



Why You Lose Control in Your Business (And How To Get It Back)

Three Month Vacation Podcast

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Hi, this is Sean D'Souza from Psychotactics.com, and you're listening to the Three Month Vacation Podcast. This podcast isn't some magic trick about working less. Instead, it's about how to really enjoy your work and enjoy your vacation time.

If you go to a restaurant, just about any restaurant, and if you go to sit down you would notice that some days the restaurant is absolutely full and on other days it's completely empty. What's really happening here? What you're noticing is the lack of control over the business. It doesn't matter whether you own a restaurant business or a gym or you just have a service, you have to have control over your business. How do you have this control over your business? I didn't have to answer to this several years ago. I'd run a cartooning business since I was in university and I ran a business for about ten or 12 years without any control. I didn't know where the next client would come from. While I did some amount of promotion, sometimes I had enormous amounts of work so I wouldn't get any sleep. At other times a whole month could pass and I'd have nothing to do.

The only way to have complete control over your business is to use the concepts explained in the three prong system. Now if you didn't listen to episode number two then that's where you need to go right now, or just after you listen to this episode. That's because the three prong system has stood the test of time. When you look at all the religions of the world that have lasted 2,000 years they use the three prong system. When you look at businesses that have done really well over the years they too use the three prong system. You want to go back to episode two and listen to it.

The three prong system brings strategy but to your business, but on a day to day business you need to some strategy as well. This episode talks about the strategy that you need on a day to day basis. As usual, we're going to cover three things, and the first thing we're going to cover is the factor of core skills.



The second thing we're going to cover is about how to get help or why you should get help, and the third is input is equal to output.

Let's start out with the first, which is learning the core skills. What is this all about? The biggest problem that we have and the reason why we can't earn more or take more time off is because we spend so much time not learning core skills. Let's say you were a golfer and you wanted to get really good on the golfing circuit.

What would you do? It's pretty obvious, isn't it? You'd go out there and you'd practice and you'd get a coach, and you'd work that so that you were very good at golfing. Otherwise, you'd just your Sunday golfer, go there, hit some balls, and hope for the best. In a business, hoping for the best is not a good idea. It's not your hobby as it were. This is your passion.

When you're passionate about something you have to be like Leonardo da Vinci or Michelangelo. When you're passionate about something you have to have that core skill in place. You know it's in place because you can do it exceedingly well and exceedingly quickly. For instance, if you had to write an article, say 800 to 1,000 words, how long would you take to write that? I'll tell you how long it used to take me to write it. I used to take two days. I'm not kidding. I would start on the first day and then write, and then stop and edit and write and stop and edit and write and stop and edit.

By the end of the second day I was not really sure that the article would be any good. I was a cartoonist, not a writer. I spent a lot of time just trying to get into that writer mode, because I knew as a small business owner that's what I needed to do. I needed to write books. I needed to write articles. I needed to get the word out there. Article writing, which wasn't my core skill, had to become my core skill. I had to communicate that way. I got all the material I needed to study. I got a lot of information that I was deconstructing, and then that didn't help me at all. I still had to write the articles.

Luckily for me, at that point in time there wasn't as much content on the internet. A website called marketingprops.com, they wrote to me and they said "Can you send us some articles?" Then every week the publisher would bug me and say "Can you send me some more articles?"



Even though I was not keen on writing the articles I had this person nudging me all the time and so I was forced to write the articles.

Today I can write an article in 45 minutes, but not just an article, but a very, very good article. This is what you've got to do. You've got to figure out what are those core skills. Sit down and work out what are the things that I have to get very good at, and then you proceed to get very good at it. Another core skill, to just be updating your website or knowing more about your website.

A lot of us have websites, and of course we have web designers and programmers and stuff. That's very important. We have that too, but you also need to know enough to fix your pages, to put in graphics, to do whatever you want to do. Because having to wait on someone for a day or two days, it slows you down. It frustrates you, and you don't get the results.

While it's all very fine to say outsource this and outsource that, you have to also remember that there are certain core skills that you have to learn, and unless you get very good at these core skills you remain an amateur. You continue to be someone for whom the business is just a hobby. I'm saying hobby; I know it's not your hobby but that's how it ends up being. For me, that key component towards my three month vacation, and your key component, is going to be getting control over your core skills. You have to make a list of the few things that you want to do, not run after every shiny objective that comes your way - because there are lots of shiny objectives there on the internet - and develop your core skill.

This takes us to our second topic, which is about getting help. Our business is incredibly small. It's run by just my wife and I. When I started out it was just me. Then my wife Renuka came along and people said "I wish had someone like Renuka. I wish I had help as well." This is what I tell them at that point in time. I said at the point that Renuka joined Psychotactics she was earning \$85,000 a year. By quitting her job what we were doing was talking a hit of \$85,000. Remember, at that point in time I wasn't really earning a lot. I was probably earning about \$1,500 a month in marketing.



This is very important because you might think that you can't afford to get any help and it's just impossible to run a business all by yourself. There are far too many things to do, far too many things that you have to juggle if you're going to be running a business by yourself.

Now the first obvious thing to do is to outsource some of the things, and then you start outsourcing more things. At some point in time you just have to have someone on a consistent basis that does consistent jobs so that you don't have to do everything yourself. The biggest problem with a business is just that you lose too much energy. I've spoken about this before. It's not about time, it's about energy.

Once you do task one and task two and task three and task four you're getting very, very tired. At the end of the day you may still have some time, but you just don't have the energy.

Think of it as a plane. Now if you ask a pilot, they don't need two engines to fly that plane. But if one of the engines quit it's not such a good feeling. You can fly your plane with one engine but it gets very frustrating, and there are times when that one engine fails and then it's more than just frustrating. I know this is hard advice to give. How do I give you this advice? How do I say to you: Go out there and find someone. Go out there and pay for the services. But the problem with trying to do it all yourself, this flying solo business, it just doesn't work in my opinion.

We've run our business now at [Psychotactics](http://Psychotactics.com) since 2002. I really thought that it would get easier over the years, and you know what, it might have got easier if we were doing exactly what we were doing in 2002, if we were earning exactly what we were earning in 2002, yes. But given my aspirations, given the things that I want to do, given the books that I want to write ... and these are just passions. This is less about the money that we're going to make. I'm really fascinated with writing about pricing. I'm really fascinated about writing about talent. I'm really interested in doing something about Photoshop.

This is why we started a cartooning course even though it was free. We started out a cartooning course even though I'd been a cartoonist for 15 years. People knew about my cartooning, and it was free. Without that support that



Renuka brings it would be impossible. It would be completely impossible for me to do the things that I really want to do. Over the years we've added bits and pieces here and there. We got someone to do our blog, as in post the information to the blog. Then we got someone to put together the reports, so I write all the information, I do the cartoons, but someone puts it together in an InDesign file and I showed them how to do that.

This is what allows me to do what I want to do. It allows Renuka to do what she wants to do. It gives us time. More importantly, it gives us that energy that we so desperately require. That's all I can say. This advice is like a halfhearted, half-baked advice, because I don't know how you're going to do it. I just know that you have to do it. If you want more control of your life you have to get that second engine.

Don't go up in the air with a single engine because it's just too much. Yes, I can go on and on about how we take three month vacations but this is the big secret as it were.

The first thing is that you need to have core skills. You need to be able to do stuff that is critical to your business and do it very, very, very quickly. The second thing you definitely need is that second engine. I don't know how you're going to get it but you need it. The third thing that to me is critical is this whole concept of input is equal to output.

The other day I was in an interview and I was being asked how to be a good writer. It's very tempting to keep talking about the techniques and the methods and the secrets, and all the stuff that goes into great writing. I don't believe that to be true. I believe that the writing part is the execution of what goes in in the first place. I believe that input is equal to output, or at least input really helps the output. To me, reading is more important than writing. Or should I put it another way: it's equally important.

Without the reading part of stuff it's probably not going to end up with great writing. People make a mistake with input. They take in too much information, and that doesn't really work to your advantage. That just sends you scattering in every direction. Now don't get me wrong, at the same time that I'm learning how to use my camera I want to learn how to use InDesign and I want to learn how to do character design in cartooning, and lettering, and all kinds of things.



Those are hobbies, and there is my work. When it comes to my work I'm doing something completely different.

My input day goes like this. I start out the day and I go for a walk. I make sure that I'm listening to stuff that is interesting to me or important to me. Ideally I don't listen to podcasts. I know it's ironic since you're listening to a podcast, but I don't listen to podcasts because a lot of people ramble on endlessly, so I listen to an audio book. I listen to a course where I know they're not rambling on. Mostly audio books because they're structured, they're edited, and there's less chance of this ramble. I'm not trying to remember. This is the mistake that a lot of people make with audio.

They don't treat it like radio, and you should treat audio like radio. You shouldn't really try to remember anything. It's all sitting in your head bit by bit. Listen to one book and another book and a third book. Soon enough, all the thoughts become input; they sit in your head.

Again, I'm not saying that you should not make notes. I'm not saying that you shouldn't make mind maps. I'm not saying you shouldn't do anything you do not want to do. I'm saying that there is so little time in the day that when you're driving, when you're walking, you need input. Then you get back to your office, your place of work, and then it's time for output. Over the years I've found that just by increasing the input and also cross-pollinating the input, so I'll listen to a whole bunch of different things on the way in. Then we get to the café, we discuss what we've learned along the way, and maybe we've not learned a lot, and then we turn round and come back. Then I will probably listen to something lighter or learn a language.

That's it. That's the input equals to output. If you want to become a great writer you have to listen to and read great writing. If you want to become a great artists you have to go to galleries. You have to look at art books. You have to do all that stuff. That's all the input part. The same thing is with business. If you're going to go chasing after some guy that promises you a lot of money, some guy that promises you a lot of customers and you think that's a good idea, well it might be a good idea but often, and especially if you're listening to a podcast like this, you probably not going to fit in.



That input is wrong. That input signal becomes erroneous, and therefore you don't get the output. All you get is frustration.

Control your input signals and then you start to get better output signals. The output is important as well. Every time I put out a book I'm not really sure that someone is interested in it. Every time I do a course I'm not sure that someone is interested in it. I do it for myself. I think that it really matters. I think that when you put your passion into it you then need to sustain it. It's the same thing with this podcast. I don't know if you've realized it, and I probably mentioned it before because I've been mentioning it to everyone, but it takes about 20 minutes to record a 20 minute episode, or 15 minutes to do a 15 minute episode.

But it takes about two and a half hours to then put the music. The only reason why I continue to do this and will continue to do this is because I'm fascinated with it.

I'm listening to podcasts where they have great music and I'm listening to stuff where they have great content and great interviewers, and that becomes my input. That's why you're getting this output. Let's wrap up today and let's summarize. We started out with control. You have to know the things that are important. Writing is important. Being able to tweak your website, that's important. Your sales letters, what's wrong with it, what's wrong with your email, understanding that whole sales thing. I think these are critical for a business. If you don't have those critical elements at the tip of your fingers then you're struggling.

The second thing is just an energy factor. If you don't have enough energy at the end of the day then it just becomes one mindless, endless loop. You have to get that second engine. How you get that second engine, whether it's by hiring someone or getting someone in your family to help out, that's something you have to figure out and figure out quickly. You can't friendly solo. I can assure you that. It's very, very, very hard.

The third thing is input is equal to output. The quicker you realize that you don't have that much time in the day and you need great input, the quicker you realize that there is no shortcut and all these guys who offer you this quick route to success, you need to get off that input because it's driving you crazy.



It's distracting you. Listen to stuff that is important. Read stuff that is important. That is your key to a sensible future. That is your key to the three month vacation.

That brings us to the end of this episode. We're now on episode 15. Wow, that was quick. Anyway, if you haven't already subscribed ... I've said this a million times before and I'm going to say it again. If you haven't subscribed to iTunes, go there, subscribe; and yes, leave a review. Please do leave a review because it really helps us. I read the review everyday. If your reviews not there then I'm looking out for that review.

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Oh, I almost forgot purpose of one thing that you had to do today. Yes, the one thing that you can control today is input. I am sure you can go out there and get someone over time and get control over all the things you do, but input, you can listen to stuff like this or you can get an audio book or start reading. Have that input every single day, 30 minutes of learning every single day. It will make a big difference for your life. Get rid of those idiots that promise you the world. Yep, that's it. I'm done, really done. Bye bye.

Oh and before I go—Can I ask you a small favour? Would you be kind [enough to leave a review](#). Your review, rating (and subscription) are most appreciated. They help the rating of the show and I read every single review. And if you have any feedback, you also want to write to me at sean@psychotactics.com. Anything you'd like to see or listen to anything you don't like, just write to me at sean@psychotactics.com. I actually implement the feedback. You can do this from your phone or your computer. [Here's a graphic, if you need any help](#).



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