



Rule No. 18 —Your calendar reflects your priorities.

Why this Rule is important: Because, intentionality beats reactivity.

Rule Summary:

This rule confronts the lie we tell ourselves that “we didn’t have time,” when in reality, we simply didn’t make it a priority.

If you want to know what truly matters to a person, don’t ask them—look at their calendar.

Time is the most democratic resource—everyone gets 24 hours. High performers don’t find more time; they allocate it better. They schedule their values. They protect their most important goals from being swallowed by the urgent but unimportant. Covey called this “putting first things first”—and it’s the difference between being busy and being effective.

This rule is not about time management tools. It’s about discipline and alignment. If your calendar doesn’t reflect your stated priorities, one of them is lying.



Recommended Reading

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey

“The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”
— Stephen R. Covey

Key Executive Takeaway:

- Leadership, personal growth, and meaningful impact come from consistent habits, not shortcuts or reactive fixes.
- Effectiveness is a principle-centered, inside-out approach. Start with character and values, then align behaviors and relationships.
- The Time Management Matrix is a tool to focus on what matters most, not just what’s urgent.

Ask Yourself:

Would a stranger know your priorities by looking at your calendar?

If someone audited your calendar for the last 30 days, what would they say your top priorities are—and how does that compare to what you say they are?

What in my calendar last week reflects my top three priorities?

Where am I letting other people’s urgency override my own strategy?

Does our leadership team’s calendar align with our stated priorities?

What non-negotiables should be time-blocked—but aren’t?

Action Step:

Review next week’s schedule and remove anything not tied to top priorities.

This rule is simple but unforgiving:
Your calendar is either reinforcing your leadership
—or exposing it.

Actionable Strategies

Here are 10 disciplined, actionable strategies tied directly to Rule No. 18: The Calendar Reflects Your Priorities. These are not productivity hacks. They are structural leadership decisions.

1. Schedule Your Top Three Priorities First

Before anything else fills your week, block time for your top three strategic priorities. If growth, culture, and customer retention matter, they should appear on your calendar before operational noise does.

2. Establish a Weekly Strategic Block (Non-Negotiable)

Protect 90-120 minutes each week for uninterrupted strategic thinking. No phone. No email. No team interruptions. If you won't defend this time, no one else will.

3. Audit the Last 30 Days

Print your calendar and mark each meeting as: Strategic Operational Reactive Unnecessary
The pattern will expose your true priorities quickly.

4. Kill or Delegate 10% of Recurring Meetings

Most leadership calendars are bloated with legacy meetings that no longer produce value. Eliminate, shorten, or delegate at least one recurring commitment this quarter.

5. Time-Block Development Conversations

If people development is a stated priority, schedule recurring one-on-ones focused on growth—not just updates. Leadership culture is built intentionally, not accidentally.

6. Pre-Block Quarterly Planning Days

Don't "fit in" strategy sessions. Schedule quarterly planning days at the start of the year. Treat them like client meetings—immovable.

7. Create a Personal No-Meeting Zone

Designate specific windows each week where no meetings are allowed. Use that time for deep work, customer calls, or proactive leadership tasks.

8. Tie Every Major Meeting to a Stated Priority

Before accepting or scheduling a meeting, ask: Which strategic priority does this support?
If there's no clear answer, decline or delegate.

9. Schedule Culture

If recognition, vision reinforcement, and relationship building matter, block time for:
Walking the floor, Team appreciation, Customer engagement. Culture erodes when it isn't calendared.

10. Review Your Calendar Before You Review Your Metrics

At the end of each month, evaluate your calendar before analyzing performance numbers. Results follow allocation. If outcomes are off, your time allocation likely is too.