

THE ADHD FOUNDER PLAYBOOK

How I Built \$15K MRR With High-Functioning ADHD (Without Burning Out)

By Josh | Amalfi AI

LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT MY BRAIN

I have high-functioning ADHD. This means:

- I can hyper-focus for 6 hours straight on problems that interest me
- I cannot focus for 5 minutes on tasks that bore me
- I start 10 projects and finish 3
- I have 47 browser tabs open right now
- I think in systems and patterns
- I struggle with consistency and routine

For most of my life, this felt like a liability. School was torture. Corporate jobs were impossible. "Just focus" never helped.

Then I started building a business. And something clicked:

ADHD isn't a bug. It's a feature. If you build your business around how your brain actually works.

This guide is the operating system I built for my ADHD brain. It's how I went from starting-and-abandoning 20 projects to building \$15K MRR in 6 months.

If you're neurotypical, this might seem weird. If you have ADHD, this will feel like someone finally gets it.

WHY TRADITIONAL PRODUCTIVITY SYSTEMS FAIL FOR ADHD BRAINS

THE CALENDAR FALLACY

Neurotypical advice: "Block your calendar. 9-10am: Email. 10-12pm: Deep work. 12-1pm: Lunch."

What happens with ADHD:

- 9am: Open email, see interesting problem, fall down rabbit hole
- 11am: Realize you never started "deep work"
- 12pm: Not hungry yet, keep working
- 2pm: Starving, order food, scroll Twitter while eating
- 3pm: Panic about wasted day, try to force productivity
- 4pm: Give up, feel like failure

Your brain doesn't work in scheduled blocks. Stop pretending it does.

THE TODO LIST TRAP

Neurotypical advice: "Make a to-do list. Prioritize. Work through it top to bottom."

What happens with ADHD:

- Make list of 20 items
- Start with #1, get bored
- Skip to #7 because it's more interesting
- Think of new task, add #21
- Get overwhelmed by list length
- Abandon list, work on random task not even on list
- End of day: List is longer than when you started

To-do lists don't work. You need a different system.

THE CONSISTENCY MYTH

Neurotypical advice: "Do the same thing every day. Consistency is key."

What happens with ADHD:

- Day 1: Pumped, do the thing
- Day 2: Still good, do the thing
- Day 3: Slightly boring, do the thing but reluctantly
- Day 4: Brain rebels, refuse to do the thing
- Day 5-7: Guilt about not doing the thing, avoid thinking about it

- Day 8: Give up entirely

You're not bad at consistency. You're wired for novelty. Build for that.

THE ADHD-OPTIMIZED BUSINESS FRAMEWORK

PILLAR 1: Energy-Based Work (Not Time-Based)

Forget schedules. Work based on current energy state:

HIGH ENERGY (Hyper-Focus Mode):

- Build features
- Solve complex problems
- Write proposals
- Deep client work
- Creative tasks

When hyper-focus hits, RIDE IT. Cancel everything. This is your superpower.

MEDIUM ENERGY (Normal Mode):

- Client calls
- Testing
- Email responses
- Documentation
- Admin tasks

LOW ENERGY (Zombie Mode):

- Watching tutorial videos (learning)
- Organizing files
- Updating tracking sheets
- Brainstorming (low stakes)
- Nothing (rest is productive)

Match tasks to energy. Don't fight your state.

PILLAR 2: Interest-Driven Priorities

Don't prioritize by importance. Prioritize by interest.

I know that sounds insane. Here's why it works:

- Important-but-boring task: You'll procrastinate for weeks
- Interesting-but-less-urgent task: You'll finish in 2 hours

Which one actually gets done? The interesting one.

The hack: Make important tasks interesting.

How?

- Add a challenge ("Can I build this in under 4 hours?")
- Change the context (work from a coffee shop)
- Pair with something fun (good music, reward after)
- Turn it into a game (track streak, compete with yourself)

PILLAR 3: Constraint-Based Execution

ADHD brains work better with constraints, not freedom.

Bad: "Build this feature whenever"

Good: "Build this feature in next 4 hours or it doesn't ship today"

Time constraints create urgency. Urgency triggers focus.

My constraints:

- 21-day project delivery (hard deadline)
- 40-hour work weeks (forces efficiency)
- 3-day PDF creation (artificial pressure)
- Monthly revenue targets (visible scoreboard)

Without constraints, I'd tinker forever. Constraints force shipping.

PILLAR 4: External Accountability

Internal motivation doesn't work for ADHD. External accountability does.

What works:

- Client expecting delivery Day 21 (can't let them down)
- Posting public commitments (social pressure)
- Accountability partner checking in weekly
- Money on the line (clients paid, must deliver)

What doesn't work:

- "I should do this"
- Self-imposed deadlines
- Internal goals nobody knows about

Make it public. Make it expensive to fail.

THE PRACTICAL SYSTEMS

THE 3-ITEM DAILY SYSTEM

Forget 20-item to-do lists. Pick 3 things max:

- **The Big Thing:** One major task (2-4 hours)
- **The Medium Thing:** One moderate task (1 hour)
- **The Small Thing:** One quick task (15 min)

That's it. If you finish all 3, today is a win. Don't add more.

Example from yesterday:

- Big: Build CV extraction prompt (3 hours)
- Medium: Client check-in call (45 min)
- Small: Update project tracker (10 min)

All 3 done = successful day. Brain happy. No guilt.

THE HYPERFOCUS CAPTURE SYSTEM

When hyper-focus hits on the "wrong" task:

1. Don't fight it (you'll lose)
2. Set timer for 2 hours
3. Ride the focus wave
4. When timer ends, assess: "Is this actually important?"
5. If yes, keep going. If no, switch

This honors the hyper-focus while preventing 8-hour rabbit holes on irrelevant tasks.

THE CONTEXT SWITCHING MINIMIZER

ADHD + context switching = disaster. Minimize it:

- **Batch similar tasks:** All client calls on Monday, all building Tue-Thu
- **One client per day:** Tuesday = Client A, Wednesday = Client B
- **Close unnecessary tabs:** If you're building, close email/Slack
- **Physical movement:** Change task? Change location (even just another room)

THE DOPAMINE HACK SYSTEM

ADHD brains crave dopamine. Use it:

- **Immediate rewards:** Finish task → 10-min break doing something fun
- **Progress tracking:** Visual progress bars, streak counters
- **Gamification:** "Can I beat yesterday's speed?"
- **Variety:** Rotate between 3 types of work to stay interested

Don't fight dopamine cravings. Build them into your system.

DESIGNING AN ADHD-FRIENDLY BUSINESS

PICK HIGH-VARIETY WORK

Why AI solutions architecture works for ADHD:

- Every client is different (novelty)
- Every project has different challenges (stimulation)
- Mix of discovery, building, testing (variety)
- Clear start and end points (dopamine from completion)

What doesn't work:

- Repetitive maintenance work
- Long-term projects with no visible progress
- Same task every day
- Ambiguous never-ending work

BUILD IN SPRINTS, NOT MARATHONS

21-day projects = perfect for ADHD:

- Short enough to maintain interest
- Long enough to do real work
- Clear finish line (dopamine hit)
- Then you move to next client (novelty)

6-month projects = ADHD hell:

- Lose interest week 3
- No sense of completion
- Gets boring
- Procrastinate

LEVERAGE HYPERFOCUS WINDOWS

When hyperfocus hits, I can build in 4 hours what takes others 2 days.

This is the ADHD superpower. Capitalize on it:

- Keep weekend clear for spontaneous work bursts
- No meetings during prime hyperfocus time (10am-2pm)
- When it hits, cancel everything and ride it
- Don't feel guilty about "uneven" work patterns

Some days I work 2 hours. Some days 10 hours. Average is 6-7. That's fine.

AUTOMATE THE BORING

ADHD + repetitive tasks = never getting done.

What I automated:

- Invoice generation and sending
- Project tracking updates
- Client email responses (templates)
- Social media posting
- Expense tracking

If it's boring and repetitive, automate it or delegate it. Your brain won't do it consistently.

PROTECTING YOUR ADHD BRAIN

THE 40-HOUR LIMIT

I work max 40 hours weekly. Not 60. Not 80.

Why? **ADHD brains burn out faster.**

Sustained focus drains us more than neurotypical people. What takes them 50 hours of stamina takes us 40 hours of intense mental effort.

Honor that. 40 hours max. No guilt.

THE NOVELTY BUDGET

ADHD craves novelty. Budget for it:

- Work from different locations weekly
- Try new tools/approaches each project
- Learn new skills each month
- Vary your routine deliberately

This isn't distraction. This is maintenance. Your brain needs variety to function.

THE REST PROTOCOL

When your brain says "I can't focus today":

- Don't fight it
- Don't feel guilty
- Do low-energy tasks
- Or rest

ADHD isn't laziness. Sometimes your brain needs to recharge. Let it.

THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH ABOUT ADHD ENTREPRENEURSHIP

You will:

- Start projects you don't finish
- Have uneven productivity days
- Hyper-focus on "wrong" tasks sometimes
- Struggle with boring-but-necessary work
- Feel like everyone else has it together and you're faking it

That's not failure. That's ADHD.

The difference between successful ADHD founders and unsuccessful ones isn't "overcoming" ADHD.

It's building a business that works WITH your brain, not against it.

My system isn't about fixing ADHD. It's about leveraging it:

- Hyperfocus = superpower for deep work
- Novelty-seeking = great at client variety
- Pattern recognition = good at systems thinking
- Constraint-driven = ships fast
- Interest-based = passionate about work

You don't need to be neurotypical to succeed. You need to stop trying to be.

THE RESULTS OF WORKING WITH MY BRAIN

Before (trying to be "normal"):

- Started 20+ projects, finished 2
- Felt guilty constantly
- Burned out every 3 months
- Thought I was lazy/broken
- Couldn't maintain consistency
- Revenue: \$0

After (embracing ADHD):

- Started 5 projects, finished 3 (60% vs 10%)
- Feel proud of output
- Sustainable pace
- Understand my brain works differently
- Consistency through systems, not willpower
- Revenue: \$15K MRR

Same person. Same brain. **Different approach.**

THE PERMISSION YOU NEED

You're allowed to:

- Work in sprints, not steady state
- Pick interesting tasks first
- Need variety to stay engaged
- Have uneven productivity
- Build systems that honor your brain
- Not work like neurotypical people

Your ADHD isn't a problem to solve. It's an operating system to optimize.

WANT THE COMPLETE ADHD FOUNDER TOOLKIT?

Join the Amalfi AI Mentorship: \$97 one-time

- 3-item daily planning template
- Energy-based task lists
- Hyperfocus capture system
- Dopamine hack checklist
- Project sprint frameworks
- Accountability partnership guide

- ADHD-friendly business models analysis

www.amalfiai.com/mentorship

You've reached the end of all 10 PDFs. If you read all of these, you have everything you need to build a \$15K+ MRR AI solutions business. Stop reading. Start building.