

Momentum

Playbook 24

Healthy Habits

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Playbook 24:

Healthy Habits

What Finally Convinced Me to Floss

Every six months, I diligently visit my dentist. For years, I had the same conversation with the hygienist when she'd ask if I was flossing each day.

"Not really. Every so often."

"You really should floss daily."

"Yes, I totally should. I'm going to start."

And six months later, we'd have the same conversation.

While I wash my face every night (I can't stand going to bed with makeup on), I never got into the flossing thing. It took too long. The floss would hurt when I wrapped it too tightly around my fingers. It made my gums hurt. And besides, I always had great checkups. Sure, sometimes the cleanings would take a while or my gums would be inflamed, but overall, my teeth were really healthy.

Then, one day, I had a really bad cleaning. My gums bled. This had never happened before. Here comes another lecture, I thought. I sheepishly gave the hygienist all the excuses for not flossing every day: Time, discomfort, forgetfulness. She smiled.

"Maria, did you know that flossing does more than just get the food out from between your teeth? By flossing, you agitate and break up the stuck bacteria that cause gum problems. Even if you just quickly swipe the floss between each tooth, you'll be doing a world of good. And the more you floss, the more your gums will get used to it so it shouldn't hurt so much."

I'm not sure why this resonated, but it did. She broke what appeared to be a total hassle into a manageable habit I could get into. So that night, I made a game out of how fast I could floss my teeth. After about a week, I was into it. After about a month, I was hooked.

The habit had formed.

Now, I won't lie. I still don't floss every night. But I do it several nights a week, which is way more often than I did before.

The point is that no habit is easy to start. And it certainly is not easy to keep. The goal of MOMENTUM was to get you into the "habit" of focusing your efforts and tackling one marketing activity each week.

There is a myth out there that it takes 21 days to form a new habit, but science tells us that habits can take anywhere from [two to eight months](#) to build a new behavior into your life. You've learned a lot in MOMENTUM so in today's Playbook, we'll "sum up" some of the healthy habits you need to succeed so you can break them down and move your business forward.

Healthy Content Marketing Habits

We've talked a lot about creating content and marketing that showcases your value and converts your audience from mere fans to loyal raving buyers.

Follow these best practices to make your content efforts shine. If you're going to put in the effort to create content and marketing to promote your work, you'll want your business to get every single bit of mileage out of it.

1. Make Content Shareable

- Use Forward to a Friend, Social Share Buttons.
- Pre-write posts to share: [ClicktoTweet.com](#).
- Use images and infographics.

2. Use Images

When people hear information, they are likely to remember only 10% of that information three days later. However, if a relevant image is paired with that same information, people retained 65% of the information three days later. (LifeLearn, 2015)

Visual content is 40X more likely to get shared on social media than other types of content. (Buffer, 2014)

You can pay for images at many sites such as [Yay Images](#) or [iStockPhoto](#). But you can also easily get free images on the Internet. Always give the right photo credit, depending on rights agreements and terms.

Some Free Image Resources:

- [Unsplash](#)
- [500px](#)
- [Flickr Creative Commons](#)
- [Canva](#)

Optimize Images for Each Social Network:

It doesn't work to use the exact same image sizes for every platform. They won't show up right and will make you look like an amateur. Bookmark [this page](#) for always up-to-date image sizes for every platform.

Use Free Image Editing Tools:

- [Canva](#): Get every template you need, pre-sized and with compelling imagery. They have templates you can use or you can upload your own images.
- [PicMonkey](#): Re-size images to any size you like and add eye-catching banners, effects, titles, etc.

3. Batch And Pre-Schedule Content...

- Batch content creation by doing several videos or blog posts in one sitting
- Pre-schedule content delivery in advance so you can set it and forget it:
 - Blogs: Many blogs, such as [WordPress](#), enable you to schedule your posts way in advance
 - Email Marketing Platform: All of them have the ability to schedule the email to publish in the future.
 - Social media: Popular scheduling tools include [Hootsuite](#), [Buffer](#), [Meet Edgar](#), and you can use [Tailwind](#) specifically for Pinterest and Instagram
 - One caveat: If pre-scheduling to a Facebook brand page, use Facebook's native scheduler, not a third-party tool. Otherwise, the Facebook algorithm will not show the post to as many of your fans.

4. ...But, Set Aside Weekly Time For Live Engagement

- Social media is SOCIAL so make sure you are active within the platform.
- Schedule 15 minutes per day or to dip into social networks and interact, even if you pre-schedule content.
- Follow proper etiquette for each network.
- Respond to comments, give shout-outs, thank people, share valuable content from other trusted sources, promote complementary businesses or organizations if applicable.

5. Recycle and Reuse

- Spruce up old content for use again.
- Repackage into other forms: A blog post becomes a media pitch; an article becomes a podcast or video. A series of blog posts becomes a free guide.
- Find at least three uses for every piece of content.

6. Gather Continuous Feedback

- Monitor social media for questions, comments.
- Provide mechanism to solicit content ideas.
- Ask clients or customer about your content efforts when they call or meet with you.
- Poll your audience annually or quarterly.

7. Get It All Done!

- Create a plan so it's easier to divide the workload.
- Hire a full or part-time content marketing manager.
- Hire a skilled freelancer on [Upwork](#) or [Fiverr](#).
- Hire a virtual assistant specializing in content marketing/social media from someplace like [Worldwide 101](#). *Full disclosure: This is an affiliate link because I use them and love them!*
- Contact a local college or university and bring on an intern who is studying marketing, communications or journalism to build the plan and execute the content. You may be able to do this in exchange for course credit rather than pay.
- Document your processes in as much detail as possible to avoid any confusion and be sure to clearly set expectations on quality and communication before you start. Re-read *Playbook 35* for more advice on this.

Make Time Management a Habit

As you've hopefully learned throughout this program, not everyone is born knowing how to manage their time, streamline their efforts and do everything with ease. Running a business *and* doing the work of your business is hard. They are two very different jobs.

But you can get more efficient at doing it all. It starts with very small steps that add up to big time savings.

These three simple tips will help you better organize your marketing tasks:

- **Batch similar activities:** Beyond just batching content creation, you can batch anything you regularly need to do to create healthy habits. Do you find yourself "Paying bills" multiple times over the course of three days? Batch those tasks into Pay Bills every Friday, mark it on your calendar like a meeting and don't touch the bills until then.
- **Schedule your priorities in your calendar:** Again, physically putting time in your calendar to work on something not only blocks the time out for others, but also keeps you accountable and avoids distraction. At the beginning of this program, I asked you to schedule one to two hours weekly to work on your assignments. This is to help you keep that time sacred but also avoid stressing about the work until then.
- **Designate "Business" versus "Create" days:** You can get so caught up *in* your business that you don't work *on* your business. Short-term fires overpower long-term thinking. Carve out time on your calendar each week for active client work, bill paying, and office supply shopping. Carve out *separate* time for more unstructured creation such as content ideas, goal-setting, writing, or inventing new offerings.

Make Collaboration a Habit

Practice makes perfect. If you want to make better networking, genuine collaboration and asking for help a healthy habit, you have to do it more often.

Flex that muscle and enlist others to help you promote your good work and share your good news. **Here are some best practices to transform you into a collaboration pro:**

- Generously share and retweet other experts' content in social media
- Network in-person and online in groups. Revisit *Playbooks 20* and *21* for help on how to do this with ease, style and fun!
- Make connections or proactive introductions for people for no gain or reason other than "they should know each other."
- Check up with your colleagues every few months with a "What are you working on? How can I help?" email.
- Call on friends who may know your ideal clients and customers. Yes, this means promoting your work to your personal network!
- Consistently provide valuable content BEFORE you're ready to sell so people will fall in love with you and want to support you.
- Delight your existing clients, customers and partners so much that they will do the selling for you!

If you build these networks before you need them, it's easier to strategically ask people for help when the time is right. Let partners or colleagues know about your launches and new offerings. If you're doing all of the above, they will be glad to help. Turn them into an evangelist army to help you specifically promote when the time is right

Scheduling Your New Habits

You know I'm a huge fan of putting things on your calendar to ensure they get done, right? It's why I asked you to set aside your weekly MOMENTUM time and book it out on your calendar for the entire year.

If it's not on the calendar, chances are it won't get done, or other things will suck up your time instead because that time will look "available."

But everyone is different. For example, over the course of my marriage, I've learned that my husband likes to clean the house a little bit at a time, every day. I prefer one marathon cleaning session each week. We all have different priorities, work styles and even times of the day when we're most productive.

Determine a cadence for healthy marketing habits that works for your own life and personality type.

Here are some *suggested* time intervals for you. Please note that you need to determine the cadence and timing that works *best for you*, such as how often and when to publish blogs, videos or newsletter. I've placed an asterisk next to such tasks. But this is a guideline to help you start.

DAILY:

- **Plan your Three Critical Tasks for the day.** Remember my beloved *Rule of Three*? Same holds true here. What are the three things that have to get done before you can sleep tonight? Post those up on your desk. Everything else is just gravy.
- **Check email at least twice a day.** Doing this **ONLY** twice a day is a great productivity tip and actually helps you reduce the amount of email you get. Some folks even put an auto-responder that tells the sender what times they check their emails and what to do if the matter is time-sensitive. If you send less email, you get less replies!
- **Eat lunch:** I add this because not doing so was ruining my life and health. Seriously. Take at least a half hour break away from your computer and nourish yourself. Plus, your eyes need a break from the screen!
- ***Dip into social media:** No matter how much you set it and forget it with advance scheduling, social media is still *social* and needs to be treated as such. Set aside 10-15 minutes to dip into your accounts to share posts, give shout outs, answer questions or just be part of the conversation. Set a timer so you don't look up four hours later and realize you wasted your day! Doing this bi-weekly for a longer amount of time is fine, too.

WEEKLY:

- ***Publish a blog post, video or podcast.** Again, this timing is up to you. Weekly keeps you top of mind, but perhaps monthly or daily works for your audience. Whatever you decide, plan for it and be consistent!
- **Denote an admin day (or half-day).** Get caught up on billing, processes, or stocking up on office supplies. Don't worry about any of this until that day.

MONTHLY:

- ***Set aside a batch day(s).** You can schedule batch days monthly or even quarterly. Up to you. I like to set aside time each week for content creation because that's how I work best. You may work better by taking a two-day workcation and cranking out six months worth of content. The choice is yours.
- ***Send an email/newsletter to your list.** Again, this depends on what you've committed to your audience and what works best for you. I strive for weekly.
- ***Pre-schedule your content publishing:** Schedule your blog posts or social media posts in advance as much as possible. You can do this weekly as well, or if you're really organized, quarterly or (gasp!) yearly!
- **Review your Profit and Loss statements and financials.** Because....#businessgoals. Understand where you are and where you need to be.

QUARTERLY:

- **Revisit your yearly goals.** Are you on track? Ahead? Behind? No need to beat yourself up about this, but know where you stand. Adjust accordingly while there is still time. Better than getting to all the way to year end and saying, “WTF?!”
- ***Poll your audience.** Ask them what they want and need. Get feedback. Re-connect with them and make sure you’re still giving them what they want, how they want it. This could be about questions they have, content they desire, course topics that may be of interest, or communication preferences. Whatever you need to know. Some folks do this annually and that works, too.
- ***Create an Editorial Calendar.** Make your content creation efforts run more smoothly by planning a few months of content ahead of time, on a rolling basis. Determine which topics you want to cover and when. This makes it easier to batch content creation and pre-schedule everything—see #3 in the Best Practices section about this.
- ***Run a promotion.** Do something special for your audience every quarter if you can. That could be running a free training webcast, launching a new offering, promoting a sale or contest, holding a special event. Plan something like this at least once per quarter. But don’t go crazy: You don’t want to promote something different every month or week: your audience will get dizzy!
- **Get away.** Play hooky and take your kids to the zoo. Savor a spa day. Go on a long weekend in the mountains. Traipse off to the beach for a week with your friends. Give yourself something to look forward to every single quarter. Vacation. Rest. Recharge. Plan for this.

ANNUALLY:

- **Review and reflect on your year.** Take time to reflect on the past before storming toward the future. What worked well this year? What would you rather have less of in your work? Did you meet or come close to your goals from last year? Review and learn.
- **Set your intentions and goals for the year.** See *Playbook 1: Your End Game* for clever ideas on how to set goals without killing yourself.
- **Take a long break.** If you didn’t do this quarterly, take at least a week off from work. Don’t explain this away with taking tons of mini-breaks. Your body and mind needs a longer time to decompress and release all the stress hormones that have built up by being in a constant state of flight or fight.
- **Celebrate!** Do something special for your tribe every year. A wine and cheese social, a virtual contest, a free giveaway. And don’t forget to celebrate your own successes and learnings each year.

Your Assignment: Put Healthy Habits into Motion

What three best practice “habits” will you start putting into effect this week?

What is your game plan for putting some of the other healthy habits into effect? Will you create a checklist, hire a resource, commit to a schedule, etc?

Map out your own [Cadence Calendar](#). What three things will you do daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly? Slot those tasks/review times into your actual Calendar as a reminder to get them done.

Daily:

Weekly:

Monthly:

Quarterly:

Annually:

But wait, you're not quite done....

Please post your time savers and healthy habit resolutions on the Facebook page by Friday.

Remember, we are here to encourage you and provide any feedback. If you're like me, often it's fellow collaborators that help me polish my ideas to a glossy sheen.

Again, I'm going to reward you all year long, so don't lose your **MOMENTUM**: Post it now and keep that train moving!

One Last Thing...

Streamlining won't happen overnight. But with practice, it will happen.

Don't get discouraged: You can't transform the way you do things overnight. Develop these healthy habits. Make them part of your routine business operations. Soon, they will become second nature.

Just like when people try to get into shape, renovate a house or change their diet, these things take time. You start by making small tweaks that ultimately create life-changing (and business-changing) habits.

To your health,

Maria

Goodies and Inspiration

[How to trick your brain to create a new healthy habit.](#)

[7 essential habits of successful business owners.](#)

[28 best habits to have in business.](#) I don't quite agree with #5 anymore, but whatever works for you.

Healthy habits require some [ch-ch-ch-changes](#). Ah, Mr. Bowie, we miss you!