



OVERCOME YOUR OVERWHELM

The Leader's Secret to Recapturing Time, Energy and Focus

THE FIRST STEP

BOB WENDOVER



WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY!



If you're taking time to read this, chances are you are experiencing the symptoms of overwhelm while you work. You're in good company. Numerous surveys indicate that some 75% of business owners and senior leaders deal with this challenge at least a portion of every week.

But it does not have to be that way! I created this guide because I was suffering from the same symptoms. When I began studying the leaders who don't, I discovered a rather remarkable thing – *The way they avoid it is by making a fraction of the daily decisions others make. That became my mantra – Make fewer decisions!*

Of course, that can be easier said than done . . .

We all have scripts in our head about what we need to do and should be doing. If you're the leader, it is easy to believe that it ALL rests on you ---- BUT IT DOESN'T.

You may understand that intellectually. It's the *emotional* part that becomes the anchor. I know. I was one of those people who believed that I needed to answer all the questions and be available all the time. That just added to the stress I felt.

Are you there? This guide will show you how to get past these feelings almost immediately. No . . . I am not kidding.



*Make fewer daily
decisions!*

THE LEADERS WHO HAVE OVERCOME THIS OVERWHELM . . .



Use simple techniques to reduce the nuisances, the busy-work decisions and other activities that dog so many of their peers.

Most leaders, and business owners continue to paddle upstream against the endless current of “quick questions,” technology distractions, bureaucratic obligations, and unreasonable demands. Why? Because they have gotten into such a rut, they don’t how to make the transition. Are you there?

Those who don’t suffer from these ruts, have taken the initiative to *eliminate*, delegate or automate these nuisances, questions, updates, keeping-you-the-loop messages and endless meetings where they don’t need to be. How? By saying “NO!”

Of course, overcoming overwhelm is more complicated than simply saying “No.” But not by much.



Non-stressed leaders eliminate, delegate and automate.

THE SUPER-SIMPLE SOLUTION



What I have found in observing and visiting with hundreds of leaders is that overcoming overwhelm really comes down to two elements:

1. Reducing the number of daily decisions you make personally and
2. Improving the decision culture around you. In other words, compelling those you work with and who report to you to make confident, independent daily decisions without "checking in" with you first.
(More about both of these later.)

But first, you need to take stock of all the decisions you make personally.

"I already know all the decisions I make every day," you might be thinking. But you don't. Trust me! Truth is, the majority of decisions you will eliminate, delegate or automate over time are the little time stealers that consume energy. Lots of times, we discount these as "no big deal." But when you add them all up, they ARE a big deal.

Dealing with just two "quick questions" in the morning and two in the afternoon can consume a full hour of your day. That's five hours a week, 20 hours per month and 240 hours per year. That's SIX WEEKS OF YOUR WORKING LIFE!

And this doesn't include all the technology distractions, social media, and compelled decisions like opt-ins, opt-outs, passwords, and two-factor authentications you deal with!

Ever get home at the end of a day and think, "I know I did a lot. But it wasn't the right stuff. It was just stuff." Frustrating, isn't it?



How many "quick questions" steal your time and energy every day?

SO . . . HOW DO YOU BEGIN?

(without disrupting your routines and adding to your heartburn)



This guide contains the first step in overcoming your overwhelm. It is a simple exercise to help you identify all the decisions you make throughout each week. Print out at least three copies of the last page of this document. Then follow the instructions on page 5 to get a comprehensive picture of all the activities consuming your time.

The more days you log, the more complete the picture. Then go back and consider which ones can, and should be, eliminated, delegated or automated.

Completing this exercise will provide you with an understanding of where the time-stealers really are. Once you've done this, I'll send you more information on how to move forward without this process becoming a burden.



*The more days
you log, the more
complete the
picture.*

INSTRUCTIONS

Before you begin . . .

This exercise is designed to integrate into your workdays. Other than jotting down activities and decisions as you complete them, there is nothing else to be done.

WARNING!

If you look at this as just another burden, you won't do it. Look at it as an *opportunity* to clarify where your time and energy are going. Chances are, you will gain some interesting insights as you do so. That's good! It's the first step in realizing how you can begin to overcome the overwhelm you're experiencing.

Simply enter each task you complete, each meeting you attend, and each conversation you have in the left-hand column. Then record how much time you spent completing the task, meeting or conversation. You may realize just in writing down the activity that you should not be doing it.

Obviously, a number of the activities you list will be a legitimate part of your responsibilities. *But don't jump to that conclusion without really thinking about each one.*

Expect that somewhere between ten and fifteen percent will be activities you will be able to eliminate, delegate or automate. Small tasks and conversations add up over time. These become sand in the gears of your focus and concentration.

Here are ten general categories to consider. You may have a few more that are idiosyncratic to your work.

 Meetings	 Social Media	 Emails/texts/messaging
 Projects	 Reports	 Computer learning/updates/downtimes
 Research	 Organizing	 Spur-of-the-moment questions/conversations

Online curiosities

(YouTube, gaming, convenience apps that really aren't, etc. You get the idea.)



Note:

You might be asking, "Why isn't there an app for this? I do everything on my smart phone or tablet." Two simple reasons – 1. Ample research has demonstrated that writing things down does a better job of helping the brain to remember them, along with promoting creativity. 2. By the time you wake up the device, find and open the app, and wait for it to load, you may have forgotten what you were going to jot down in the first place. Just make few copies of the form on page 10 and carry them around with you.

ELIMINATE? DELEGATE? AUTOMATE?

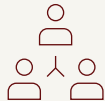
Once you have tracked your tasks and decisions for a few days, it's time to make some decisions about what can/should be removed from your day.

Before we go on, let's define our three terms:



Eliminate

Eliminate is just that – stop doing it. We are all creatures of habit. As a result, we sometimes do what we've always done, even though it is not helpful. It feels comforting. It's part of the routine. We do it without thinking. This was one of my major obstacles. NOT doing these things can feel uncomfortable at first because making a change can be a source of discomfort. The big one for me? Incidental conversations. How about you?



Delegate

Delegate means assigning the task or decision to someone else. This involves four elements: 1) Providing a clear expectation of performance, 2) Providing the authority to act, 3) Providing any resources required, 4) Assuring the person that you have their back when they make a mistake or the unexpected happens. In other words, trust.



Automate

Automate has a number of meanings. It can be booking all your periodic appointments at the beginning of the year such as healthcare check-ups, oil changes, blood donations and such.

It can be engaging a service to take care of mundane tasks such as lawncare and house cleaning. It can be using one or more of the endless online apps to automate personal finances, legal issues, and such.

Don't let spending a few dollars get in the way of recapturing time and energy. I am continually surprised at the number of leaders I meet who spend weekends mowing the lawn and doing yard work, only to exhaust themselves for the week ahead.

TIME TO BEGIN!



Now, hide away someplace. Grab your favorite beverage and go through the items you have identified. With each, ask yourself the following:

1. Is this a task or decision I can eliminate? If yes, put an E in the column next to it. If no, can this task or decision be delegated to someone else or automated in some way?
2. If this task or decision cannot be eliminated, is it one that only you can make? If yes, put an X in the next column. If no, should it be delegated or assigned for automation? If it can be delegated, put a D in the next column. If it can be automated, put an A. Do not worry about assigning delegation or automation at this point. Get through the entire list first.

Once again, don't look at this as a chore. Look at it as an opportunity. If you feel like it, break this review down into three or four time periods. If you're rushing through it because you gave yourself a limited amount of time, stop and continue later.

In working with a wide variety of leaders, I have found that three things are true:

1. They are driven to accomplish things. The question is, of course, are they the right things? We spend a good deal of time discussing this.
2. They have trouble making delegation stick. Why? Because of two issues: 1) They don't diligently follow the

four steps I mentioned above. 2)

They second guess decisions they have asked the person to make. This destroys trust and creates hesitation.

3. These individuals spend too much time working "in the business" instead of "on the business." I spend a good deal of time coaching leaders on how to resist this trap or climb out of it. (Where are you on this?)



*Are you working
"in" the business
or "on" the
business?*

SO . . . WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP?



The best piece of advice I can give you is – *Begin at the margins*. Your brain dislikes change because any change initially produces a sense of uncertainty. As you complete the Eliminate – Delegate – Automate exercise, you will be left with a list of changes enabling you to recapture time and energy. Resist the temptation to select half a dozen and attempt to implement them all at once.

I have found that simply concentrating on saying “no” more often with “quick” questions, is an easy place to start. When approached with a “can you help me” question, I will hesitate for a second and then say, “perhaps.” Then I ask the person why they need my help. In a lot of cases, it will turn out they are just looking for assurance. After assuring them that I trust them to make the decision, these encounters become one or two minutes long rather than five or ten.

But what about the decision culture around you?

As I mentioned above, overcoming overwhelm is really a combination of two objectives:

01

Reducing the number of you personally make every day and

02

Compelling those around you to make confident, independent daily decisions without checking with you first.

Completing the first step exercise in this document will provide you with a great start to recapturing your daily time, energy and focus.

In the coming days, I will send you insights on how to improve the decision culture around you. In the meantime, begin at the margins to implement the changes you’ve identified with the Eliminate – Delegate – Automate work you’ve done.



How effectively do you say “No?”

YOU CAN'T OVERCOME YOUR OVERWHELM ALONE!

Why? Several reasons:

1. As you make these changes, you will experience the discomfort that results from eliminating, adjusting or establishing any new routine.
2. As you begin to delegate certain tasks and decisions, you will need to establish or reinforce the trust necessary to get people to act independently
3. Recapturing your time, energy, and focus is a journey. You can easily slip back into old habits and routines because they are comfortable.



You can't do this alone!

That's why I provide personalized coaching opportunities for leaders who want to truly invest in overcoming their overwhelm.

**I AM
HERE TO
HELP!**



I work with leaders and owners every day, helping them to get a handle on this challenge without disrupting the rest of their lives and responsibilities. It is a delight to know that I am helping individuals to recapture their time and energy one hour at a time until they have regained the balance they seek.

YOU CAN'T DO THIS ALONE! If you're going to be successful in overcoming this overwhelm AND preventing its return, you need people to support and hold you accountable. Trust me. It is worth the investment. I am here to help.

Just click on the link below to schedule a time on my calendar for a free exploratory conversation.

**Reserve
Time on
Bob's
Calendar**



My best to you in your efforts toward recapturing your time, energy and focus as a leader. You deserve it!

**BOB
WENDOVER**

