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The 90-Minute CEO

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Introduction

In today's high-velocity business landscape, the life of an executive or CEO is more unpredictable and demanding than ever before. The pressure to perform, pivot, and persevere is relentless—back-to-back meetings, constant streams of communications, and a barrage of critical decisions fill every waking hour. It's no surprise that many leaders feel stretched thin, struggling to find the time or mental bandwidth to focus on what truly moves the needle for their organizations. Yet, amidst this chaos, a select group of CEOs seem to master their schedules, make laser-focused decisions, and lead high-performing teams—all without succumbing to burnout.

This book, "The 90-Minute CEO: Time Management, Decision-Making, and Leadership Strategies for Busy Executives," exists to unlock the strategies behind that mastery. At its core is a deceptively simple but deeply transformative idea: the most effective leaders ruthlessly prioritize, breaking their days into intentional, high-impact 90-minute blocks that drive both organizational results and personal renewal. Rather than letting their schedules dominate them, these leaders design their time to maximize concentration, effectiveness, and longevity.

What sets the 90-Minute CEO approach apart is its blend of practicality and flexibility. Based on interviews with top executives from diverse industries—spanning both established corporations and nimble startups—alongside the latest research from business schools and leading productivity frameworks, this book distills best practices into actionable steps. Whether you're a seasoned CEO, a newly promoted executive, or an ambitious leader on the rise, you'll find proven templates, decision-making tools, and real-world case studies that you can implement immediately.

But the 90-Minute CEO is more than just a series of time hacks—it is an integrated framework for sustainable, whole-leader effectiveness. In these pages, you'll discover not only how to audit your time and energy, but also how to schedule for peak productivity, communicate with purpose, delegate strategically, and automate routine tasks. You'll learn how to process the flood of information required for high-stakes decisions, cut through complexity, and empower your team—while protecting your own well-being along the way.

Each chapter is designed for clarity and immediate application. You'll find chapter-ending action plans—reflection questions, checklists, and first steps—to help you move from insight to outcome before your next meeting even begins. The stories you'll encounter, both the triumphs and stumbles, come directly from leaders who have walked this path and are eager to share what works.

Above all, this book aims to serve as your executive coach in written form—an approachable, authoritative guide designed not for idle reading but for real, immediate results. It's time to take charge of your workday, your team, and your legacy. Welcome to the mindset and methods of The 90-Minute CEO. Your most focused, impactful, and resilient leadership chapter begins now.

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CHAPTER ONE: The 90-Minute Framework: Reclaiming Control of Your Executive Day

Every executive knows the feeling: the relentless pull of a packed calendar, the constant stream of urgent demands, and the pervasive sense that there simply aren't enough hours in the day. You check your email before your feet even hit the floor, respond to messages during your commute, and find yourself still tackling work long after dinner. It's a common narrative, one where the leader is perpetually reactive, their schedule a patchwork quilt of obligations rather than a strategically designed blueprint. Many executives work well over 50 hours a week, often stretching into weekends and evenings, yet still feel as if they are falling behind. This isn't just about being busy; it's about the erosion of focus, the fatigue of constant context-switching, and the chilling realization that you're operating at less than your peak.

But what if you could flip that script? What if you could transform your workday from a reactive scramble into a series of intentional, high-impact sprints? This is the promise of the 90-Minute CEO framework. It's not about working more hours, or even necessarily harder, but about working smarter by aligning your most critical tasks with your natural energy cycles and dedicating uninterrupted, focused blocks of time to them. It's a framework that empowers you to dictate your day, rather than letting your day dictate you.

The core of this framework lies in understanding and leveraging the concept of ultradian rhythms. Our brains, much like our sleep cycles, operate in approximately 90-minute periods of high-energy focus followed by shorter periods of lower energy and recovery. Think of it as your brain's built-in power management system. During the peak of an ultradian cycle, your cognitive functions—problem-solving, creative thinking, decision-making—are at their sharpest. Pushing through when your energy dips, attempting to maintain the same level of intensity, is like trying to drive a car on fumes; you'll get diminishing returns and increased mental fatigue.

The 90-Minute CEO doesn't fight this natural rhythm; it embraces it. By intentionally structuring your day around these 90-minute focus blocks, you capitalize on your periods of peak alertness. This isn't just theory; research indicates that professionals who align their work with these cycles report significantly higher productivity levels—as much as 40% more—compared to those who work in random intervals. They also make fewer errors and produce higher-quality outcomes. This translates to getting more meaningful work done, making better decisions, and feeling less drained at the end of the day.

The beauty of the 90-minute block is its versatility. It's long enough to dive deep into a complex problem, generate creative solutions, or make significant progress on a strategic initiative without feeling rushed. Yet, it's short enough to maintain intense focus without succumbing to mental exhaustion. Many high-performing CEOs dedicate these 90-to-120-minute blocks to "deep work"—tasks that require strategic thinking, planning, or writing. This is the work that truly moves the needle, the kind that often gets pushed aside by the tyranny of the urgent.

Consider the typical executive workday: a flurry of 30-minute meetings, interrupted by email alerts, quick phone calls, and team members popping by with questions. This constant context-switching is a productivity killer. Every time you shift from one task to another, your brain needs to "reboot," wasting precious mental energy. Studies show that switching between tasks can reduce productivity by up to 40%. The 90-Minute Framework provides an antidote to this chaos. By dedicating a solid block of time to a single, high-value task, you minimize these costly transitions, allowing your brain to enter a state of "flow" where concentration and performance are maximized.

This framework isn't about rigid adherence to a clock, but about intentionality. It's about proactively designing your schedule rather than passively reacting to it. Top leaders don't leave their days to chance; they structure their time around priorities, understanding that their time is their most precious commodity. This intentionality extends beyond simply blocking time for tasks; it involves understanding your own peak productivity periods. For some, the morning hours are when their brain is most active and creative. For others, it might be later in the day. Identifying your personal rhythm is a critical first step in applying the 90-Minute Framework effectively.

The 90-Minute CEO framework isn't just for individual productivity; it has a ripple effect across your entire organization. When you model intentionality in your own schedule, you set a powerful precedent for your team. You demonstrate the value of focused work, the importance of protecting time for high-impact activities, and the benefits of strategic pauses. This can lead to a culture where efficiency and effectiveness are prized, and where busy-ness for the sake of busy-ness is challenged.

Implementing the 90-Minute Framework requires a shift in mindset. It demands that you become a gatekeeper of your time, a thoughtful architect of your day. It means saying "no" to distractions and "yes" to uninterrupted focus. It means recognizing that true productivity isn't about cramming more tasks into your day, but about doing the right things at the right time with the right energy. This foundational chapter lays the groundwork for that transformation. In the chapters that follow, we'll delve into the practical techniques and tools that will enable you to reclaim control of your executive day, one powerful 90-minute block at a time.

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