

# OPTIMIZING OPERATIONS

TO BUILD A HYPER-EFFICIENT FIRM

Best Practices Guidebook



# Optimizing Operations

Leveraging your time and resources is incredibly powerful. The right technology working together will exponentially leverage your time, streamline your operations and skyrocket your productivity, while the “wrong” technology becomes one more thing for you to manage. Solid systems and tried-and-true technology are the methods that will help you maximize both your time and effort, and allow you to seamlessly scale as you grow. Implementing systems also will ensure consistent high-quality service and interactions, for everyone from team members to referral sources and prospects to clients.

As you begin adjusting your systems and tech to allow for scale, it’s important to pause and ask integral questions (like where are we and where are we going?), before moving into the process of building solid systems. The below 3-step process below will ensure successful adoption of new systems and tech, and also be helpful in insuring they integrate well with your current systems.

## What are your **SYSTEMS & TECH** today?

Use these 3 tools to assess:



**BUSINESS SYSTEMS INVENTORY**




**TECH STACK TEMPLATE**



**TECH STACK INTEGRATION**

## Evaluate which **IMPROVEMENTS & NEW SYSTEMS** to implement

### PRIORITIZE CHANGES BASED ON:

-  Easiest to do
-  Highest Value to Clients
-  Biggest Pain Point
-  Greatest Return



## Build into your **ANNUAL LAUNCH PLAN**



# Systems & Tech Best Practices

Your primary goal initially is to simplify and standardize your operations. Figure out WHAT gets done (really). After you ask yourself this question, you will need to commit to systematizing and specializing your people and technology along the way, with an end goal being an automated system. The process of automating your practice may seem daunting, but the following questions and steps will help you maximize your time and energy as you move through the process.

## ESTABLISH A TECHNOLOGY AND SYSTEMS REVIEW PROCESS

Reviewing your systems and tech should be a function of your business and an ongoing part of your annual business review. Include the steps outlined below as you review and develop your strategic plan to refine your technology and systems annually.



### 1. WHERE ARE YOUR SYSTEMS & TECH TODAY?

First, identify what technology you currently are using today. Use the Tech Stack Quiz to assess and map out what technology you already have implemented. This will help you recognize where you are on the tech scale, from an old school “Leader of the Luddites” (few systems and limited tech) to progressive “Tech Savvy Rockstar” (fully leveraging systems and tech and early adopters), as well as whether you have too much or too little tech.

Next, evaluate if you have the critical systems in place to succeed. Use the Simple Systems Template to determine what systems need to be developed, as well as ensure a consistent checklist is followed when creating them.

Remember that it is important to build a system for your systems as well. A tool like the Business Systems Inventory or Asana will allow you to track your existing systems. Remember to keep the system as simple as possible, assign clear owners, look for potential breakdowns, involve your team and commit to it.



### 2. EVALUATE & PRIORITIZE IMPROVEMENTS & CHANGES

After you have reviewed your current systems and tech, use your Tech Stack to identify gaps and holes in your core systems and how they integrate with one another to locate areas for new tech growth. Prioritize changes based on what is easiest to do, delivers the highest value to clients, will yield the greatest return and will eliminate your biggest pain points. Make sure any new systems you choose to focus on will integrate well with your existing tech and processes.

For technology, be sure to review core technologies like CRM, scheduling, document management, investment and portfolio management, financial planning and file storage and sharing.

Next, evaluate core business systems like scheduling, client processes, client meetings, team meetings and communication, operations workflows, and your annual launch plan process.

Let entrepreneur Dan Sullivan’s mantra, “Who, Not How,” guide you as you assign processes and look for systems that will be a natural fit when paired with the correct team member. Remember, involvement equals investment. Allow employees to have a deeper understanding of the purpose of their job and how their work impacts others by being involved in the change process.



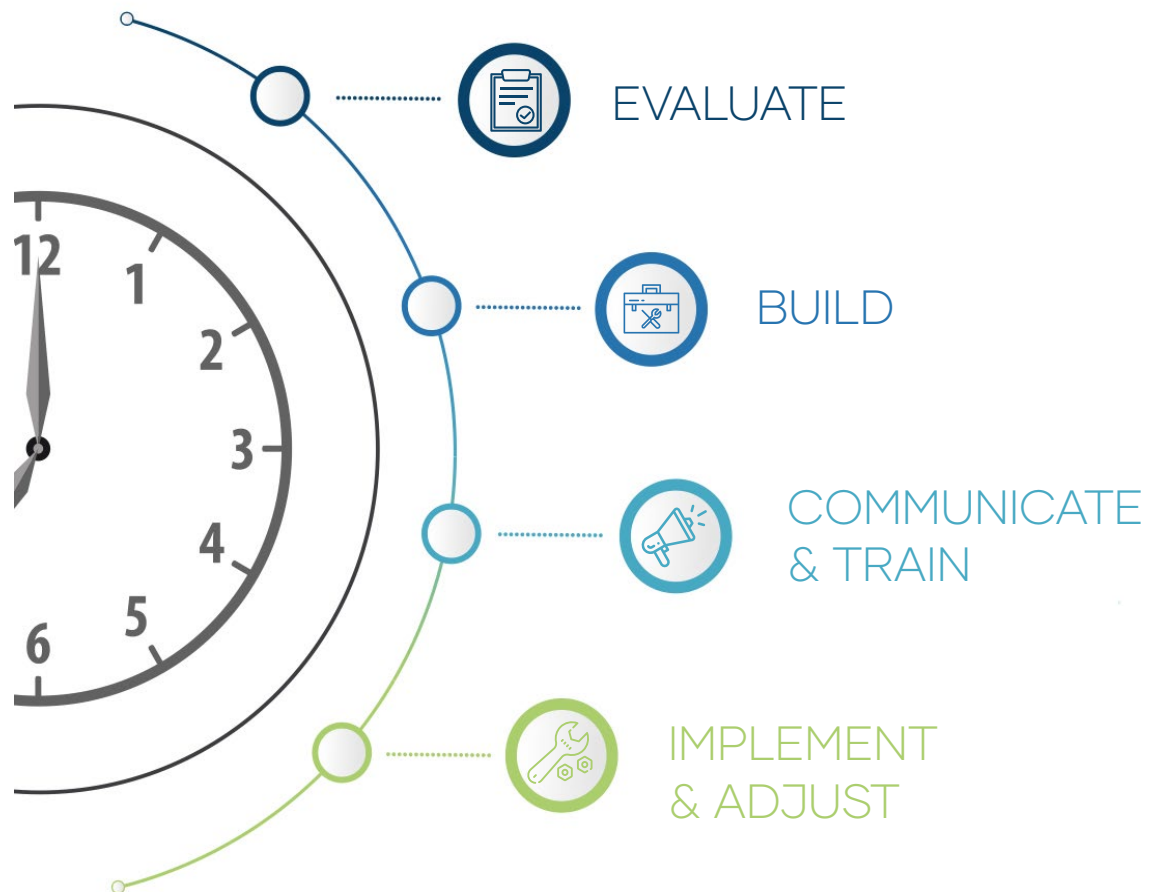


### 3. BUILD INTO YOUR ANNUAL LAUNCH PLAN

Successfully moving through the process of identifying where you are today, prioritizing improvements and changes, and then building those into your 1-Page Business Plan will allow you to create systems that will serve you well. Reviewing technology and systems annually will keep your systems and tech from getting stale and, instead, allow it to grow and develop as you do.

#### BUILDING SYSTEMS AND TECH

Once you have identified your priorities for which new tech and systems to implement, follow the 4-step process below to put it into place. This will ensure successful, smooth adoption of new tech and systems and allow for flexibility along the way:



#### EVALUATE

As you evaluate, take time to figure out what is getting in your way. What works and what doesn't? It's likely that improving your business process will involve changing existing systems, teams or processes, so prepare for any additional business changes (ex. acquiring new software or hiring a new team member). Asking the right questions upfront as you build your system will help you ensure you are prepared for changes and avoid the overwhelm of a "new system avalanche".





### WHAT'S THE GOAL?

- What am I solving for?
- Is there a better way?
- Will it change my life?
- If I had no other choice...?
- What are my limiting beliefs?



### HOW IS THE CURRENT SYSTEM WORKING?

- How is it serving me?
- What's working?
- Where do we get frustrated?
- What are the bottlenecks?
- Which steps require the most time, cause the most delay?



### WHAT SHOULD THE NEW SYSTEM DO?

- What are the benefits?
- What is MVP?
- How does it integrate with other systems?
- Will it change my life?
- What's the ROI?



## BUILD

As you build your system, create a plan, map it out and then integrate. Extremely important to this process is creating clear ownership. This means detailing who is responsible, what their task is, by when, and the materials they will need to be successful.



## COMMUNICATE & TRAIN

We all know that change is not always easy. Even leaders can be resistant to it, especially when it involves changing a process that we have been using for some time. We can use tools such as the Change Curve, Clear Habits Journal or Kotter's 8-Step Change Model to overcome resistance to change. When sharing changes with a team, remember to:

- Share motivation & purpose
- Set expectations
- Define success measurements
- Hold accountability check-ins

It can be helpful to resolve concerns up front with direct questions such as, "It sounds like you are concerned about XYZ. What could we do to eliminate or mitigate that concern?"



## IMPLEMENT & ADJUST

It can be tempting to simply put a new process into place and expect smooth sailing. Instead, continually adjust, asking probing questions like, "Where did this go wrong?" and "Show me the holes." Successfully implementing new systems in a process...but one that is worth the effort!



# Optimizing Operations Resources

The below are some of the available processes, worksheets and samples you can implement to maximize your time and manage your systems & technology.

EDITABLE VERSIONS ARE AVAILABLE.

### Example Process

**WEEKLY TEAM MEETING PROCESS: SAMPLE**

Owner: CSA  
 Description: Process for preparing for, conducting and following up after weekly team meeting  
 Meeting date: Every Monday at 10 - 11 a.m.

ACTION STEP	WHO	BY WHEN
1 Update the Weekly Team Meeting Agenda in preparation for Monday meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add any weekly win or shout out, these can be your own or for someone else</li> <li>Update the status to reflect if a priority is Green = On track, Yellow = Issues to discuss, Red = Significant issues deadline in jeopardy</li> <li>Each team member adds their most critical issue for discussion to Top Issues and remaining issues to Remaining Issues</li> </ul>	Team Members	End of day Friday

### Simple Systems Template 1

**PROCESS TITLE**

Owner: Insert Owner  
 Description: Insert brief description  
 Timing/Freq: Insert details regarding timing or frequency  
 Other: Add additional information or items here, delete if not needed

**SECTION TITLE / HEADING**

- For processes that have specific steps, insert action step which should include who is responsible, when it occurs, and what's needed to complete the steps.

**SECTION TITLE / HEADING**

- For processes where you are including information or details, but specific steps are not followed, use bullets to:
  - Add any relevant details or sub-steps here

**SECTION TITLE / HEADING**

- For processes that are designed as checklists, use checkboxes.
  - Add any relevant details or sub-steps here

At the bottom of your process, include a process forms list with necessary additional tools.

**PROCESS FORMS LIST**

- Insert form title here
- Insert form title here

## Tech Stack TEMPLATE

USE THE BELOW CATEGORIES TO IDENTIFY YOUR CORE AND ADDITIONAL TECHNOLOGIES. THE BELOW TECH ARE STANDARD, BUT NOT ALL ENCLUSIVE. AS YOU EVALUATE YOUR SYSTEMS AND FIND ONES NOT INCLUDED HERE, SIMPLY ENTER A NEW CATEGORY AND NAME. LOOK FOR HOLES AND GAPS TO HELP DETERMINE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

CORE TECHNOLOGY	ADDITIONAL TECHNOLOGY
CATEGORY: TECH	CATEGORY: TECH
CLIENT FILE SHARING & HOSTING	INTERNAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CRM	INTEGRATION TECHNOLOGY
COMPLIANCE EMAIL & SOCIAL MEDIA ARCHIVING	NOTE-TAKING & WRITING
CUSTODIAN	PASSWORD MANAGEMENT
DOCUMENT CREATION & MGMT	SOCIAL MEDIA
FINANCIAL PLANNING	VIDEO RECORDING
EMAIL PLATFORM	WEB FORM / SURVEYS
EMAIL MARKETING PLATFORM	OTHER
EMAIL HOSTING	
eSIGNATURE	
ONLINE SCHEDULER	
PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT (BILLING & PERFORMANCE REPORTING)	
RISK TOLERANCE	
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE MEETING	
WEBSITE HOSTING	

### BUSINESS SYSTEMS INVENTORY

Instructions: Update to include the business systems in your firm. Then, for each business system, identify the current status (red, yellow, green), process owner, review frequency, process update, target date and the last updated date. For descriptions of each of these, select the title cell. Use this tool to identify projects to include as upcoming business initiatives to be completed.

Business System	Description	Area	Status	Process Owner	Review Frequency	Target Date	Last Updated
Vision & Goals	Process to establish strategic vision and tactical goals for the firm.	Position: Strategy	●		Annually: November		
Strategic Planning	Process to set strategic priorities for the firm.	Position: Strategy	●		Annually: November		
Business Plan Blueprint	Process to define the business model and business strategy for the future.	Position: Strategy	●		Annually: November		
System for regular		Position: Strategy	●		Quarterly, 1st Mo.		
		Packaging: Brand	●		3 years		
		Packaging: Brand	●		3 years		
		Packaging: Brand	●		3 years		
		Packaging: Brand	●		2 years		
		Promotion:	●				

## Tech Stack Integration TEMPLATE

USE THE FOLLOWING AS A STARTING POINT TO MAP YOUR CORE TECH INTEGRATIONS. MISSING AN ITEM? USE THE SAMPLE BOX ON THE FAR LEFT TO ADD IN ANY ADDITIONAL SYSTEMS YOU MAY HAVE. FINALLY, ADJUST THE ARROWS TO REFLECT THE INTEGRATIONS BETWEEN YOUR TECHNOLOGY.

