



VIRTUALGURUS
We're your people.



The 5 Fs of Productivity

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Time is your most precious resource. Getting smarter about how you spend it is the best way to power up your productivity and achieve (or surpass) your goals. If you master the concepts in this e-book, we guarantee you'll end up working less, accomplishing more and helping others grow — all while crushing your goals!

How do you get there? Cultivate the 5 Fs of productivity:

- Focus
- Fight
- Filter
- Forge
- reFresh

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Focus on the right things and delegate the rest.

The first 'F' is for **focusing** your time on only the highest value activities. Everything else should be outsourced or delegated.

The definition of high value tasks will be different for everyone, but they usually have one or more of these characteristics:

- Produce the highest impact or ROI
- Require your personal expertise
- Carry significant legal or financial risk

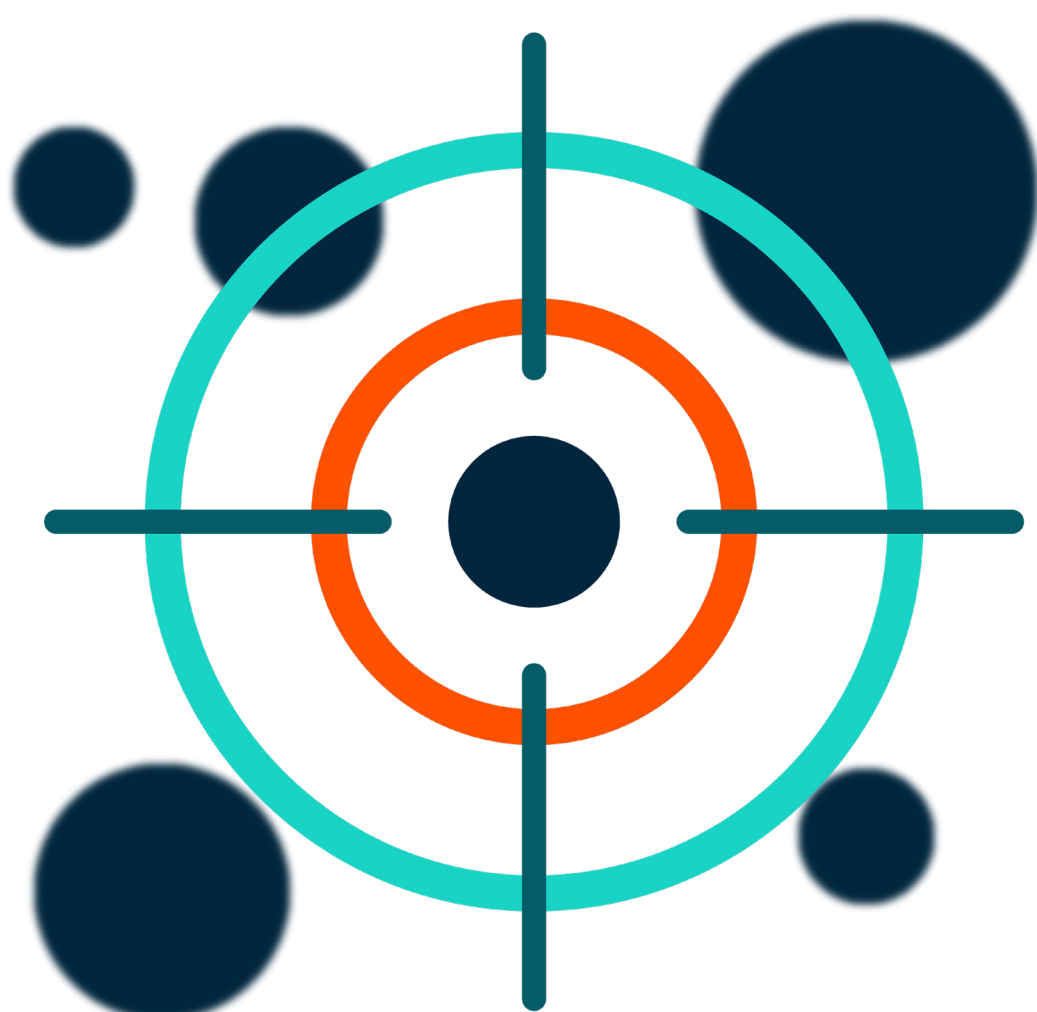
Examples of high value activities for leaders and business owners include:

- Strategy and planning
- Business development
- Talent development
- Process improvement

What kinds of things should you delegate? Tasks that have one or more of the following characteristics should be handed off to others:

- Time consuming
- Recurring or repetitive
- Hate doing
- Not good at doing

Whenever possible, delegate tasks like the ones listed below to a team member or virtual assistant. A part-time **virtual assistant** is an especially cost-effective solution, since you pay only for the hours you need without the overhead of a staff hire.



Tasks to consider outsourcing or delegating:

- data entry
- email and calendar management
- event planning
- research
- proofreading
- minute-taking and distribution
- transcription
- appointment booking / outbound calling
- travel arrangements
- bookkeeping
- social media management

Delegation: Why it's worth mastering

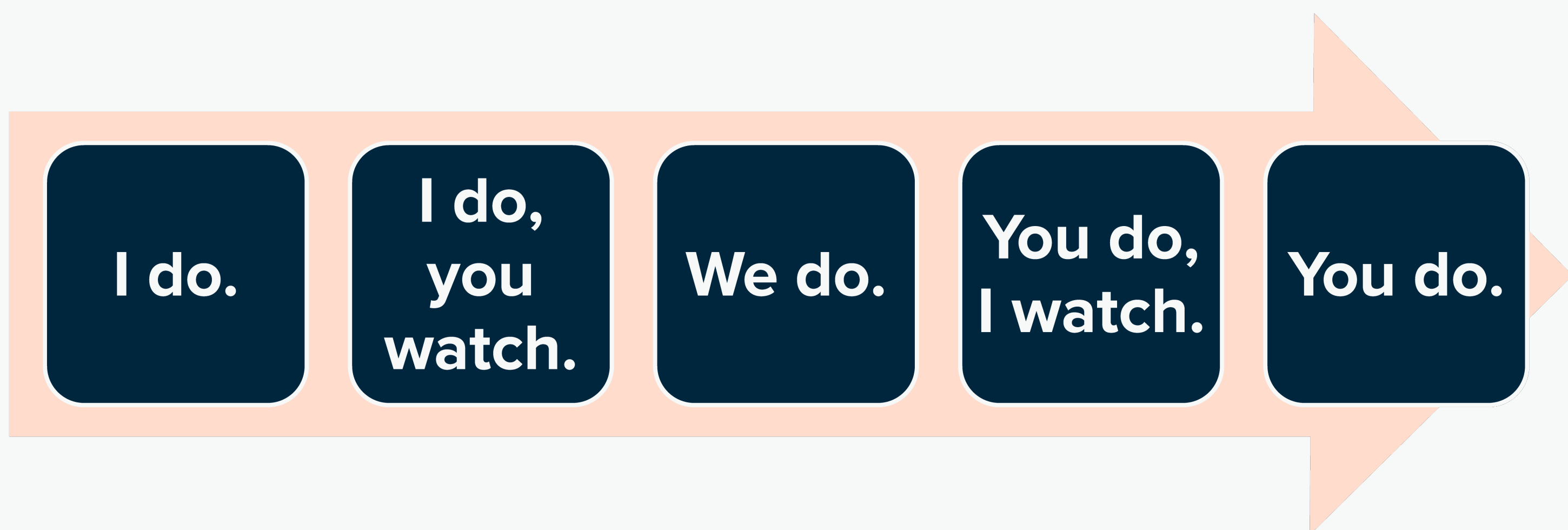
If delegation is new to you, it might be challenging at first to trust your projects to someone else. You may worry that their output won't be up to your standards, and you'll have to invest some time upfront to train them.

But the payoff can be tremendous. The time you save will free up your capacity to concentrate on high-impact projects that will move your business forward. Embracing delegation will also build trust, provide others with growth opportunities and set the tone that efficiency matters.

Tips for delegating effectively

1. We recommend following the classic 5-step delegation process (see diagram) when assigning a new or complex task, or when onboarding a new assistant. You can skip steps or condense the process when the person you're delegating to has some familiarity or experience with the tasks you're assigning.
2. Develop a training and logistics plan, including arrangement of any account setups and access to all necessary files and resources.
3. Communicate effectively, including clear instructions, deadlines, quality expectations, associated goals and relevant context (the 'why' behind the tasks).
4. Follow up with regular check-ins to answer questions, check progress and course-correct where necessary.
5. Make delegating part of your routine. As you work, watch out for tasks you can hand off. With enough practice, delegation will become second nature.

Delegation Flow Chart



Fight

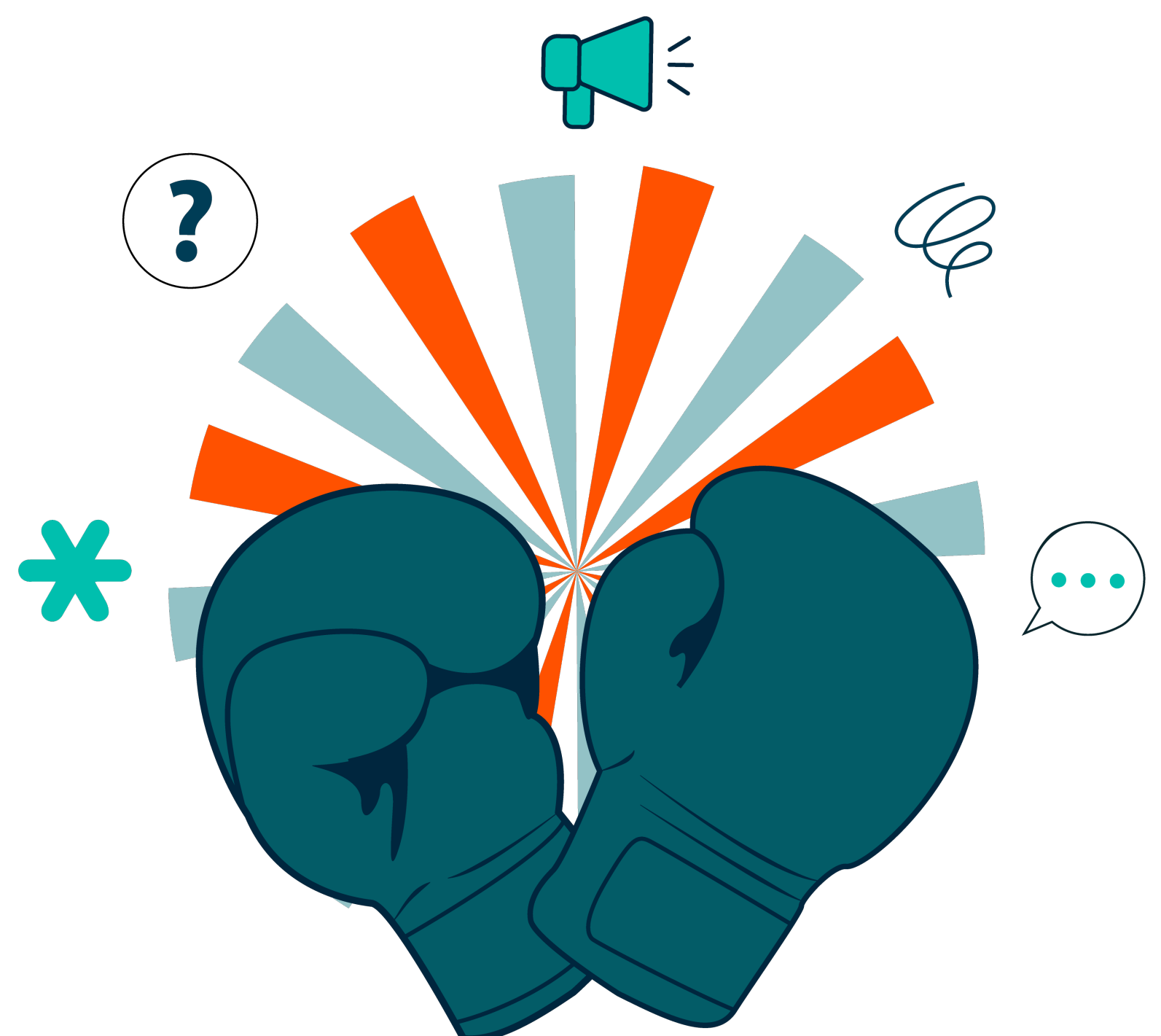
Fight distractions.

Distractions are everywhere: smartphones, social media, a barrage of advertisements in every medium, emails, instant messages, open office environments, walk-by traffic and more. When you stop what you're doing to respond to interruptions, your brain has to do something called context switching, a well-documented productivity killer.

That's why **fighting** the urge to give into unproductive distractions is our second 'F'. While you can't ignore every distraction, you can control how and when you respond to them.

5 strategies for fighting distractions:

1. Consider **timeboxing**: scheduling blocks of time in your calendar to work on important projects.
2. Mute smartphone and desktop notifications during your scheduled work blocks.
3. Limit when and how often you check email; don't let your inbox dictate your day. Get in the habit of addressing your inbox just one to three times per day.
4. If your colleagues tend to drop by or message frequently, consider setting drop-in hours for all non-urgent conversations.
5. Delegate distractions. For example, if you receive a high volume of emails, it might be worth delegating the task of triaging your inbox to an admin or **virtual assistant**.



Filter

Filter content mindfully.

Our third ‘F’ goes deeper on how to handle content-based distractions. Whether it’s through your social feeds, email inbox, streaming services, websites, or even old-fashioned print publications, you’re regularly lured into consuming content by enticing headlines. Unfortunately, many of those headlines lead to mediocre information with little – if any – real value.

Get disciplined about **filtering** through those content enticements by starting an ‘information diet.’ Carefully select and curate the content you consume, keeping these principles in mind:

1. Don’t read or watch solely to be entertained. Consume content to enhance your skills, get inspired, become informed or feed your soul. Focus exclusively on information that will help you get closer to your goals.
2. Limit the number of times you view social media, and turn off app notifications.
3. Block time in your calendar to read, watch or listen. If you commute, use that time.



Forge a custom routine.

We're all wired differently, with our own motivators, sensitivities and biological clocks. Take some time to understand your own circuitry and then **forge** a routine that's optimal for you.

1. Know when your productivity peaks tend to be (early mornings, later afternoons?), and schedule your workday around them. This might require working with your team or leader to allow for flexible work schedules.
2. Understand the environmental factors that improve or detract from your productivity — things like background noise, the amount or quality of light or the comfort of your chair. Create or seek out an optimal environment for you.
3. Give yourself deadlines, if they motivate you.
4. Use your calendar for everything. Let it double as a to-do list by scheduling times to work on specific tasks or projects.
5. Share your calendar with your team. This can give you added incentive to deliver.



Prioritize a reFresh.

Society often glorifies the concept of working hard. But too much work without balance and rest takes a heavy toll in the form of stress and fatigue, which actually decreases productivity.

Although it seems contradictory, taking enough time to rest and **refresh** will make you more creative, efficient and productive when you *are* working.

How to stay fresh

1. **Forget FOMO, seek JOMO – the Joy of Missing Out.** Let someone else lead a project. Practice saying no if your plate is already full. Take breaks from tech, and especially social media. You'll be surprised at how little you miss these things.
2. **Spend time on stress-relieving activities throughout the week.** Whether it's exercise, meditation, music, crafting or spending time with your family or pets, make time for pursuits that help you unwind and forget about work. Consider including both solo and group activities where you can connect with others in meaningful ways.
3. **Take real weekends and vacations.** A change of scenery can be powerful — many people get their best ideas while they're away from the office! Strive to completely avoid work on weekends (or whatever your days off are), and use all of your vacation time. Again, pause notifications and avoid checking work messages on these days. When you're off work, ensure you're really off work.
4. **Have some fun during your breaks.** Playful activities stimulate the brain's learning receptors and help you combine ideas in new ways.





Putting it all together.

Let's get productive!

Focus, Fight, Filter, Forge, and reFresh. If you master the 5 Fs, not only will you amplify your productivity and success, you'll feel happier and more energetic. And by mastering the art of delegation, you'll create opportunities for others to grow and shine.

You won't get there overnight, so give yourself some time. Start small, focusing on one tip at a time. Once that habit becomes second nature, layer in the next one. Keep up the discipline and you'll be rocketing towards your goals in no time!



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Ready to get going on F #1 - Focus?

Let us match you with the perfect *virtual assistant* so you can start delegating now.

[Get Started](#)