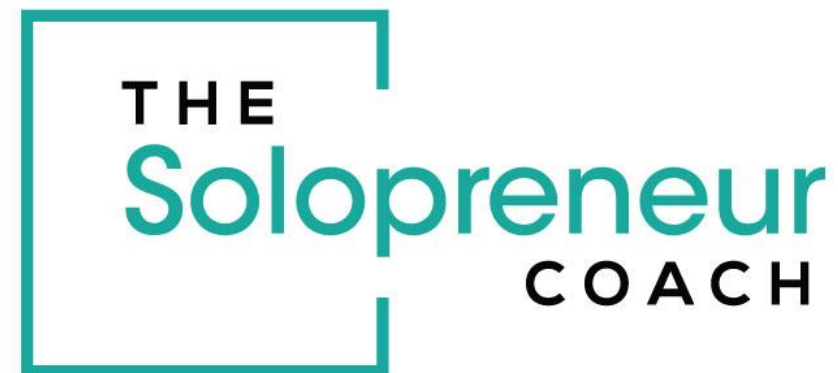


FREE CHEATSHEET

**10 WAYS
TO
REDUCE
BUSINESS
OVERWHELM**



“Experiencing business overwhelm
is common for most **solopreneurs**
and **small business owners**,
so you're not alone!”

As Small Business Owners we're **particularly vulnerable to experiencing overwhelm**. We're often building and running our businesses in isolation or with limited support (especially in the early years). The 10 tips outlined below are the practices that I've implemented both personally and with clients to **successfully reduce business overwhelm**.

Implementing these strategies will help you to:

Feel calmer

Have a clear sense of your priorities, and

Feel more in control

So, let's get started!

1

Do a time audit

When you're in overwhelm there can be a tendency to **want to keep working** and a **feeling that you can't stop** or take time out. This is actually a sign that you need to stop to assess the situation more objectively. **Start with a time audit.** Write down what you do every day for 1 week. You need to be specific, so use a spreadsheet or a calendar app that has days and times. Fill in every hour for a week. **Once you have completed the audit, take a look over the week.**

I'm sure there will be a few surprises, and this is *good*!

Here's what to look at in your time audit:

Review **what tasks you are spending your time on** and assess if certain tasks are taking too long. Did you take **breaks** and overall **how organised** did the week look? Ask yourself: *What outcomes did I achieve? What areas could work better? Can I batch tasks or delegate them?* eg. Put all your meetings on two days to free up the other days.

Aim to **implement these changes the following week.**

2

Know your top priorities

Not all tasks are of equal importance. You need to **discover your top 3 business priorities** and schedule those tasks in as the most important. Your top 3 business priorities or what I like to call ***Power Priorities***, are the **3 tasks or actions that will drive your business forward.** Start to schedule your Power Priorities first, then the remaining tasks. **Outsource what you can**, then **batch as many tasks as you can** and put them in your schedule.

3

Simplify

It's very easy as a Small Business Owner (SBO) to “**bite off more than you can chew**” so-to-speak. You want to build your business and you know what you should be doing. So there's a **natural tendency to just start taking action on all tasks at once**. But this is exactly what will perpetuate the business overwhelm. **Your challenge is to simplify and to pace yourself**. You can do this by only working on a **maximum of 2 major business goals per quarter**. More than 2 goals will split your focus and create a feeling of overwhelm. It will also **reduce your ability to achieve the outcomes**. Keep it simple so you can focus and achieve those 2 goals.

4

Become aware of your thinking

Are you aware of what you are thinking about your business? How do you feel about how it is functioning? Are you concerned about certain aspects of your business growth?

What you think creates *how you feel*.

How you feel, in turn, creates your behaviours.

And your behaviours create your results.

So, what you're thinking determines your results.

It therefore makes sense to **become more aware of what is going on in your mind**. You can do this by simply **stopping and reflecting**. Create a **regular practice of reflection (or review, if you prefer that term)**. Write out your thoughts about what is happening in your business, including how you're feeling. If you're not a natural writer or don't feel comfortable with the writing process, just answer two questions:

What were my thoughts about my work this week?

What do I think is working well?

The process of writing your thoughts down is beneficial in two major ways. Firstly, you become aware of the thoughts you have and how these are **creating your current view of your business**. Secondly, it creates space between the thoughts and yourself. **It's easier to see your thoughts more objectively when they are written down.** You can look at them and **decide if they are helping you or hindering you.** Just becoming aware of your thoughts and noticing how they affect you, will **create a shift in awareness** that will **improve how you manage your mind** and in turn your business overwhelm.

5

Know your human brain's natural responses

The process of **building your business involves change and growth**, two things that our **human brains naturally resist**. It's important to understand this and the role that your mind has in perpetuating overwhelm.

When you require your mind to do new things **it requires a lot more cognitive effort than doing the same thing** you did yesterday. Your **human brain doesn't like this** because it requires more energy and it is unfamiliar (which it interprets as a threat). **You must expect that your brain will resist change** and accept it as part of the process in creating something new.

Ever created a new habit? Do you remember how much resistance came up? This **resistance can take the form of stressful thoughts** such as *"I don't know what I'm doing"*, or *"I can't do this"*. You may find that you **want to procrastinate** or that you're generally **experiencing uncomfortable feelings more often**.

It's important to understand that this natural human resistance is **normal and it's universal**.

It is *not* a sign of personal failing, but a universal challenge that can be managed and overcome.

6

Create focus

In order to stop your mind from going into this default mode of alerting you to the perils of change, you need to **create focus for your mind**. The best way to create focus for your mind is to **set SMART goals and make a plan for them**. You can then focus your mind on each bite-size step, which will instantly reduce the overwhelm. Breaking your SMART goals into smaller steps also **allows you to see your progress**. You will **feel more relaxed and confident** knowing that you have a plan and are walking a specific path towards your goal.

7

Slow down

When you experience business overwhelm, a natural reaction is often to **try and get out of it as soon as possible**. After all, we all want to avoid pain and discomfort. This can mean that you try and **rush tasks to get them all done**, in the hope that you will **then be able to relax** and experience some relief. However, in reality, that relief is short-lived.

You need a long-term, sustainable approach to business overwhelm.

A crucial step in establishing this is **learning to slow down**. This **can feel counter-intuitive** to SBO's who naturally have a deep sense of drive (believe me I know, I've been guilty of this). It feels more natural to want to push forward, to get things done, create outcomes. But the key learning here is that **you can still move forward in a focused manner without rushing**.

How? As you work on each outcome, make sure you **focus only on one task at a time**. Do not multi-task. Allow yourself **time to be truly present with the task**. This will create **more engagement** and dare I say it, **more joy in the process**. It will **feel more rewarding and reduce the business overwhelm**. Win, win I say!

8

Get support

The path of many SBO's can be rocky and winding. It's good to have people on board with you to **provide support in those challenging times**. I like the idea of creating **3 pillars of support**.

For example:

1. your partner or a family member;
2. a close friend who doesn't work in your industry; and
3. a coach or mentor.

You can chat about what's challenging, how you're feeling and share the wins as well. A **coach can offer specific and strategic support** as you navigate your way with your business. They will be a **neutral sounding board** and a great **resource of support, providing tools** to help you overcome any roadblocks. Having a mentor within your industry can also provide you with a **place to turn to for advice**. You can certainly use both and I would recommend that you do so.

9

Create specific outcomes

Business overwhelm often sets in when we sense that we're **working excess hours without getting the results we want**. If you're experiencing this, it could be that you're **doing too many things** or that you are **not creating specific outcomes within specific time frames**.

For every task you do, you should **create a specific outcome, before you start working on the task**. eg. Goal: Writing a book or program. Your task might be to write for 1 hour each day. This however **does not articulate a specific outcome**. What will you have at the end of the hour?

Set a specific outcome, such as to **complete 2 pages of writing within the hour**. This clearly indicates what you are aiming for in the hour and **allows you to easily assess if you've met the outcome or not**.

When you are clear on what you need to accomplish, the **task actually becomes easier**. Without specific outcomes you can work on writing a book or program (as per the example above) for an hour, but the result will vary. You may write 1 page or half a page. So is half a page good or not? Is that enough progress? You **won't feel like you're progressing if you don't set a specific outcome**. Using a specific outcome and experiencing the **feeling of accomplishment** will give you a sense of progression and **motivate you further**. These small wins will keep you going.

10

Practice self-care

Self-care is about looking after yourself in a way that **refuels your body and mind**. It's about engaging in nourishing and restorative activities. **We all have our own unique way re-energising ourselves**, so it's important to do what feels right for you personally, rather than what you think you *should* do.

I recommend choosing **3 different self-care practices** that you can **include in your routine** on a regular basis. Doing this will help you to **better manage your stress levels** and ensure that you **take time-out** from your business. Some examples of self-care practices include: spending time in nature, playing sport/working out, getting a massage/manicure, meditating, listening to music/podcasts, having "screen-free" days etc. The key is to include your 3 self-care practices in your schedule to **support your wellbeing** and in turn your **business performance**.

Stay in touch!

