



Better use your business brain and achieve better business results...

Rarely do you hear a business owner or manager complain about how easy it is to run a business.

Quite the opposite!

Having too much to do has become our biggest complaint.

Because running a business is a full-on, wholehearted, over-the-top, rollercoaster experience, you get to the end of the day empty, shattered, wrung-out.

Being physically, mentally and emotionally worn out is the norm.

You're working your brain to the max.

Or are you?

Yes you're worn out, but have you used your brain in the way it was designed? Or are you just doing what you always do when you work?

In a nutshell

Better use your business brain and you'll achieve better business results.

But most of us constantly ask the brain to do what it can't!

How good are you at multi-tasking, really?

When trying to reverse park your car on a



©istockphoto/ChrisGongio

busy road or park into a difficult space, have you ever turned your car radio off or stopped a conversation?

That's your thinking brain telling you to stop multi-tasking.

Given the busy, busy lives we lead it's

Here's a proven solution for you...

Your capacity to improve your results, your team's results and your business's results boils down to how well you use 4% of your business brain – your prefrontal cortex. It's not as hard as you think!

suggested we should all multi-task. But your business brain just doesn't like it.

For example, how accurate would you be if asked to press a left foot pedal when a low musical note sounded and a right pedal when a high note sounded?

You'd be 100% accurate.

How would you then perform if asked, at the same time, to add together two single-digit numbers (5 + 3) together?

You'd be just 50% accurate.

Or so say hundreds of experiments carried out by numerous researchers over three decades.

Overwhelming scientific proof shows that

when we humans do two 'thinking' tasks at the same time, our 'thinking' capacity drops from that of a graduate to that of an eight year-old (see the tools section on the back page for more evidence and the black-grey exercise to prove it).

Better manage the decision-making part of your brain and you make better business decisions. Don't leave it to chance.

You don't want to damage your car when making parking decisions; you don't want to damage your business when making business decisions.

Is this rocket science or brain surgery?

Neither.

Mastering what's considered the most complex thing in the known universe – your brain – is easier than you might think.

The world's neuroscientists agree.

Human evolution has already done most of the hard work for you.

One part of the brain has evolved to help you achieve more if you'd only use it in the right way.

Neuroscientists suggest that one small part of your brain, approximately 4%, determines how successful you are.

Your vital choice...

How **you choose** to use this small part of your brain determines how successful you are.

Learn how to better use the 4% of your brain that is your prefrontal cortex and you'll achieve better business results.

It's too risky not to...

When you don't learn how to make the most of the 4% that is your prefrontal cortex you are:

- Less able to make good decisions
- Less able to control impulses
- Less able to solve problems
- Less able to think creatively
- Less able to set goals
- Less able to plan

Fail to harness the power of your 4% and you're more likely to drift on autopilot, directionless, aimless.

More worryingly, if you stay on autopilot, you won't even notice you are wandering aimlessly!

Better Business Brain Insight 1:

1. Be a better stage director

30 leading neuroscientists, more than 300 research papers and more than a thousand brain and psychological studies have been brilliantly captured by David Rock in his book 'Your Brain At Work.'

David suggests a brilliant way to look at your 4% is to see it as a very small stage where your thoughts are the actors - for example:



More than 2 or 3 actors on stage and your business brain fails you.

Ask a group of children to act out a stage play with no direction or guidance – what would happen? A likely confused sequence of events with the strongest characters pushing to be on the stage as much as possible. The play would be poor, parents would not be pleased.

Your stage play – like your brain – works so much better when you **choose** the actors and **direct** the actors.

Direct well and you prioritise the most important scenes and bring the right actors to the stage at the right time.

By accident or on purpose?

Choose to 'direct' the actors on your small stage and you start to take control.

Take control and you can be more certain you'll achieve what you want to achieve.

Leave it to chance and you have no chance of improving your business brain or your business results.

Here's how you take control, here's how you become a better stage director.

Better Business Brain Insights 2, 3 and 4:

Your prefrontal cortex, your 4%, your stage, has some unavoidable physical and biological limits.

Better manage these limits and you'll achieve greater mental and business performance.

2. Your stage is tiny – your (4%) prefrontal cortex can only cope with 1, 2 or 3 actors at any one time – your job is to limit the number of actors (thoughts).

3. Your stage uses powerful battery-powered lights – like any sizeable muscle your prefrontal cortex consumes lots of glucose and wears out fast – your job is to

use this glucose wisely and prioritise well.

4. The actors can play only one scene at a time – like a calculator you can't multiply and divide two numbers at the same time – your job is to **limit distractions** and **stay focused**.

Doing your best with a small stage...

You know you're working with a small stage when you park your car on a busy road and have to turn your car radio off or stop a conversation.

So why, when focusing on an important project, or complex task at work do you allow distractions?

You must choose your actors carefully, you must stop distractions (the wrong actors), you must prioritise your actors.

So make prioritising a priority...

It pays to prioritise your projects when your brain is fresh.

"Prioritising is one of the brain's most energy-hungry processes." – David Rock

"We have a limited bucket of resources for activities like decision making and impulse control, and when we use these up, we don't have as much for the next activity." – Dr. Roy Baumeister, Florida University

Batteries, muscles and brains wear out too...

When your prefrontal cortex is worn out, it finds making good decisions much harder.

A bit like a remote toy helicopter struggles to take off after it's been flown a few times. It's no longer powerful enough. It pays to respect your limitations rather than fight them.

TIME TO DISAGREE

“My competition aren’t concerned with a better business brain they just want to win my customers.”

Ignore the power of your business brain (and the business brains of your team) and you will be at the mercy of your competitors’ business brains.

Whoever makes best use of their business brain is most likely to succeed just as Steve Jobs did.

Apple, after all, was the brainchild of Steve Jobs – and he knew how to make the most of his business brain.

Jobs was a practitioner of ‘mindfulness.’ Mindfulness is another way to describe the ‘stage director.’ Check out the sections on mindfulness in David Rock’s excellent book ‘Your Brain At Work.’ You’ll also find more on this in the tools section of this edition of Business Bitesize.

The more you know about how to best use your business brain, the more likely you are to be the winner in your market.

“There’s just too much going on for me to change the way I work and the way I use my brain.”

Continue to do what you’ve always done and you’ll continue to get what you’ve always got (or maybe less).

Now that you know your business brain (the 4%) has severe limitations, why not simply manage your external distractions better?

Use the Business Bitesize Support Tools And Resources

to help you make the most of this edition of Business Bitesize – go here: www.businessbitesize.com/pentlands

Manage your distractions better and you improve the power of your business brain, improve the decisions you make and improve your business results.

Peak performance beckons: If, as research suggests, your business brain has one to two peak performing hours a day at best then create 2 x 1 hour chunks of time to do your most important work.

Switch your emails off, switch your phone off, put a ‘do not disturb’ sign up or go hide away and **do your important work for the day undisturbed.**

You can then do your other work in the other 6 hours of your working day the same way as you always did.

“It’s just so hard to know what to do and what not to do!”

You’re right it is difficult.

And these decisions about what to do, what not to do and in what order you do them determine your business success every day.

So do it when you’re fresh.

It pays to choose your actors and choose your focus carefully. Are you really better off doing emails first thing in the morning when your brain is fresh or should you be making decisions about the most important jobs of the day?

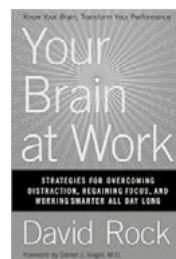
If the priority job of the day is obvious then use uninterrupted time to focus on the priority job and nothing else.

Your emails will still be there when you’ve done a priority job or two.

Please tell me more...

We cannot recommend David Rock’s excellent book ‘Your Brain At Work’ highly enough.

Rock shows how it’s possible not only to survive in today’s overwhelming work environment, but also to succeed in it – and still feel energised at the end of the day.



Your feedback is important to us. We’d love to know what you think of this edition of Business Bitesize and how you use it or plan to use it. Also we’d welcome your suggestions for future editions of Business Bitesize. To give us your thoughts please use the simple feedback form here: www.businessbitesize.com/pentlands



4 helping hands for you...

Because you have so many demands on your time and attention...

...because you want to succeed in business in an increasingly competitive business world...

...because it really pays to know much more about how to make the most of your business brain...

...here are four helping hands to get you going and help you build a better business brain and build better business results:

- 1. Be a better ‘stage director’ of your business brain**
- 2. Use undisturbed ‘focus time’ whilst your business brain is fresh**
- 3. Prioritise prioritising before your brain gets tired doing other work**
- 4. Learn more about a better business brain and achieve even greater results**

ULTIMATE ARGUMENT: “How will I know I am using my business brain in a better way?”

You’ll get to the end of a working day feeling a sense of achievement and will still be energised for your friends and family.

Your ‘stage director’ will recognise and keep distractions at bay and control what you think about, rather than just letting it happen.

You’ll have a greater sense of certainty that your business decisions are good decisions.

STOP allowing anything, anytime to disrupt your most important work.

START by being a better ‘stage director’ of your business brain and create some uninterrupted time for yourself every day.



Your next steps:

It pays to better understand more about how your business brain works.

When you do you'll make better business decisions.

Make better business decisions and you'll achieve better business results.

Start by being better at limiting distractions and create daily peak performance time

Timing is of the essence – nip distractions in the bud. David Rock suggests:

"To avoid distractions, it's helpful to get into the habit of vetoing behaviours early, quickly, and often, well before they take over."

But always remember you have limited and decreasing brain resources.

"Each time you inhibit something (stop a distraction), your ability to inhibit again is reduced"

More tools and information for you:

As well as the checklist here, you can use the exercises, checklists and tools in the online supporting material.

Together they'll help you make more of this bitesize business breakthrough.

Better business decisions come from using a better business brain...

Learn more about the way your brain works. Then apply your brain learning and you'll better use your business brain. Better use your business brain and you'll make better business decisions. Make better business decisions and you'll build a more successful business.

Don't be left at the mercy of your competitors' decisions, insights and innovations, build a better business brain...

1. BE A BETTER STAGE DIRECTOR: Recognising the physical limits of the 4% of your thinking business brain (your prefrontal cortex) is a great start. Being more mindful, more aware, more conscious of your decision making process, like Steve Jobs was, makes you a better business person.

Check out the tools and resources in the link below or read David Rock's brilliant book.

2. INHIBIT DISTRACTIONS: Internal and external distractions are constantly trying to get on your mental stage. Let them and you undermine your business brain and will achieve less than you could.

Staying focused means yes – turn off your mobile phone. It also means inhibiting internal impulses (read more about this in the tools). A better awareness of distractions means your 'stage director' can nip impulses in the bud before they turn into action and derail your day.

3. PRIORITISE YOUR PRIORITIES: It's so easy just to let yourself fall into the activities of the day as you always have done. It's time to make prioritising your number one process while your brain is fresh.

4. CREATE UNDISTURBED FOCUS TIME: Your customers demand your attention; your team demands your attention; many things demand your attention. But you now know you have up to two peak performing hours a day so plan them in. Make them totally and utterly uninterrupted, unbroken, undisturbed.

For more details on this step-by-step process please see the tools in the link below.

YOUR SUPPORT TOOLS ARE HERE: Go to the link below and you'll find a selection of practical support tools to help you work out more ways to use your business brain in a better way.



Find the support tools to help you here - www.businessbitesize.com/pentlands

**business
bitesize**



business breakthroughs
in minutes

Pentlands

Accountants
& Business
Advisors