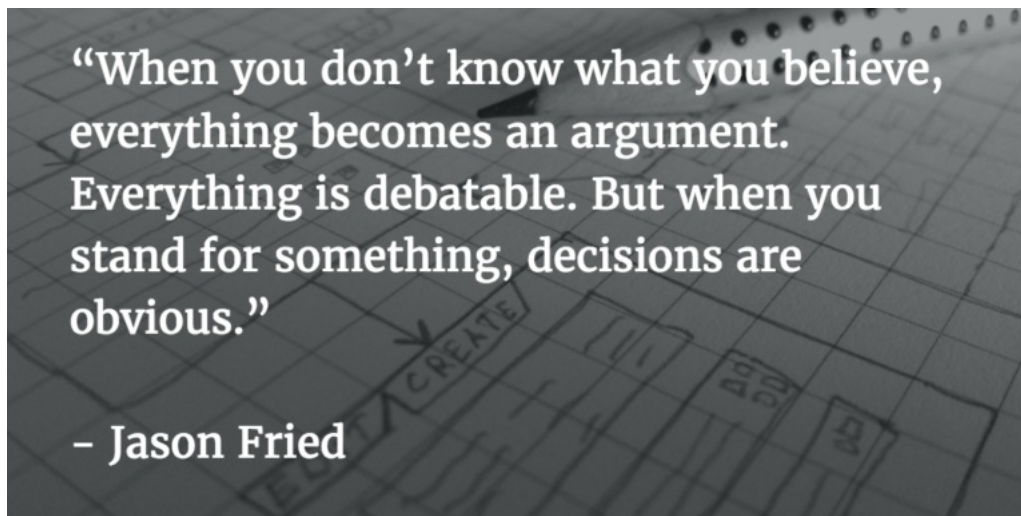# ReWork Summary

fourminutebooks.com/rework-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *ReWork shows you that you need less than you think to start a business – way less – by explaining why plans are actually harmful, how productivity isn't a result from working long hours and why hiring and seeking investors should be your absolute last resort.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:

"When you don't know what you believe, everything becomes an argument. Everything is debatable. But when you stand for something, decisions are obvious."

– Jason Fried

I picked *ReWork* up from Entrepreneur On Fire's Top 15 Business Book List, as recommended by over 350 of their guests. They compiled the books that were recommended more than four times and ended up with 15 solid picks, one of which was this one.

The author, Jason Fried, is the co-founder of Basecamp, which was the first Ruby on Rails (a programming language) application ever, originally created by co-author David Heinemeier Hansson. Today some of the world's most popular sites and apps run on Rails, such as Twitter, GitHub or even Shopify.

Basecamp is also the name of their project management and collaboration software, giving teams everything they need to get stuff done, from chats to message boards, to-do's, timelines, reminders and folders. It's over 10 years old already, but thanks to keeping his company lean throughout the years, Jason has managed to grow it into a million-dollar software product.

In 2010 he and his co-author decided to publish some of the principles they relied on to run Basecamp (until 2014 the company was called 37signals) and ReWork was born.

Here are 3 great lessons about starting a business from the book:

1. Take a stand for something you believe in and then pick a fight with an incumbent.
2. Screw big corporate marketing, stay honest, personal and nimble.

3. Don't let long hours and meetings prevail, they actually hurt productivity.

Ready to rework your approach to business? Let's go!

Lesson 1: Take a stand for something you believe in and then pick a fight with a competitor.

If you're going to start a business, please, please, please, do it right. Don't be one of those people who spout off ideas over lunch like: "Oh yeah, we're gonna build this fitness app and in 2-3 years, we'll sell it to CrossFit, that should be a sweet exit!"

Trust me, if selling your business is your only goal, don't even start, because you'll never get there.

Instead, why not build something you really want to see in the world? Something you can be incredibly proud of, something you want to take a stand for – **a thing worth fighting for**.

For example, can you imagine walking into a McDonalds and hearing the slogan "We believe in fresh food?" I hardly think so. Everyone knows the burgers sometimes sit there for hours and occasionally look like they imploded.

If you *really* believe in fresh food, like Vinnie's Sub Shop in Chicago, you'll probably do what they do, and close up shop in the afternoon, because the bread will just never be as fresh as it was in the morning.

Now that's something to be proud of.

Plus, taking a stand will make it easy to pick a fight with a competitor, which in turn will help put you on people's map. If you hate the 7 Minute Workout app and think any good workout takes at least 30 minutes, then that's something you can build upon and people might agree with.

Lesson 2: Screw big corporate marketing, stay honest, personal and nimble.

> Founded in 1998, Milestone Systems is a global industry leader in open platform IP video management software. With support for the widest choice in network hardware and integration with other systems, XProtect provides best-in-class solutions to video enable organizations – managing risks, protecting people and assets, optimizing processes and reducing costs.

Yuck! Don't you fall asleep reading this? Took me 2 seconds to find via Google, so this is a common problem. No matter how small, companies always want to sound like big corporations.

For the love of god, why?

Nobody understands this complicated jargon, if anything, it makes you sound pretentious. Instead, **write like you talk to a friend and just be honest.**

Take this email I sent out yesterday, for example:

> Heyo,
>
> it's Nik here with an apology.
>
> My most recent guest post on Productivityist went live right when I was on vacation… **but the bonuses didn't**.
>
> You're getting this email because you signed up after May 11th, when the post was published *or* previously signed up for the bonus to my post from last year – that's as specific as I can track it.
>
> **All bonuses for the new post are now up and running.**
>
> To make it easy for you, I thought I'd shoot you a quick recap with both posts and all bonuses.

I screwed up, so guess what – I apologized. No fancy buzzwords needed. So forget marketing like the big guys.

Lesson 3: Forget long hours and meetings, they hurt productivity.

The only thing that happens when someone stays late at the office is that the rest of the office feels bad for not doing the same. Don't even try to convince yourself that those late-night hours are really productive, you know they're not.

So instead of promoting a culture of overtime, start by **cutting away the things that interrupt people during focused work.**

Imagine how much your employees can get done when they just work on one thing for 2-3 hours. So don't fret over emails left unanswered for a while or when someone can't make a meeting.

After all, a 10-person meeting that lasts 1 hour means 10 hours of focused work time just went down the drain. Give people the space they need to get the things done that really matter and then interrupt them as little as possible.

That way everyone can go home at 5 and still get a lot done.

ReWork Review

There are lots of starting points in *ReWork*. I think it's one of the most comprehensive approaches to starting a business the right way I've seen in a while, it touches all the important bases.

I highly recommend the summary of this book on Blinkist, and then dive deeper into Fried's philosophy. It helps you see the overall picture and addresses all the core parts of the book as well. A very good one, great job by the guys in the Berlin.

Read full summary on Blinkist

Get the book on Amazon

Learn more about the author

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- When you should launch your business
- Why making your product inimitable allows you to share more than the competition
- How to strike the balance between embracing being small and acting like a big business
- Why you should say no to any product feature at first
- What you can do to create an environment in which people manage themselves
- Why "Let's decide" should dictate your planning and not "Let's think about it"
- The reason BMW has a fake assembly line and why hiring should be your very last option

Who would I recommend the ReWork summary to?

The 17 year old with an itch to start a company, the 29 year old startup employee who's fed up with her company slowly becoming like a big corporation, and anyone who hates meetings.