BSE 006 - Chris Ducker

Build, Grow and Manage a Virtual Team to Help Run An Entrepreneurial Empire

Tony: Welcome, again, to Business Systems Explored with me Tony Brown and my co-host on the line.

Vinay: How are you doing? Vinay here from Process Street.

Tony: How's it going, sir?

Vinay: Awesome. Good to be here on another episode.

Tony: Yeah. Definitely. We have got the one and only, and I like to call him my friend and my virtual mentor, Mr.007 Ducker. Chris Ducker, how is it going, sir?

Chris: I think I just want to lose the Ducker. I just want to be known as Mr. 007. Can we figure that out? Can we work that out?

Tony: I think we can. I also noticed someone else has been using that. I'm going to have to claim it.

Vinay: You're going to get your first kill Chris.

Chris: Well, I am licensed. I won't have a problem with it.

Tony: I think I need to explain. The 007 is because I say Chris is the biggest exporter on the UK. Forget James Bond, we've got 007 Ducker.

Chris: There you go.

Tony: Chris, listen. It's great to have you and we appreciate the time you spend in with us.

Vinay: It will be a good night.

Tony: We know we're going to get some real value from this. Get your pens and papers ready guys. We're going to get a good one here. Firstly, how are things?

Chris: I think it's great. We're off to a brilliant start in 2016. I always make sure that I have a jam packed schedule the first week of every year. It makes me laugh Chris when I hear people say, "I'm going to ease my way back into the new year," and I'm like, "Do you want the money to ease its way into your bank account then?" I'm all about really going hard. I go real hard. The first week I work probably 10, 12 hours a day in the New Year.

Then honestly in the second week, it gets back to normal. I'm very strict with my time, as you know. I like to really push myself the first week, really get things moving and get things up at a nice pace. Not just for me but for my team and for the people I work with and for as well. Then second week, it goes back to that usual 6-7 hours a day, Monday through to Thursday and that's it.

Tony: You say in 6 and 7 hours a day. Now I'm just looking at a list of roots we could've gone down to talk to yourself. You've got the blog, you have ChrisDucker.com, you've got the Youpreneur FM podcasts, you've got the Youpreneur membership community which is banging. You've got your international speaking gigs, you've got Tropical Think Tank, you've got the book, there's so much going on and you work in six or seven days a week.

Chris: Actually it was 7 hours, four a days a week maybe.

Tony: It's crazy. I'm sure there's a lot of people listening who are like, "How does he do that?" What we want to explore today, the systems we want to explore today is, I want you to talk to us about virtual teams and remote working. You are the man. You're the author of Virtual Freedom. It's a book I've read probably three times now and we thought if anyone else could talk to us about it, it's going to be Chris Ducker. That's the route we want to take today.

Vinay: Yeah, absolutely. I think there's probably a few tidbits that I'm imagining that you could throw in as well just around general systemization because I imagine that that everything that you do is just not automatically outsourced to somewhere or given to a virtual team

member. I'm sure there's other things in play there. Definitely, really interested to dive into, in particular, as we talked about in the opening sentence outsourcing but now actually just more building and managing and working with remote teams.

Chris: Yeah, I mean look, the thing is that a lot of people have this pre-conceived idea that it's easy to hire just a couple of VA's and outsource your entire life and think go swinging a hammock of Monday to Friday. It's not like that at all. The four hour work week came out late 2008 or whatever it is, 2007 even I think. What that book did, did something incredibly good and it did something not so good. The not so good part was that it got everybody thinking about outsourcing as this magic bullet, which it really isn't.

It's not the fact that you're outsourcing the work that's the magic bullet, it's the fact that you're just delegating as a business owner that's the magic bullet. That ain't nothing new. It's been around for decades and decades and decades. If you want to build a successful business, you need to delegate work, you need to build a team and you need to do it well. What it did very well however, the book, is that created ultimately on its own a whole new generation of entrepreneurs. These entrepreneurs are focused with lifestyle being the number one priority and then building the business as the secondary priority going forward. For that reason alone, the book did incredibly well.

There were definitely a few things in there that I would've done differently when it came to the outsourcing side of things. Tim Ferriss is ultimately a bit of a genius. We can forgive him.

Vinay: We can forgive him for that one or two little mistakes.

Tony: The book obviously done something for you because off the back of that, obviously you caught something off the back of the book. Instead of Virtual Staff Finder which obviously served you very well, I believe.

Chris: Yes. No, it's done great. It's funny that company came about because of a blog comment. That's it. That's how it got started. Somebody commented on a blog post that I wrote and said, "I'd love to find a VA that I could really trust to do the work that they're being hired to do at the level they're being hired to do it at. If there was a source, I'd pay for

that. Four weeks later, we launched Virtual Staff Finder because we're here. We're in the Philippines.

There's no one else that can say that. Yes, there are other VA companies that are based from the Philippines but none of them have had a CEO that's lived here for 15 years, almost 16 years now. I'm the most well connected foreign business owner that I know in this country, plain and simple. Because of that, our era as a company, as a group of companies is very, very close to the ground. We do what we do better than anyone else because of that and because of the relationships we have locally with our internal staff as well as our remote staff. For us, it really comes down to just continuing to serve people at that high level that we've been known for.

It's going to be what, six years in September this year that we've been running? We do account at the end of every year and we've now helped 4,300 and something virtual assistants in the Philippines find full time employment in that five and a bit years. We're very, very proud of that fact.

Vinay: Nice.

Tony: Excellent. In terms of your team, last time I heard, I think it was on Instagram when you posted it, a picture. You said you had 450 employees. Is that right?

Chris: I'm up to about 460 now. That was just before Christmas. We always have a little bit of a turnover in the New Year. I'm not going into reasons for that. It's got nothing to do with our company. It's all down to a very silly government regulation that takes place over here. We always have a little bit of turnover in the New Year. When I say little, I mean less than 3% or 4%. We have a bit of turnover and we always end up hiring a little more because we're not the kind of company that just keeps somebody around just because they're hired.

We train very hard. We have a six week training period. If you don't cut it, you're done after six weeks and that's why if we need 10 people, we'll hire 20 because we want to make sure that the 10 people that actually then go ahead and do become full time employees, they can actually do the job properly and they're not just bums on seats sort to speak. That's the focus for that. I think 460 or something or another, I don't know. We

anticipate probably 550 by the end of this year I think and then I'm going to retire. Then I'm done. I don't want to hire anyone else. It sounds all very impressive and all the rest of it, but trust me, when you got that many people working for you, even when you're a master delegator like me, it still becomes a headache every now and then.

It's a worthy headache because it's all worthwhile obviously.

Vinay: What do most of those people do? Are they mostly recruiting and screening virtual assistants for other people or are they actually employed virtual assistants for other people? How does that look?

Chris: Well the large majority of the people that work for me, work for me in one of my businesses, which is the Live2Sell group. That is the group of companies of which Virtual Staff Finder is part of that as a subsidiary. Then we have chrisducker.com and Youpreneur and all the rest of it that goes on as well.

The big employer in that group, that 400 in change of that group is Live2Sell which is our capture center. That's our outsourcing call center. We're serving clients from Northern America, to the UK, Australia, all over Europe, with your more traditional type of customer service, inbound support, outbound lead generation, that type of thing. Then we have Virtual Staff Finder which has a relatively small team, up to around 20 or so now. Then I also have additional teams internally for other businesses I'm involved in either as an adviser or an investor as well.

The funny thing is that as an entity, the business is known for virtual staffing. The very large majority of the people that work for us all work in one facility. They're not homebased. I have four VAs, that's it. Four Virtual Assistants that work for me from home. They're all based out in Manila and I see them every other month. I fly out to Manila for a couple of days and we hang out. One day, we're all about work. We rent a small conference room. Sometimes, we just do it in my hotel suite and we just work, work, work all day long. Then the next day, it's nothing but fun.

We'll go fishing or karaoke or bowling or something like that. I get to spend so much time with my team here, I feel a little bad about not spending time with them, even though there's just four of them, they do

an incredible … I mean, they fundamentally run my entire online business. They're huge. Without these four ladies, I wouldn't be able to do anything that I do online or very little of it, to put it that way.

Tony: Let's dive deep then. I'm a business owner, frustrated, I'm overwhelmed. I've got a lot going on. I'm thinking of packing it all in and then I come across this concept of remote working and having a virtual team. What process should I be going through? What should I be thinking about at that stage?

Chris: Well, before you even start going through that, you need to understand and appreciate and embrace the idea of getting over yourself because if you got to that point of overwhelm, of burnout, it's because you're a micromanaging Type-A entrepreneur and you're talking to one right now. I could still allow myself to be that if it wasn't for the systems and the processes that we put in place and because of the team that we built.

The first thing is you've got to get over yourself and understand that if you want to build a business without burning out and do the business in a very small manner, you cannot do it in your own or even with just one or two extra pairs of hands. You need to really seriously think about how you're going to build your team. Your team will define how successful ultimately any small business owner becomes. Fact. Nothing beats it. Nothing beats it at all. You're going to have all the clients in the world, all the products and services in the world. If your team is not built properly with the right roles in place, with the right people in those roles, then you can forget about it.

The first thing I would do after getting over myself and stopping drinking my own kool-aid, the first thing I would do is I would sit down and perform an exercise that I've been teaching people to do for years and years and years. That's what I call my three list to freedom. Now you've read the book Tony so you'll know exactly where I'm going with this. It's fundamentally the one exercise that changed my entire life because I was that Type A, micromanaging business owner. I did burn out. It was very painful physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually.

I was done and it took me a good while to get over but as I was recovering from it, I sat down and I ultimately made these three lists without knowing that I was doing it at the time. Basically what it is, the

easy way to do it is you get a piece of paper, you draw a couple of lines down it, creating three columns. In the first column, you write down all the things that you do on a daily basis that just drive you nuts. Now you talk to any business owner, trust me, that list is long and hard because we're sucked into these things. Your business is demanding them of you on a daily basis and you were procrastinating until the damn cows come home.

Then what happens is you rush them all at the end of the day or sometimes you just give it the complete elbow and not do them and you're destined to failure at that point if you're missing these vital tasks just because you don't like them. That's the first list, the list of all the things you don't like doing. Second list is a list of all the things that you struggle doing or that you maybe can't do but you think you can't do because of that Type A personality.

Tony: This is up to 4:00 in the morning.

Chris: Exactly. I remember years and years ago and I got active online. We're talking late 2009. I wanted to start blogging. We're talking final quarter of the year. What I did is because I was a tight ass business owner. I didn't want to hire anybody to build me a website. I built or rather I bought a pre-designed Wordpress theme. This was $80 or whatever it was. Excellent. Stick it in the back. Thank you for playing.

I loaded up and then and I look at it, I'm like, "I don't like the way that looks." I instantly become a PHP programming without any training at all, and I go and then I start ruining the code. I spanked the hell out of this site and it looked like a complete dog's dinner when I was done with it. Then I did, what I should've done in the first place, and I went to Elance and I found somebody to fix the mess that I created for myself and then go ahead and do the changes I wanted to make and the customizations I wanted to make. It cost me $400.

Why the hell didn't I just do it in the first place? That's the second list.

Tony: That's true.

Chris: Second list is a list of things that you can't do. Then the third list is by far the most important because it really, really gets you thinking about how you're going to run your business going forward and that is a list of

all the things that you feel is the business owner that you are as you shouldn't actually be doing.

The reason why this list is so important is because you could actually be very, very good at some of these things that you could actually enjoy doing a lot of these tasks but that bigger picture, that blue sky to use management speak, that blue sky approach to running a business is, "Should I be doing it? Is my time possibly better spent doing other things?" That's the first thing you've got to do is you're going to get that brain dump out of your head and then you can really start to figure out how you go forward.

Tony: I think that last list a game changer because that's the one where you usually drawn to it. In my case, it's podcast editing and video editing. I really enjoy this because it's creative, it's hands on but it's a time suck.

Vinay: You can't scale properly, right? It limits your ability to scale when you're doing it yourself and you really like doing it, you get drawn to doing it. You're like, "I can do this better than anybody else." Maybe that's true but you're still not going to be able to scale. Three people performing at 80% your capacity is better than you performing at 100%.

Tony: Yeah, and I'm sure that there's a ton of times where they're even better.

Chris: Yeah, exactly. That could be spread across any industry. It's not just necessarily the business world. It could be creative, like you say Tony with the editing or whatnot. It could be filmmaking. How many times do you think Robert De Niro has been in front of the camera and said, "This director sucks. I could do better than this."

Not that often because he generally doesn't work with poor directors nowadays but you see what I'm saying? There's probably been plenty of times in his career where he was like, "God, will you just put the camera up and then pan it across properly? This scene will look golden." It's something like that. It all comes down to, "Should you be doing these things?" No, you're the actor. You should be in front of the camera, not behind it.

Tony: It was Mark Zuckerberg who said he needed to stop coding to grow for his book or something like that.

Chris: Yes. I'm sure he still has issues with letting that part of his mindset go. In his heart of hearts, he's still a coder, no doubt about it. Particularly, when he goes to those offices and he sees hundreds and hundreds of people working, doing what they're doing for millions of people around the world every day, he can't turn around and say … I don't believe he's not got an ego. I don't believe he can sit there with a cup of coffee and say, "I started this."

He's going to do that very regularly and because of that, that coder mentality will come back and play. When somebody says, "We're having a problem with this," or "We'd love this particular idea to go live but we're having a problem getting the code right," I'm guaranteeing you right now he gets in front of that people quite regularly and does something he shouldn't be doing as a CEO of that business. He should be paying ridiculously talented people to do that stuff for him.

Vinay: I think that he's a bit of an interest use case as well but for the people who are I guess a bit smaller than that, and you're maybe starting out, you're looking to scale your team in some way, how would you go about deciding whether the person that you should hire should be local or virtual?

Chris: That's a great question. Generally speaking, I don't think that there is a whole lot of difference anymore between the two. I think that we're in a position today where we're not really controlled by geographical constraints anymore. Vinay, look at your business. I'm going to go out on a limb and say you probably don't even have an office, yet you're building this great company and you've got great people working for you all around the world and you're travelling around the world.

That is the way that a lot of businesses are being either started and built or it's a way a lot of businesses are moving in that direction that traditionally have a big office. They've scaled things down. You're looking someone 37 signals, one of the best companies in the world, Base Camp and High Rise and all that sort of stuff. They've written two great books, two amazing books on the subject of just remote work and building that type of thing. They have people all around the world who are building this incredibly profitable large company. I don't really think that there's a lot of times nowadays where you will be pushed into making that decision.

If you are and it's obvious that you need somebody local, then the conversation is over, isn't it? If you're in London and you're running around London all the time in meetings and events and speaking and this and the other, you need a PA on the ground in London. You can't hire somebody in the Philippines or America or Australia. You can't do that. You need somebody on the ground. Nine times out of ten, I say that if that question is asked, the answer is going to present itself in a New York second.

Once you decide that it's time to go virtual, then that's when the real fun begins.

Vinay: Yeah, for sure.

Tony: I think for me, because I actually went through this just before we went to Jamaica. I needed someone who could answer the phone during office hours and I wanted them to sound like they were in the UK. I just hired a freelancer, a virtual assistant which had to be based or they had to be based in the UK. It was virtual but it was still kind of local as well because I had somebody previously doing it in the Philippines when I was going away. Like I said, I just needed that local and that was because it was a time zone issue. I just needed him to be able to answer the phone during work hours.

Vinay: Yeah, timezone is a big one for me. For me, one of the big things going back to quickly before our [inaudible 00:21:23] topic is it wasn't so much that it taught me about you need to hire people to scale your business. That was something that I learned in business school and saw it from working in other companies, etcetera. In Australia, hiring people is really, really expensive. The base salary is really high and there's a lot of taxes involved, all that stuff.

To me, it was more about actually the foreign exchange arbitrage aspect of it. Actually, being able to hire people in a different currency at a much lower rate. That was one of the big appeals to me initially for hiring virtually. It's still a big appeal for me now in my current company although we have another aspect in that finding certain developers and engineers is actually easier remote than it is in one particular location but it's still a different topic.

Still a lot of the value actually comes from that foreign exchange arbitrage and the ability to actually hire somebody with a similar background, similar experience level but actually a cheaper price than maybe local in San Francisco.

Chris: I think you bring up a great point and I think, "Who doesn't want to save money?" Give me a business owner that doesn't want save money anywhere in the world. It's not going to happen. We're all about cost-saving benefit. I think that was probably one of the big benefits when this whole outsourcing malarkey hit the scene years ago.

By the way, outsourcing is nothing new. It's been around decades but that book and other situations and events and things like that, that happen, that just brought it all out into the public eye sort to speak or for the average every day Joe type entrepreneur. That was really the biggest benefit of getting involved. It was the cost savings that come along with hiring people offshore. I think it's still one of the main benefits. I'll tell you something right now. It's someone who's got his feet on the ground here.

VAs particularly in the Philippines, they know they're in demand. The good VA's over here, they know they're in demand. They know that the Philippines is the go-to destination for English speaking, hard working, very online savvy VA's. they know it man and I can tell you, in the five and a half years that we've been going with virtual staff finder, I have seen the average salary of a general VA on a monthly basis go from $300 to $800 for somebody very, very, very good. Now $800 is still a 3rd of what you would pay for somebody or maybe even more than that in the US, the UK or Australia for example.

Like you said, they're doing the work sometimes even better. I've had Australians say to me, "People in Australia are lazy and that they don't want to work, and that's why they hire offshore. I truly am quoting an Aussie when I say that. It just goes to show you if that's that mindset of business owners, we're all about trying to serve them aren't we, you know what I mean?

Tony: I think the flipside of it as well is, and I know you talk about it in the book is the perception that it's cheap labor. Hiring a VA is just cheap labor and you can get someone to do 30 hours a week for 2.50 pounds. It's just nuts. It's not the reality. I think oftentimes when I speak to people,

they go into it with that in the forefront of their mind. It's just going to be like I said cheap labor but I found and I've learned from experience that you get what you pay for.

Chris: You do. The other misconception is that you can hire one person to do three people's jobs. You can hire one person to do your graphic design, your web development, your video editing, your SEO, your admin, and it just doesn't work like that. You have to hire for the role and not based on tasks. That's really one of the biggest tips I give to people is when you looking to hire a graphic designer, hire a bloody graphic designer.

Don't say, "I'd like a graphic designer that can also edit videos." It doesn't work like that. Yes, they might know how to use Adobe whatever it is. I don't even know what the name of it is. See, that's how far removed I am. I know I pay for the license but I don't even know the name of the damn software that my VA uses for video. I've got no idea.

Vinay: Your videos look great.

Chris: Yeah, and that's fine. I'm happy with that.

Vinay: I see.

Chris: No, seriously just because someone knows how to use a piece of software, it doesn't mean they're any bloody good. It's like just because somebody knows how to build a swimming pool, it doesn't mean that it's not going to be left with a ton of cracks before you fill it up. For me, I'm all about really hiring the right people for the right roles and really building that team up with that mindset of truly hiring for the role.

If I want a coder, if I want a developer then Mark Zuckerberg, I'm hiring. If I need a graphic designer, then I'm going to hire somebody that sits in Photoshop 12 hours a day and knows how to use one of those cool, Pen Stylus thingies, not just a regular mouse and all that stuff. That's what I'm about right there and I'm more than happy to pay for it because you get what you pay for.

Tony: Yeah, that's it. Let's just pause there for a minute then. Talk to us about some of the biggest mistakes people make when outsourcing.

Chris: I think the first one is hiring based on tasks like I just said. I think that's really the biggest mistake, hiring one person to do several people's job. I would also say lack of training or maybe more so the lack of onboarding. I think a lot of people think just because someone's got the experience that they need to do the job, just because they've got the right mindset, the right personality for you as an employer and for your business in terms of company culture doesn't necessarily mean that they know how you like things done and want things fulfilled.

I see a lot of people who say, "It's that magic pill." They think that people can pop that pill and everything's going to go away. It doesn't work like that at all. You must spend time onboarding people properly and telling them how exactly you want things done and how you want things to look and feel and how you want things to be exported and all that stuff.

Vinay, you know this. The importance of building processes in your business makes all of this stuff way, way easier.

Vinay: Yeah, for sure.

Chris: Way easier. If I've got 15, 20 different processes from everything from publishing a blog post to editing a video to putting together an itinerary for when I travel, if I've got those things down pat based on my every sordid whim, then when I bring somebody on board, it allows me to hand them those processes and maybe walk them through them once or twice but at least there's something for them to follow, to learn from right out the gate. That's another really huge mistake as people don't spend time putting together those processes and utilizing them through the onboarding process.

Vinay: Onboarding is actually one of our most common processes that they get to run and process straight.

Chris: It doesn't surprise me. It doesn't surprise me in the slightest because it's a no-brainer. You've got a job that needs to be done. You've got a process that you know works because you've done it yourself a hundred times. Spend the time to do it one more time and process it properly. Systematize it properly in writing, in some a flow chart, in some brainstorm chart or whatever and then hand it off to someone else and never do it again. I'm all about that.

Vinay: What about communication? We know that communication, and this is part of onboarding, right? We know that communication, if you went to business school, one of the most important parts of just normal businesses. Any tips for communicating in virtual teams? More important, less important. What are your thoughts?

Chris: I think communication is key. It doesn't matter whether you're right next to somebody or on the other side of the world. The chances are the majority of large office facilities nowadays, the chances are the majority of the employees working in that building are probably chatting by in Instant Messenger or email or something all day long anyway.

I've been in facilities where I've done consulting in the last six, seven years where they're literally sitting across each other typing out in an Instant Messenger instead of talking with each other. You could literally save all this money and get them working on a laptop at home. I've seen that. I continue to see it. I think communication is absolute key. It's number one, isn't it? That's one area of my business where I don't spare any expense at all. If we need to upgrade our bandwidth so that we can get quality VOIP, I don't care what it costs, just do it. It's done. It's approved. Move on. Next.

If I need to buy one of my managers a new laptop because this other one is three years old and it's slowing down his productivity, I'll buy the damn laptop because it's communication, it's key. If I need to get 400 members of my staff on a particular SAAS product because it's going to make us 25% more productive and build company culture and boost profits and I've got to buy 400+ licenses, then I'll buy the licenses. Communication is absolute key. I learned this in the last ever boss that I worked with.

I remember we went to a conference in Las Vegas. We checked into a hotel and there was no WiFi included in the room. He had sent me an email. You know that big hotels are in Vegas. They're like fricking cities.

Tony: They got their own currency.

Chris: Right. Well because he was the big shot, he had a suite which meant I was in a completely different wing because I was a nobody and I was in a little matchbox somewhere at the other side of the hotel. He had sent

me in an email after we had checked in that he wanted me to look at before dinner with a client. I could not check that email because I didn't want to go ahead and order the 29.99 per day WiFi for the room. He didn't really give a shit about the 30 bucks. He was all about just staying in communication with me.

We're sitting at dinner and he turned around and said, "You got my email, right?" You got it with the pricing updates. No, I sent it to you. But boss I didn't order the WiFi because it was 30 bucks so I was trying to keep … I don't care about the 30 bucks. I pulled out as one of many lessons I learned from him in regards to communication and we were, by the way, at that point I was working, it was the last ever job I ever had. I was working in the Philippines and he was in Miami.

We were used to working virtually with each other. He spared no expense on communication. I think genuinely entrepreneurs, they should have that similar mindset? I certainly do for sure.

Tony: Excellent. You mentioned about Instant Messengers, etcetera. Are there any tolls that you recommend? Any tools or apps that you recommend to people to use?

Chris: Yeah. When it comes to that, we use Skype, that's a given. It's a very normal piece of kit for anybody who work virtually to use. We tend to now use that though mostly for calls and not so much Instant Messaging anymore. Nowadays for the last probably … Oh, God. At least a year and a half, maybe even two years we're all about Slack.

Slack is a piece of kit. We fundamentally all but banned internal email in my businesses and we just use Slack for everything. We got the pro account and we just use Slack. The reason why I like it is because it's so mobile. Skype's even years after the IOS and Android have been updated a hundred times and all the rest of it, Skype's mobile app still sucks. I love Slack. I think Slack's amazing. Probably one of the best. It's got to be in the top five SAAS businesses in the planet right now in my mind.

It's really changed the way that we work because it's taken that time suck of email of and inboxes out of all of our days more so than ever. Slack is key. We also use Basecamp still only though when we're working on projects. That's our project based management system

when we're truly working on projects. Let me clarify that. Let's say we're doing a redesign of one of our websites, that might take six weeks, maybe eight weeks depending on how big the job is, redesign, recoding, retesting, responsive testing, etcetera, etcetera.

There could be as many as six people involved in that particular project so it all goes into Basecamp. Day to day internally, we use Asana, which is another project management system. When we say "we", I don't even have an account. Seriously, I never sign into it but my staff use it internally with Virtual Staff Finder to manage all of our customers and our VA's and all the rest of it. That's what we use communication-wise, those four tools. That's it. If something's not broken, we don't try and fix it.

Vinay: Do you have a dashboard of any sort to track what's going on?

Chris: You know what, you're the second person that's asked me that in the last 24 hours? I had somebody on Snapchat ask me that yesterday. I don't but I'm beginning to think maybe I need one now because I've seen a few people doing it. Like I said, a couple of people have asked me in the last couple of days now about it.

I don't. I've become so lazy. I think that is honestly the right word to use when it comes to that stuff. I'm serious because I have people that can put all those reports together for me on a weekly basis and they do. I like the idea of not looking at those numbers on a daily basis. I think if I had, I'm talking myself out of this now, aren't I? Which is great. No, it's good that I am. If I had that dashboard set up and I could open it up in a tab at any point in Chrome or whatever, I would be checking all day. You would, right?

Tony: You'd revert back.

Vinay: Yeah, I would. I'd be micromanaging my dashboard. I'd be on there all the time whereas now I just get a weekly update for my team for three or four different managers across the businesses. I get a weekly update every Monday. We don't do it on Fridays, we do it on Monday. The reason why we do it on Monday is because I want people to put that report together at the beginning of the week so they can see what happens last week so they can try and better it themselves going for that week. I'm always about Monday. Monday is our reports day. I don't

know. I talked myself out of it fully. Excellent, that's good. I'm all about getting other people to do it for me.

Vinay: You have a degenerated dashboard. That's pretty much what I have right now is either I'll have team members just email me a report or I'll just have an Excel report generated that hits my Inbox once a week. That saves that logging any time check your stats problem which I've definitely had myself as well.

Chris: We use Rainmaker for our online publishing platform and it's funny. They have a brilliant dashboard on Rainmaker on the main homepage inside where you can see everything from sales to Google Analytics to Podcast downloads. It's amazing. I never really looked at it all that much. I was using it for a good year almost. When we launched Youpreneur in January … Sorry, in September last year, I was consumed with this damn dashboard because I could see how many new members we've got, how many forum posts are going up, how many recurring memberships have gone through that day, that week, that month, those last three months and all the rest of it.

I did honestly. I would look at it all the time. I was looking at numbers that I knew were there for months but because I was starting to use it more because of the membership style of things, I started to also look at Google Analytics and podcast downloads. I don't look at those numbers. Across the board, I just don't look at them. It really started to consume me and we ended up deleting all of those elements from the dashboard because otherwise I would just keep looking at them all the time.

In my account, I'm the lead administrator for Rainmaker. I don't see any of that stuff but my VAs see it and then my financial director sees the money side of it. They just brought all those reports together for me now.

Tony: Excellent. Well listen, we just got into the top of the hour on this recording and obviously we want to honor each other's time. Mr. Ducker thank you very much. We appreciate everything you've shared with us today.

Vinay: Yeah, it's been great.

Chris: Thank you guys. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Tony: I'm sure. There's a ton of value in there for our viewers.

Chris: I will say, I've thoroughly enjoyed the conversation. I've talked about this whole delegation outsourcing VA topic a thousand times in the last few years. This conversation, it seemed a little bit more intellectual, little bit more high level and not so much basic. Kudos to you both.

Tony: Excellent. Nice one, nice one. We'll leave you to get back to your Snapchat in.

Vinay: Before you leave, if people want to find out more about you, where is the best place that they can go to?

Chris: Chrisducker.com. That's my hub, that's my home and that's what I'm all about.

Vinay: Love it. Appreciate it Chris.

Chris: Thank you guys. I appreciate it.

Tony: Chris, nice one. All the best, take care.

Chris: Cheers, Tony. I'll talk to you soon mate. If there's anything I can do to help either of you guys when this one comes out, let me know. I'm more than happy to Tweet it out for you guys.

Vinay: Awesome. Sounds good.

Tony: Nice one, thanks.

Chris: Vinay, a pleasure to meet you buddy. I hope to meet you in person at some point.

Vinay: Yeah, me too.

Chris: All right, take care fellas.

Vinay: Take it easy mate, bye.

Tony: Nice one, Chris.

Chris: Bye, guys.

Tony: All right, take care. Bye.