

# Focus Habits for COOs Playbook



**Structuring Deep-Work Blocks and Focus Habits  
for COOs and Their Teams**

# Overview:

Here's what we'll cover in this playbook:

## Focus Habits For COOs Playbook



# Introduction:

As an operations executive you're juggling endless demands - meetings, escalations, decisions, team handoffs. The challenge isn't just doing more, it's doing the right work with clarity and sustained focus. That's why structuring deep-work blocks and focus habits becomes a strategic imperative, not a luxury. Drawing from the productivity thinking of Prasanth Nair at Double Gemini and the operational realities you face, this article shows how to design your time and attention for high impact.

Deep work, in this context, means blocks of time you protect for high-value thinking: process redesign, strategic priorities, capability building, future blocking. It's the opposite of firefighting. It requires structure, boundaries, and habits. For COOs and operations leaders, this means moving beyond "when I have time" to "this time is reserved".

# Section 1: Understanding Your Current Focus Patterns

How Do You Do Your Best Thinking?

**Write down short answers to the following:**

1. When do you do your best thinking? Describe when, environment, your state of mind.
2. What currently causes the most interruptions?
3. What types of work require deep thinking for your role?
4. How often do you protect time for strategic work?

► **Want to better understand Deep Thinking and How to Get Into The Zone?**

Watch Prasanth Nair's presentation to COO Forum here: [Into The Zone](#)

## Section 2: Mapping Your Focus Drains

Learn How To Recognize Interruptions and Its Effects On Your Thinking

**Check all that apply:**

### **Attention Drains**

- ☐ Constant inbox checks
- ☐ Slack/Teams notifications
- ☐ Back-to-back meetings
- ☐ Escalations without context
- ☐ Lack of clarity before tasks begin
- ☐ Multitasking
- ☐ Ambiguous priorities

### **Energy Drains**

- ☐ Long days without breaks
- ☐ High cognitive load
- ☐ Fatigue or poor sleep
- ☐ Too many decisions

## Section 3: Designing Your Focus Architecture

Be Deliberate In Developing the Ideal Focus Environment

**Your weekly deep-work layout:**

**Fill in your ideal times:**

Monday: \_\_\_\_\_

Tuesday: \_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday: \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday: \_\_\_\_\_

Friday: \_\_\_\_\_

**Focus space set-up ideas:**

- Noise-cancelling headphones
- Closed-door workspace
- Offline mode
- Cleared desk
- Close all non-essential tabs and tools
- Presession planning notes

## Section 4: Building Focus Habits

Increasing Deep-Thinking Time Requires Action

**Chose 2-3 habits to strengthen this month:**

- ☐ Review priorities before email
- ☐ Begin each deep-work block with a clear objective
- ☐ Set escalation expectations with your team (your “Do Not Disturb unless...” rule).
- ☐ Protect one “no-meetings” hour per day
- ☐ Batch similar tasks together
- ☐ End the day with a shutdown checklist
- ☐ Limit decision-making windows to reduce interruptions
- ☐ Use a “parking lot” to capture unrelated thoughts

► **Want to learn how to achieve a zero-message inbox?**  
**Take the Stack Method training here: [Stack Method](#)**

# Section 5: Team Focus Standards

Creating Focus Habits Is a Team Effort

**Use this section to define norms across your operations team**

1. What should deep-work time look like for the team?
2. What requires an immediate interruption and what does not?
3. How should escalations be structured? (Context + Options + Recommendation)
4. What are your standard “no-meeting” time blocks?
5. What email standards have you set that limit “copy-all” or other unnecessary interruptions?



## Section 6: Weekly Focus Review

Measure Your Progress Against Your Goals

**Complete at the end of each week:**

1. How many deep-work time blocks did you protect this week?
2. What disrupted your focus?
3. What high-value output came from your deep-work time?
4. How well did your team do protecting deep-work time?
5. How well did the escalation process work?
6. What adjustments are needed for you and your team?

## Conclusion: **Why This Matters To COOs**

When you shift from firefighting mode to structured deep-work mode, your capacity changes. You move from reacting to designing. You create systems rather than just rescuing them. You give your team space to lead. The ripple effects are significant: fewer crises, clearer priorities, stronger delegation, improved metrics, and sustainable execution.

Over time, this shift compounds. Your calendar becomes a strategic asset, not a constraint. Decisions improve because they're made with context, not urgency. Your organization becomes more resilient because it's built on intentional systems rather than heroic effort. This isn't about doing less -it's about doing the right work at the right altitude, so operations can scale without pulling you back into the weeds.