitment of some time and effort on your part. In order to increase your efficiency and productivity, attain a balanced life and move your business to the next level, you’ll need to be open to making changes.

Change often presents a challenge. Developing new habits isn’t easy—old habits, however unproductive, are comfortable and usually demand little thought or effort. Recognizing and remembering the potential payback to you and your business of making these changes is key—the *What’s in it for me?* principle. Focusing on these benefits often provides the motivation and self-discipline we need to make the effort and stick with our new habits. We encourage you to take your time, your business and your life seriously—take responsibility for your own success.

The What’s in it for me? principle: Recognizing and remembering the potential payback to you and your business of making changes is key.

What Is Success, Anyway?

We use the word “success” frequently today, often without giving much thought to what we really mean. Yet how you personally define success will have a significant impact on how you use your time, run your business and live your life. What does success mean to you? How would you define it? Write your definition below. This may take a little soul-searching, but it will prove invaluable.

**Your Passion: Key to Long-Term Success**

“Ordinary people become extraordinary and produce extraordinary results when they align their passion with a meaningful purpose.”

– Theresa Szczurek, PhD

If you want to make the changes needed to achieve a more balanced life, passion is an essential element. Some years ago, after an unpleasant divorce, I lost a thriving business and almost everything I owned. It was time to start from scratch. Since it required very little capital, I started a maid service. Overnight, I went from driving to my office in my sports car each day and wearing designer clothes to taking the bus and wearing an old pair of sweats. I certainly wasn't passionate about cleaning, but I recognized it as a stepping-stone that would provide the capital I needed to launch my dream company in the sportswear field, and I was passionate about that. Building a company that helped others by cleaning their homes became fun. Even when it was

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tough, my passion kept me motivated. Two years later, with 28 maids on staff, I was able to pursue my dream.

We can't just drum up passion when we need it. It comes from within. In his excellent, carefully researched book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins writes, "You can't manufacture passion or 'motivate' people to feel passionate. You can only *discover* what ignites your passion and the passions of those around you."

We are much more likely to make changes that will help us become balanced if we:



- 1) know what we want in life—have a passion and a plan to achieve it; or,
- 2) keep our ultimate goal in view, and understand that what we're doing now is a necessary stepping-stone that will take us there. What are you passionate about?

If it's not your business, does the business give you the opportunity to do what you are passionate about, or will it in the future?

Yes

No

It is easy to continue working in a field that simply doesn't excite you and remain stuck there. Making a change can be scary and requires courage, but pursuing a dream and doing what we are passionate about brings joy and purpose to our lives.

Pursuing a dream and doing what we are passionate about brings joy and purpose to our lives.

Even as a young child, Kim loved to draw and paint. During her teens, art was a passion—she looked forward to her two art classes each day and worked enthusiastically on painting projects, especially portraits. Kim was set to follow her dream to study fine art in college. Later, her well-meaning parents, who feared that this might not equip her to make a living, discouraged her. As a result, her confidence in her art abilities faded, and Kim changed her focus to pursue what she thought might be a more practical degree in art history.

In college, she took a part-time job at a real estate office. Her employer soon realized she had excellent office skills and an innate understanding of bookkeeping and accounting. Soon she was working full time in a business office. Later, as a single parent and working hard, she found little time for art.

Finally, Kim realized that the lack of fulfillment she felt in the business world was because she had abandoned her dream. “I was living my life by default,” she explains. “I had a giant hole inside that I’d been trying to fill for years. I wanted to reclaim my artistic side.” No longer content to focus on expanding her data-management business, Kim decided to rediscover her dream and passion for art.

She signed up for some basic drawing classes, practiced drawing and observation skills and enrolled in an introduction to pastels class—a medium she’d long wanted to explore. After more classes the following year, she started working in oil paints, often doing versions of a theme in both mediums. Kim continues to expand her skills and challenge her abilities. At the end of a workday, she can’t wait to come home and paint.

Kim now works three to four days a week at her data-management business and spends the remainder of her time pursuing her passion for art. “I feel as though I’ve *come home*,” she says. Making time for her passion has brought deep fulfillment and meaning to her life.

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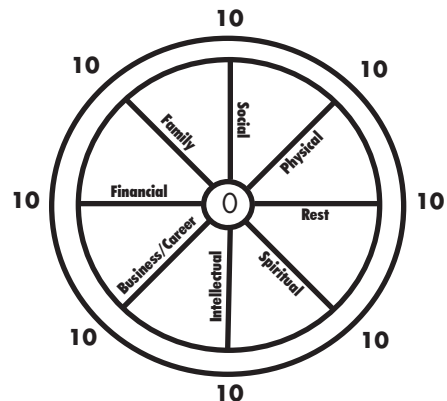
TAKE ACTION—The Life Balance Wheel

As the owner of a small business, you have probably found that the personal, family and business parts of your life are often intertwined. Some business owners have found this tool useful to pinpoint areas needing attention. Knowing where your life is out of balance and taking steps to correct it will lead to a more enjoyable, productive and healthy lifestyle.

Using the Life Balance Wheel illustration, place a dot on each spoke of the wheel, indicating where you currently see yourself in that area, from zero (at the center) to 10 (at the outer edge of the circle). Rate each item according to how much time and energy you are currently devoting to it. Connect the dots and you will begin to see the current state of your life balance. Plan to make adjustments in areas where you need to change. Your lowest scores suggest areas that need improvement, and you may want to focus on these first.

For your life now, rate each of the areas below from zero to 10:
0 = Need urgent help here; 10 = Doing great in this area!

- Physical _____
- Rest _____
- Spiritual _____
- Mental/Intellectual _____
- Business/Career _____
- Financial _____
- Family _____
- Social _____



Balance Point Summary



- In today's crazy-busy world, balance doesn't come naturally.
- It requires conscious effort and may mean making changes.
- You can do what it takes to get there and live your passion when you keep your *big picture* in mind.
- Check your balance today.

7 Minutes to Reset Your Balance Point

MINUTE 1 — Look at your big picture

MINUTE 2 — Identify your values

MINUTE 3 — Focus on your strengths

MINUTE 4 — Know your limitations

MINUTE 5 — Highlight your most important tasks

MINUTE 6 — Make sure you get your quota of joy

MINUTE 7 — Ponder your big picture once more

The Small Biz Balancing Act

Will show you how to...

- Increase your efficiency (without working harder or longer hours!)
- Discover what's truly important in your business and your life
- Personally define success and attain it
- Use a proven goal-setting strategy that will not only help you define your goals but reach them
- Achieve true balance in the important areas of your life

[Click here](#) to order *your* copy now and **read the rest of the book!**

"The Small Biz Balancing Act is a must read for anyone wearing the many hats of the entrepreneur. Business is not life, it's only one part. **The Small Biz Balancing Act** is a toolkit for creating a healthy, happy and prosperous life."

Mark Crowley
Award-Winning Radio Talk Show Host and Chamber
of Commerce Executive

[Order your copy](#) of **The Small Biz Balancing Act** today and gain more balance in *your* life!

"More than a book, **The Small Biz Balancing Act** is a concise, easy to follow guide that helps entrepreneurs balance their business with the business of life. It's a straightforward plan that will keep you on track to achieve the balance and success you desire."

Steve Baker, author
Pushing Water Uphill with a Rake