

# **THE ADHD FOUNDER PLAYBOOK**

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

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## 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](http://www.amalfiai.com/mentorship)**

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