

# HOW MUCH DO YOU WORK = ON VS. IN = YOUR BUSINESS?



Gain **awareness** around how much **time** you work **on** vs **in** your business, the **variables** that map your time, and the **activities** that fill your workday. See where you **compare** and **benchmarks** to help you stay on track.



**Why is understanding  
the balance of  
ON vs. IN important?**



If you're reading this, you are likely curious about where you spend your time working in your business. As the owner, CEO, or Key Executive, you do less and less productive work. You run the place. Do you act like it?

Recently, a client told us they felt guilty coming into the office late. Even if it was for a business breakfast with a center of influence or longtime business associate turned friend. In addition, they also felt like they needed to be "in the seat" until five, even if they were at a stopping point for the day earlier.

## **Why is that?**

You can always answer more emails and knock a few more items off the to-do list, right?

Is that the best and highest use of an owner, CEO, or key executive's time?

We don't think so, but we get it.



## Let's See Some Examples

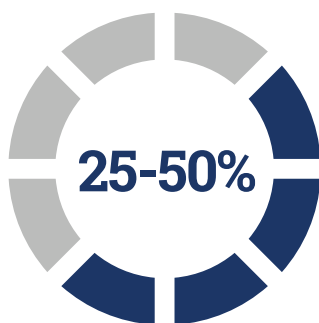
If you find yourself working similarly to the previous example, there likely is a mighty tension between leading and working. However, this probably is what made you successful, to begin with, right? It's easier to work than lead because the outcomes are obvious, and you can measure them. Task completed equals good work. At least it did at one point in your career.

But then, your business needs to change at some point, so what got you here won't get you there. Many leaders get stuck doing what got them here – working **in** the business. It can create a deep rut of the same results no matter how hard you run.

When you spend time working **on** your business, you give yourself room to set goals, think about the future, spot problems, delegate solutions, dream, and give your team a chance to shine brighter.

What % of your work time should you spend leading, strategizing, and thinking about your business?

### Acumen Owners & CEOs



How much time do you spend today On Your Business?

What's "right?"

### Other Owners & CEOs



Let's take a self-assessment and find out.



# Self-Assessment: Where are you spending your time?

Ready for a self-assessment? Let's take a deep dive and look at the activities you are focused on and how much time you are spending. You might be surprised to see where you land.



## Directions

1. **Download** the Time Assessment Tool
2. **Populate** the activities and hours per year (yellow cells) that you complete. We have a few in there to get you started!
3. **Review** the ON vs. IN totals and percentages that calculate at the end.

Activity	Hours/Year	%
<b>PLANNING &amp; EXECUTION</b>		
Annual Planning	30	6%
Quarterly Pulses	20	
Team Meetings	50	
Budgeting	20	
<b>Total Planning &amp; Execution</b>	<b>120</b>	
<b>TEAM MANAGEMENT</b>		
Direct Reports 1:1	120	12%
Coaching Team Members	120	
<b>Total Team Management</b>	<b>240</b>	
<b>THINK TIME &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b>		
Coaching	24	13%
Workshops	10	
Quiet Time	150	
Vacation/PTO	80	
<b>Total Think Time &amp; Development</b>	<b>264</b>	
<b>OTHER</b>		
		0%
<b>TOTAL Other</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>Annual Work Hours</b>	<b>2,080</b>	
<b>Avg. Weekly Hours</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Total "ON the Business"</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Total "IN the Business"</b>	<b>1,456</b>	<b>70%</b>

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**EVERY COMPANY IS UNIQUE IN ITS OWN RIGHT. IN ADDITION TO THIS, EACH LEADER ADDS THEIR UNIQUE TWISTS AND PERSPECTIVES TO THE MIX.**

# **THE — DATA**

**There are many interpretations of what defines ON vs. IN. So let's set up our definition here. We've defined the activities of working on the business to include: Planning and Execution, Team Management, Think Time and Development, and Other – to allow for things outside our activity list.**

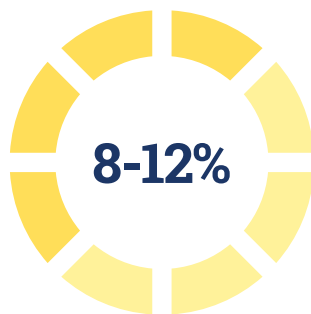
## Defining On vs. IN

Each person at your company may have a different level of capacity and approach to engagement. There likely are several variables that come to mind which might be a grey area for you, your company, and your team:

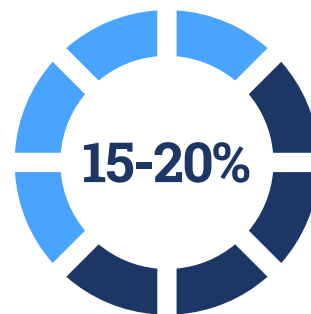
**Type of Business | Size of Business | Stage of Business  
CEO Duration in Their Seat | Definition of ON vs. IN**

### Our Research Shows...

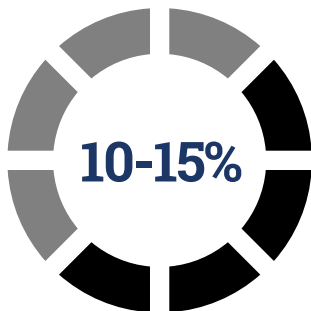
**CEOs breakout their time ON their Business this way:**



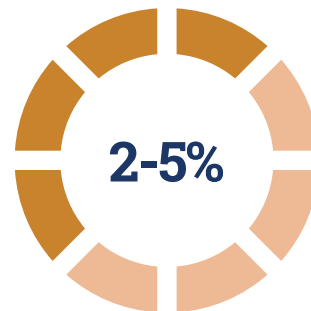
**Planning & Execution**



**Team Management**



**Self Think & Development**



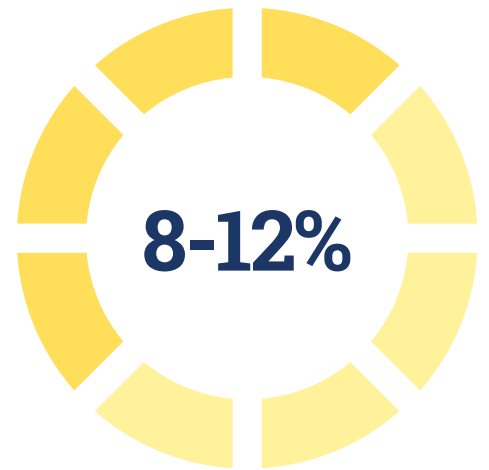
**Other**

**How are you doing? Let's take a deep dive in each of these categories to see where you are at and how you can improve.**



## Planning & Execution "ON" Hours

Overall, the survey of our clients showed that most CEOs and Owners spend 8-10% of their time planning and holding the team/execution accountable. The time in these activities increased as the organization's size increased, going as high as 40%. This is the blocking and tackling of your company, so these activities are crucial. At a minimum, they include planning annually, meeting about the plan quarterly, connecting with your team weekly, and building a budget.



### Average Hours

**If you aren't doing any planning or meeting regularly then you just have to start. If you have a rhythm, we find the challenge is keeping it and not cancelling or rescheduling.**

## Strategy to Increase

Once you have your planning and execution playbook, stick to it. Also, if you are still the one facilitating all of your meetings, stop it! For your annual planning meetings, look at getting an outside facilitator so you can be a part of the conversation and not lead it. Similarly, in your weekly meetings, have someone on your team run it (not make all the decisions, just run the meeting well). Not sure who? Let everyone lead a couple of meetings, and the answer will be obvious who should run the meeting.

## Team Management "ON" Hours



### Average Hours

One of the best ways to grow your company and expand your role to include more on the business activity is to grow and develop your team. That only happens when you intentionally focus on it. How often are you meeting 1:1 with your direct reports? How often do you cancel those meetings? What does coaching look like in your company? When and how do you coach your team?

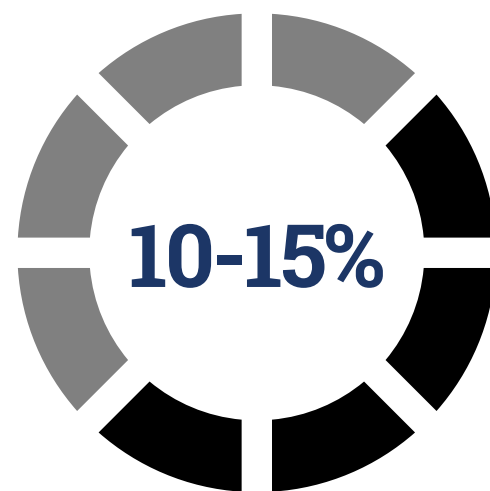
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## Strategy to Increase

Like planning, there is a "just do it" factor here. Meet 1:1 with your direct team, and don't cancel. Then, find opportunities to coach key players in the organization. This may require some MBWA (management by walking around) and asking questions, but you'll never regret the extra time you spend to lean into your team.

## Self Think & Development "ON" Hours

The most common objection we hear when talking about getting outside the business to think or invest in personal development is **time**. If you don't have the time to invest in yourself, which is your best and most valuable asset, then that's precisely why you need to do it. Spending time on self-thinking and development may be the most challenging segment for CEOs and Owners. This can include executive coaching, peer advisory or mastermind teams, workshops, quiet time, vacation, and self-directed strategy sessions.



**Average Hours**

**When you get out of the office and turn off your phone notifications. Doing this gives your mind time, space, and the opportunity to get into a helicopter and look down on your business. This can be the best time you have to think about your business. It's also the hardest to schedule and yet the most beneficial to you long term.**

## Strategy to Increase

Pay for something you will do. (Really?) Yes, really. When you put two hours in your calendar for "think time" it has no value so it's the first time that gets over-scheduled for that important last-minute meeting request or opportunity. You think you'll do it next week or month, but it won't happen. So, find something that will challenge you to get out of the office and pay for it. You'll be glad you did.



## Other Hours "ON" Business



You are a unique individual, and so is your business; there may be things you count as on the business that are not defined previously. Some leaders have defined this as working out, reading books, networking, or even speaking engagements.

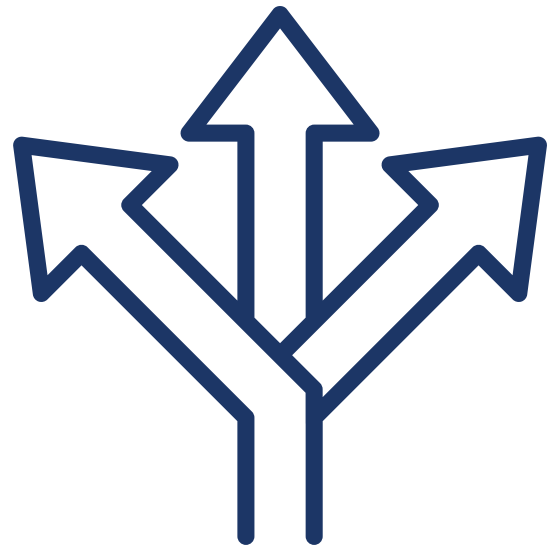
What did the "other" hours look like to you?

## Average Hours

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## Strategy to Increase

Ask your team if you are at a loss for ideas on how to take more time to work on your business. They see you lead all day, every day. Given permission, they will give you insight, ideas, and energy around how you can get out of the office more.



# Pulse Check



## Where Did You Land After Your Self-Assessment?

1

Do you run the company or work in it?



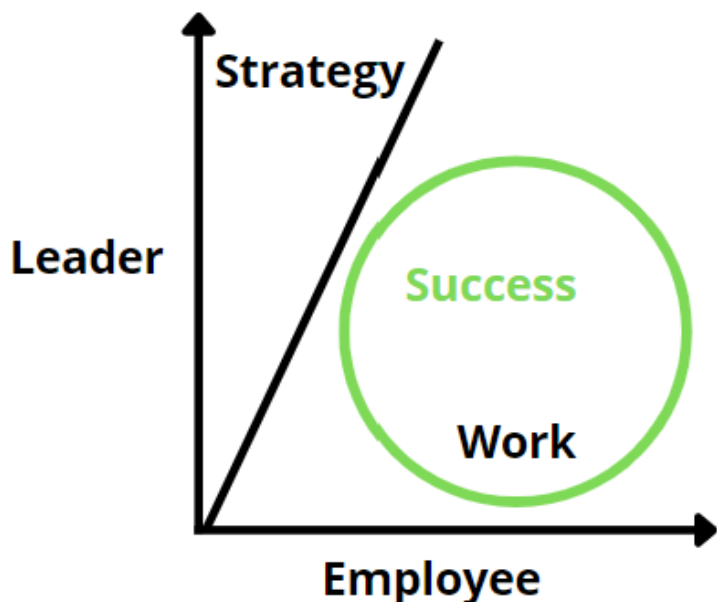
2

Are you surprised at the results?



3

What did you notice or learn?



Here's a graphic to help you think about the challenge. Let's simplify things into two big buckets. **Strategy and Work**. When you are in the business the bulk of the time, the work you do makes you successful. Output matters.



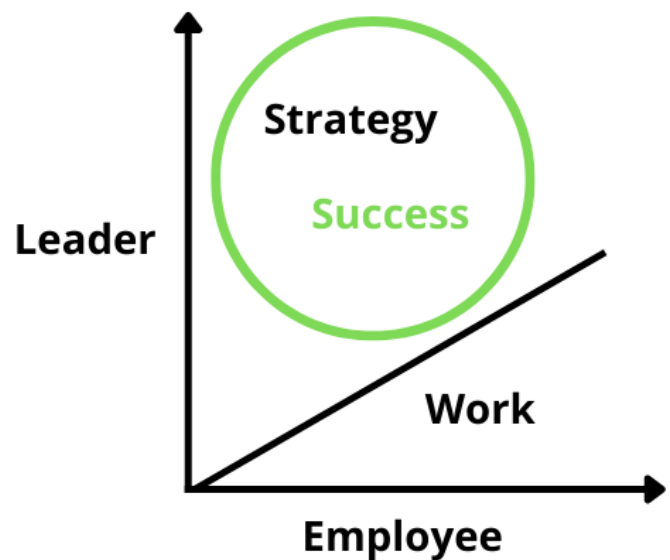
## So What's Next?

As your business grew, you needed to increase the time working ON the business. You were successful because you kicked out a ton of work – output.

To push through to the next stage, you need to modify and focus on results – outcomes. Outcomes can take 5 seconds or take years. They could be the new product idea, making that crucial phone call to close a deal, finding an investor, or holding onto the vision you initially laid out three years ago.

It's strategy, and it's work. It just doesn't feel like the old work because you can't check the box as done.

So, here's your permission slip to change your mindset and focus more on the business's important, not urgent, strategy versus knocking out action items and answering emails.



**Outcome, not output.  
You run the place. Act like it.**

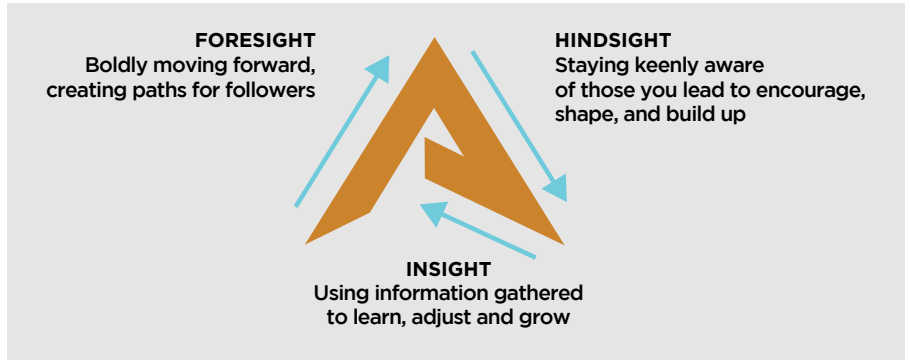


# About Acumen

Acumen is an exclusive community of CEO/Owners focused on:

- Helping you grow your top line
- Optimize your bottom line
- Enrich your storyline

**Acumen.** The word itself has multiple dimensions. Certainly its meaning in the context of business is meaningful. Keen Insight; Shrewdness; Wisdom; Ingenuity; Insight. It's Latin origin "to sharpen" is significant and a natural ty-in to one of our pillar verses from Proverbs 27:17 'As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.'



## THE ACUMEN DISTINCTIVES



Acumen is for  
**CEOS AND OWNERS**  
who seek **RESULTS.**



Acumen is  
**COMMUNITY**



Acumen is a  
place for  
**CHALLENGE**



Acumen is for  
people of  
**PASSION**



Acumen is  
rooted in  
**PURPOSE**

Leadership is a challenging and lonely endeavor involving long hours, difficult decisions and being the final word on everything. In this "every man for himself" world, you've probably realized: there is no playbook for CEOs and business owners. But what if there was a group of leaders just like you who were committed to helping each other maximize their impact on their customers, employees, suppliers and community? Welcome to Acumen. Sharpen your edge.

**Interested in learning more about how you can be  
sharpened, challenged, and inspired more as a leader?**

We'd love to chat -> <https://acumenimpact.com/contact-us/>