

Jillian Flodstrom ([00:06](#)):

Today's guest is completely obsessed with productivity, automation and optimizing his time and income so he can learn on his terms. He has a variety of products where he shares his productivity system, self-improvement hacks, and the processes he uses to find and work with consulting clients. His website is visited by a hundred thousand plus people every month who wanna learn about productivity, business, and self-improvement. And on a side note, that's how I found him as well. But he offers a range of consulting services and helps businesses optimize their systems so they can scale and grow. In the last few years, he's helped over 400 one-on-one clients create more efficient businesses using the very best productivity and sales tools that we're gonna talk about today. Please welcome Paul Miners to the show. How are you?

Paul Minors ([00:53](#)):

Yeah, I'm great. Thank you. Thank you so much for having me today.

Jillian Flodstrom ([00:56](#)):

I'm excited to talk about this because you and I work together. I feel like we know each other, we have worked together on a sauna. Like, I'm just excited because there's so many things that people don't realize about project management and really how it can save you so much time and energy and mental energy more importantly, but just knowing that everything is organized. So tell us what your thoughts are about how products like Asana, Pipedrive, Zapier, how can they help our small businesses grow?

Paul Minors ([01:27](#)):

Yeah, I mean, so I love helping business owners who are, you know, struggling to keep their head above water. Maybe they're getting a bit sort of behind on some of their, their work. They're not keeping up with the demands that they have, or maybe they're finding, you know, I'd love to be able to increase my capacity, actually take on more projects, more clients, whatever it might be. But they're finding, they're hitting that ceiling. And the really, one of my, the most frustrating things I have to deal with is when a client maybe reaches out to work with us, but then says, I don't have the time to learn this. I don't have the time to sit down and figure this out. I'm so busy working in my business, I don't have the time to work on my business. And, and I guess like to your audience listening, that's, that's where you often need to start, is you need to start by making a commitment that, okay, despite how busy I am, if I'm going to improve my situation, if I'm going to increase my efficiency, it has to start with making some time.

Paul Minors ([02:22](#)):

Whether it's a few hours, one afternoon a week, to sitting down and working on your business, whether that's your systems or your marketing. But and just, and like I said, making that time to do that because it's only through stepping back that you're actually gonna be able to start to make some improvements to make your future life a little bit easier. That's what it's about, right, is like we wanna make it easier to work in your business so that you can grow and scale and take on more work. But it has to start with stepping back and, and putting some time, some time aside to do that.

Jillian Flodstrom ([02:53](#)):

Well, I think that brings up like a really good point about that theory of like, you have to slow down to speed up. Cause there there is a learning curve with any of this stuff, whether you are a seasoned user of your product, project management software or if you're just getting started. I mean, there's tons of stuff

that you can do. I always tell people that some of our systems could launch the space shuttle. We don't use them to their full capacity, but we could. And by slowing down, we definitely could use them for more things, probably more than we even realize. So for people that might be starting out, do you have to be super like tech savvy? I know that there's trading involved probably to get a baseline of these programs. What does that look like?

Paul Minors ([03:35](#)):

Yeah, I don't think you have to be super tech savvy. I mean, the good thing about most of these products like Asana, which is a project management tool, Pipedrive as a sales CRM, the reason we like using these two tools in particular is they are really user friendly. A lot of people can figure it out on their own with enough time. You know, you can watch the videos, I've got videos on YouTube. You can read the articles and things and there's, there's plenty you can figure out on your own. So you don't need to be super tech savvy. I think you just need to have that appetite, that willingness to learn and be able to put aside some time to, to put into it. The reason I have a business and, and you know, people approach me is that they say often, number one, I don't have time to figure it out on my own.

Paul Minors ([04:17](#)):

Yes, maybe I could go down the rabbit holes and I could spend three months trying to figure this out, but I'd rather work with an expert, somebody who's used the tool for a while, who can fast track my learning. It's like, think of me as a guide. We're going on an expedition. Maybe you can, if I give you a map and a compass, you might find the way that the the way to go, but you're gonna be much more, it's gonna be a more enjoyable journey if you, if you have a guide with you who's gonna be able to point out things that you might miss on your own. The other thing people often tell us is, look, actually I've been using this tool for years. We, we surprisingly get approached by businesses who are saying, we've, we've used Asana for a couple of years, but we've grown and we've realized, like you said, Jill, we're actually not getting everything out of the tool that we could. We know it could do a lot more, but we're probably scratching the service. So we need an expert who can look at what we're doing and help identify the opportunities to improve and use this better so that we can be more efficient. So that's the other thing that we help people with. So no, I don't think you have to be too tech savvy to get started, but there's often plenty of opportunity to learn the tool quicker or get more out of it if you work with an expert.

Jillian Flodstrom ([05:21](#)):

Well, and I think you're, you brought up a really good point is refining. I mean, there's so many things when we start using these new tools, whatever tool it might be, we use these tools and there's things that we can miss that, I mean, the things that you have shown us, I'm just like, oh my gosh, that's like huge, huge. And we would've never known that because we didn't have an expert to help us. So is there a certain point in people's business that you're like, okay, now's the time that you need to start using systems like this

Paul Minors ([05:54](#)):

Often earlier than you think <laugh>, because like I said, I think a lot of businesses they do experience that rapid growth. And then they get to a point where they realize, oh man, we, we actually can't take in on any more clients now. And now they're leaving revenue on the table because now they're trying to catch up and put systems in place to catch up and, and service that demand. W w while it's already too late one of the things I'm really happy that I did when I started my business is I, I started using Pipedrive from day one. And this was actually before I was a Pipedrive consultant. I was actually cuz I started my

business on the side. I was actually working a friend of mine at the time and I, I started with the Asana Consulting and I was just, just kind of finding my feet with that, doing some consulting hours on the side of my full-time job.

Paul Minors ([06:42](#)):

But Pipedrive was a c r m we were using in that business. I was kind of working in a bit of a sales role. We were using Pipedrive day-to-day and I thought, let me just start using Pipedrive for my business because, you know, I'm starting this business now. I wanna make sure that, you know, if this succeeds, if I grow and, and take this full-time, I want my c r m to have the details of every single client that I've worked with. I want it to be a complete history of my business from day one. And I'm really glad I made that decision cuz now here I am, like seven years later and Pipedrive literally I can, I can report on every single dollar of revenue that has come into my business through Pipedrive. It's a bit tricky if you try and implement a tool like a C R M later, you know, a couple of years up into your business and then it's you, you, you've sort of got this big hole in your data where you, you don't have a complete picture. So yes, I think starting earlier potentially with some of the tools before you run into that situation where it's like, oh, we can't grow or there's this big hole in my data, I'm missing important data that I can't see. Yeah, so earlier than you think, I think is what I would say <laugh>.

Jillian Flodstrom ([07:47](#)):

Is there anybody that shouldn't use them? Do you think there's a a time where you're like, yeah, this isn't the right fit?

Paul Minors ([07:52](#)):

Well, it depends on what you're trying to use the tool for. I had a conversation with a customer who was looking at pipe drive the other day and I think he wanted to use it mainly for tracking his salesperson's commissions. Like he has a E R P system and other tool, actually a different C R M that he uses, but he just wanted pipe drive for commissions. And I was sort of said to him like, I don't think pipe drive's right for you. Like maybe there's something simple you should be doing or maybe just doing some automation and putting your commissions into a spreadsheet or something. But signing up to Pipedrive, it sounds a bit overkill for what you're trying to do. You're using this, you're signing up to this quite powerful tool that's quite, that can do a lot, but you're already using A C R M if you just plow using it for this very small part, I would question whether you are using something that's overkill for what you actually need to do. So it's when we see people try and do something with tool that it's not really designed for or you're not gonna get full use out of the tool, that's when we question and say, Hey look, maybe this isn't right for you.

Jillian Flodstrom ([08:46](#)):

How soon do you see this investment? Because that's what it is, you know, it's an investment in time, it's an investment in money. How quickly do you typically see this payoff for businesses?

Paul Minors ([08:58](#)):

Yeah, I mean with the, on the Asana side of things, I mean it's, it's quite hard to quantify the ROI on something like Asana. But ultimately it is a tool that's designed to make you more efficient. You know, so if you have projects that you do again and again and again, I, you know, we really enjoy working with a client and saying, right, how do we set up a template that's gonna help you manage that process, that project, and rinse and repeat really quickly. And then once you start using Asana and, and, and basically

from your next project, I would hope we would see an improvement in how you are able to deliver and, and work on that project. Cuz if you've got sign a set up correctly, if it lays out here's all the steps we need to do, we basically have our standard operating procedure, our s o p, we now have that process basically outlined in Asana.

Paul Minors ([09:44](#)):

I would hope the next time you do the project, it's a little bit better, it's a little bit more efficient. Of course, you know, sometimes we refine these templates and every time the pro, I mean really every time you do a project or work with a client or whatever it is that you do, you should be trying to learn something. At least that's what we do in, in, in my business is especially with some of the more bespoke custom work that we do, we sort of think, you know, how would we, how could we have done that project better? And so we're always trying to improve with Pipedrive, you know, it's a little bit easier to quantify the R roi. I think if you quite quickly, you know, within a few weeks, if you can follow a few best practices in Pipedrive, I think you can, you'll notice a difference straight away.

Paul Minors ([10:23](#)):

One of the most common sales mistakes we see people make, not just in Pipedrive, but with ev every C R m is salespeople. And I might upset people here, but salespeople are, are notoriously lazy. You know, they're not very good at following up. And the thing I learned about Pipedrive very early on is the system encourages you, encourages you to always have some kind of next activity on your, your lead or your deal. So if I've sent you a quote or a proposal, I need to set myself a reminder to follow up and get, get some feedback on, do you have any questions? How do we proceed from here As a good salesperson, I should be proactively following up with you and Pipedrive, if you follow the recommended approach and you use the activities in Pipedrive, you are much less likely to let good opportunities fall through the cracks. That's something we hear all the time as we have all these leads, we're sending proposals, but stuff's getting forgotten about, we're not following up. So I think very quickly, if you use Pipedrive properly, you can be better at following up and you will close more deals and that's gonna directly impact your revenue and your bottom line.

Jillian Flodstrom ([11:24](#)):

Well, I think we all could use help with like follow up. I mean in, that's just in all aspects of our life. It's like if we had followed up more and people were like, oh yeah, I do need to do that, I need to get back to her about that. Yeah, it's just reaching out. I completely agree with you on that. People are,

Paul Minors ([11:41](#)):

People are busy, like people so, so often I think people actually thank me for following up. They say, thank you for following up, I've had just such a busy week, gimme till, gimme till Monday, I'll come back to you. Then they actually appreciate the follow up because they, they want your service. It's just a question of like, I just need to sit down and think about this or I'll come back to you with my questions. But people get busy in the day-to-day running of the business just like you are. So they a often people actually appreciate that follow up. It's quite funny.

Jillian Flodstrom ([12:07](#)):

I, you know, there are so many different things about these different programs that you work with. I know there's probably a ton of stuff that you could like, you know, talk about with each, within each one

of them. But what are your favorite things about Asana Pipe Drive, n Zapier? Like what are some things where you're like, this is my favorite thing about this tool, this is why I love it.

Paul Minors ([12:30](#)):

Yeah, with Asana, I think I just really like the my Tasks page, which is often a page that a lot of people don't use properly. I think I, maybe we've done, I can't remember, you had a call with Lindsay, didn't you? You might have spent some time on that. The, my tasks page for me, it's the place I go to when I log into Asana in the morning. I can, I can look at, here's everything I need to do that day and Asana tells me, this is what you need to do. Again, if you use the tool properly, the, you know, it depends on it, it, this is contingent on me putting due dates on my deals sorry, my tasks and deciding when do I wanna do this task? When do I wanna start, when is it due? So again, I have to use the tool properly, but if I do, I just log into Asana in the morning and it tells me what to do.

Paul Minors ([13:09](#)):

A bit like an assistant just saying, here's your agenda for the day, which is really nice. Same thing with Pipedrive, actually, here are the people you need to follow up with based on the previous reminders that I've set. You know, I always end a sales call by saying, Hey Jill, you know, when, when would be a good time for me to follow up with you? When should I give you a call? Oh, next Friday would be great, great, next Friday I open up Pipedrive, here's everyone you need to call that day. People you need to send a follow up email to. So that's what I like most is how the tool makes my life easier.

Jillian Flodstrom ([13:37](#)):

And is that the same thing too when you're, when you're working with someone new who's like, I'm really busy, which who isn't these days? How do you form those good habits of logging in every day, looking at everything re remembering to set those reminders? Is that just something that you've set aside time every day to form those good habits? Or do the tools help you with that as well?

Paul Minors ([13:59](#)):

Yeah, a bit of both. Yeah. The, the tool does remind you, like, the nice thing in Pipedrive is when I complete one activity, it instantly pops up this window to say, what's the next activity? So that, and that, that's a really nice philosophy that I've pulled into a sauna as well, is I really like how Pipedrive's always getting you to think, what do you need to do next? And so I actually do that with my clients as well. You know, when we have a call, I always think, like right now we've completed that call, what's next for this client? Is it booking another call? Is it, do they have some homework they need to do? So with every project or client that you're working with, thinking about like, what is that next action? And so yes, the tool can, to some degree remind you to, to set that at that next action. But the, this is where it does require a little bit of personal discipline as well to set the reminder and for you to be, you know, following a good best practice. And, and that's something that does get easier with time, just if you repeat that again and again. And so now for me it's just, it's very instinctive. I just do it automatically, but in the beginning it, it can take a bit of discipline to help form that habit.

Jillian Flodstrom ([15:00](#)):

Are there any things that you don't put Asana put in Asana? Or do you put everything is like your whole life inside Asana or is it just your business? How do you differentiate between the two? Or do you just use it for everything?

Paul Minors ([15:14](#)):

No, yeah, again, I use, I wanna use the tool for what it's designed for. So Asana is designed to manage my tasks on my work. Pipedrive is more for my sales reminders and the deals that I'm pursuing. Something that wouldn't go in Asana would be like, you know, either notes that aren't related to a task or project. So I use, I'm on a Mac, I use Apple Notes. Sometimes I just wanna jot down some ideas or even just, just journaling. I, I use apple Notes as a bit of a, a digital journal. Those are the kinds of things where, because those notes aren't actionable, they're not really related to a task or a project that I'm doing. If they were, they would go into a sauna of course, but because they're not, I can just put random miscellaneous notes into apple Notes.

Paul Minors ([15:55](#)):

Same thing with like files. You know, some people say, can I, can I put all my files in in aana you can attach files to a task if it's relevant to a, a piece of work that you're doing, definitely attach a file. But it's not a long term, it's not a file management system like Dropbox or I, I use iCloud Drive or you know, Google Drive. It's not designed to be like a a digital filing cabinet like Dropbox or, or Google Drive is. So again, I use, I want to use the tool for what it's designed for. Some people kind of push the boundaries of that and they're like, oh, I'll use AANA for everything. I'm gonna use it as a wiki. I'm gonna put all my files in here and articles and I, I wanna read. And, and to be honest, that's when it can get a bit overwhelming and a bit messy. So I always defer back to what is this tool designed for the developer or the, the company that made this product? How do they want me to use it?

Jillian Flodstrom ([16:44](#)):

That's a really good way to look at it. Now, if somebody is either a seasoned Asana user or is somebody that's just starting out, like you mentioned, like is like, okay, things are starting to pick up. I wanna make sure that I can track all these, you know, things that I need to track. What's the best way for them to get in touch with you?

Paul Minors ([17:01](#)):

Yeah, I mean, just going to my website you can find information out about my consulting services there and you can book it a free introductory call with me or on my go to my YouTube channel. If you just go to YouTube and type in my name Paul Miners, I have loads of videos to help you get started with YouTube and Pipedrive as well.

Jillian Flodstrom ([17:19](#)):

That was where I found you, there is a massive like sive library of YouTube videos about Asana. And I think that's really where you get a baseline of like, okay, this is what this tool is capable of. There was some of the stuff that I'm like, I had no idea could even do that. So I think that there is much, much benefit in going to YouTube and checking it out and of course working with you, you know, makes a big difference as well. An even bigger difference. There's so many different things that, I mean, how could you possibly cover everything that Asana can do on YouTube, but there's so much there available to people. So that is a definite recommendation.

Paul Minors ([17:56](#)):

Well, often people, you know, it's, it's good to look at the videos to get a sense of what am I missing? What can it do? But then you want that expert who can help you interpret how does Asana best apply to

your business? And that, that personal advice is, is what we can obviously offer on, you know, in more of a one-on-one engagement.

Jillian Flodstrom ([18:10](#)):

Yeah, that is definitely for me, that's exactly what I decided because I looked at that and I was like, you know what, all that stuff is amazing, but I, I need a little bit of, I need a little bit of custom advice here because yeah, there's certain things, there's a lot of similarities in a lot of businesses. I know you work with a ton of clients that you know, are it, some are in similar industries, but some are not. And I think it's important to have that introductory call because you can really help people sort out what they need and what they don't need more importantly. Yes.

Paul Minors ([18:39](#)):

Yeah.

Jillian Flodstrom ([18:40](#)):

Now, one other question that I always ask all my guests on the podcast. What is one piece of advice that you would give to a small business owner?

Paul Minors ([18:49](#)):

Oh wow. Great question. Gosh, there's probably lots of advice I could give.

Jillian Flodstrom ([18:56](#)):

It's hard to choose, choose just one, right?

Paul Minors ([18:58](#)):

<Laugh>? Yeah. I think something I would say is focus on what matters. By which, I mean, I'll give an example. Like I think when you start a new business, it's very easy to get distracted by all the things you think you need to be doing. Like I need to have my website set up and have that be perfect and spend lots of time on a logo. Oh, you know what? I should print business cards cause I'm gonna meet people and I need to have a really good business card. When a lot of these things, it's very easy to kind of overcapitalise in terms of how much time you spend on these things, when really they don't matter. But yes, you need to have a good website, of course you need to have a good online presence, but it's, I would, I would try and get something like basic quick and easy setup.

Paul Minors ([19:38](#)):

You can come back and you can refine it later. You know, when you're starting a business, what matters most is proving your hypothesis about how you are gonna deliver value to people and how you're gonna make money. So in my case, it's, I think I can deliver value by helping people with Asana and I think they're gonna pay me for that support. So you want, and, and also you wanna prove that you can actually, can you see can you find clients? Can you sell, can you work with them? Like, do you just have a good valuable service or or product that you're offering So you're really trying to prove that hypothesis about your business. Is it viable as quickly as you can and, and you wanna get to revenue as quick as you can? I think so that would be my advice. Don't let the small stuff distract you.

Paul Minors ([20:23](#)):

You know, this sort of shiny object syndrome. Don't let the small stuff distract you from what really matters, which is proving that you have a valuable business that you can, that you can derive, you know, get revenue from the market and and get to sales. Cause often, you know, selling as well, selling tends to be one of those quite scary things. Like actually asking people, people for money. That does get easier the more that you do it. But, but it's something people, people are often scared by. If you're not on, if you've never had sales experience before, maybe you're like a graphic designer or something and you love doing graphic design, but selling is really scary. Unfortunately, it's gonna be a really important part of your business and the more you just need to get more and more experience doing it to get better. So don't let the smallest shiny objects distract you. Focus on what matters.

Jillian Flodstrom ([21:05](#)):

That's such good advice. So many things to take away from this conversation. Thank you so much for spending time with me. I really appreciate it.

Paul Minors ([21:13](#)):

Thank you for the opportunity. It's been fun.