

Master Your Commitments Like a Pro

By Zack Estes

Ever felt like you're juggling too many flaming torches while riding a unicycle? Yep, we've all been there.

But here's the thing: It doesn't have to be that way. Let's talk about commitments and how you can manage them like a pro.

Most leaders think that taking on more commitments translates to more progress.

COULDS, SHOULD, AND COMMITMENTS: THE HOLY TRINITY OF PRODUCTIVITY

Let's breakdown these three categories to transform your workflow.

Could: The Possibilities

Could's are any ideas that you and your team have.

They're the creative thoughts that pop into your mind—the potential projects that could be pursued if time and resources were unlimited.

These are ideas that hold promise but aren't necessarily aligned with your current goals.

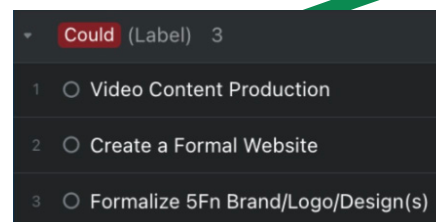
Here are some current examples of my own could's.

But overloading your team's plate? That's a recipe for burnout and chaos.

What if I told you that the key to productivity lies in understanding the difference between could's, should's, and commitments?

“Most leaders think that taking on more commitments

translates to more progress.”



While could's are important for innovation and growth, they shouldn't overshadow your more pressing responsibilities. Keep them in a separate column to revisit when you have the bandwidth.

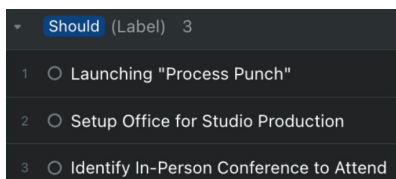
Shoulds: The Priorities

Shoulds are ideas that make sense for you and your team to focus on based on your current state.

These tasks and projects are aligned with your long-term goals but might not be feasible given your current resources: time, money, and energy.

Here are some current examples of my own shoulds.

Shoulds help you stay on track with your goals without overwhelming your current capacity. Pull them into the “commitment” column wisely and with discretion.

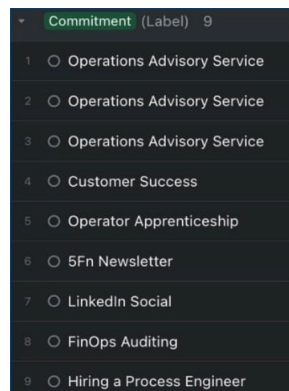


Commitments: The Non-Negotiables

Commitments are the things you’re actually taking action on.

These are the tasks that have been prioritized and are currently being worked on. They require immediate attention and have a direct impact on your goals and outcomes.

Here are some current examples of my own commitments.



“Imagine a world where your commitments are crystal clear.”

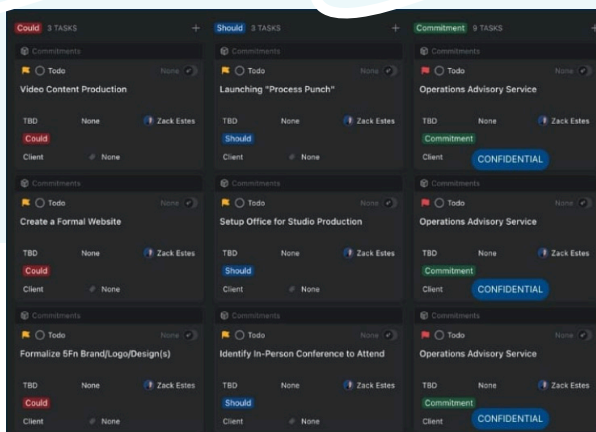
THE KANBAN MAGIC

Imagine a world where your commitments are crystal clear. Welcome to the Kanban board—a visual feast for your productivity.

This simple yet powerful tool helps you organize priorities and see your workload at a glance.

What’s a Kanban Board?

A Kanban board is a visual management tool that uses columns and cards. You then pull cards from left-to-right (coulds > shoulds > commitments) as capacity is created.



The visual aspect of Kanban makes it easy to understand and manage your workload.

To implement the coulds, shoulds, and commitments strategy, create three columns on your Kanban board:

Column 1—Could: This column is for all those “could do” ideas. This is where you place ideas that are nice to have but not urgent.

Column 2—Should: These ideas are worth getting prioritized. They’re important and need attention, but they can wait.

Column 3—Commitment: These are the must-dos—no excuses. They’re your top priorities that need to be addressed immediately.

Seeing is believing, and with a Kanban board, you’ll see everything at a glance.

This visualization helps you and your team understand what’s on the plate, prioritize effectively, and avoid overcommitting.

ACTION STEPS TO MASTER COMMITMENT MANAGEMENT

Managing commitments effectively requires a strategic approach. Given that, here are some action steps to help you master the art of commitment management.

Document Commitments

Write down what’s on your plate. All of it. Start by listing every project, product, and initiative. This comprehensive list will serve as your starting point for organizing and prioritizing your workload.

I recommend using Motion as a place where all of your work lives—including your coulds, shoulds, and commitments.

Documentation brings clarity. It helps you understand the full scope of your responsibilities and ensures nothing falls through the cracks.

With a Kanban board, you’ll see everything at a glance.

Visualize Priorities

Use the Kanban board to see everything at a glance. By visualizing your priorities, you can easily identify what needs immediate attention and what can wait. This visual representation makes it easier to balance your workload and prioritize effectively.

No more executing immediately on a harebrained idea. Remember—new ideas are coulds. Coulds need to be evaluated before they become a should. Shoulds need to be evaluated before they become a commitment.

Visualization is powerful. It turns abstract ideas into tangible items that you can manage more efficiently.

Balance Workload

Ensure that no one’s drowning. Distribute the workload evenly among your team members to prevent burnout and maintain productivity. Regularly review and adjust the commitments to ensure they’re getting the attention they deserve.

An even workload distribution boosts morale and productivity. It ensures everyone can contribute effectively without feeling overwhelmed.

Decommit When Necessary

If it’s not critical, it can wait. Be prepared to re-

assess and adjust your commitments as needed. Decommitting from non-essentials allows you and your team to focus on what truly matters and prevents burdening your business with overhead.

Flexibility is key. Being willing to decommit from priorities that aren't critical helps you maintain focus and avoid unnecessary stress.

Keep Critical Things Critical

Focus on what truly matters. Identify the initiatives that have the highest impact on your goals.

Keeping critical things critical helps you stay on track and achieve your objectives more efficiently.

Prioritization is essential. Focusing on your commitments ensures you're making progress on the most important goals.

Managing your commitments isn't just a productivity hack—it's a lifesaver.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Managing your commitments isn't just a productivity hack—it's a lifesaver.

By understanding the difference between could's, should's, and commitments, and using tools like the Kanban board to visualize and manage your priorities, you can boost productivity, reduce burnout, and improve team morale.

Implement this strategy, and watch your productivity soar.

Remember, it's not about doing *more*; it's about doing what matters *most*.