

T H E  
**F O R T L I F E**

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**EDITORIAL**

# PPR – Personal Progress Report

Are You Meeting Your 2024 Goals?



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## 77.5 years

This is the average number the CDC expects you to live when combining Male and Females in the U.S of A..

Males: 74.8 years

Females: 80.2 years

If you are a man you will get 74 summers, 74 birthdays, 74 festive holidays to enjoy with those you love. If you are a woman you will get 6 more years by stat's accounts, but again, nothing is promised.

How you enjoy and spend these summers, birthdays, and holidays will significantly be affected by 2 primary factors; Your financial position in life and your health.

It is now July 2024 - Smack middle of summer, and if you're like me, you're seriously pondering where has the top half of the year gone, dancing in sequence with a bunch of "what have I dones" leading into a stream of follow-up questions debating your level of contentment and "utterly satisfaction" with the progress you've made thus far, in this contentious yet pretentious fiery election year... Appropriately enough... The year of the Dragon.

New years, as in plural ;) present more than new beginnings and do-overs. They also offer a taste of redemption and excitement, a breath of fresh air from the quotidian Bulls911\* and the hustle and bustle of the 9-5. They are the official start line to all the resolutions you've been cleverly grooming yourself with since November prior, and now, you get to once again work semi-hard at not disappointing yourself!

## EDITORIAL

# "PPR" PERSONAL PROGRESS REPORT

## Are You Meeting Your 2024 Goals?



Humanly written by:  
François Damian Aristhomene Martinez  
CVO & Founder  
FORT International

That's a script many of us have lived at some point or another, but as the numbers climb and the body starts to slowly deteriorate, no longer able to move like in earlier times, the summers, the birthdays, the holidays, they all tend to matter a bit more, and the need for intentionality should progressively take hold of your core, pressing you to improve in every aspect of your life. If not, the alternative is truly and dreadfully haunting.

But how do we rewrite that script with full efforts at the forefront, and make it into an everyday movie where our goals are met and our dreams are accomplished?

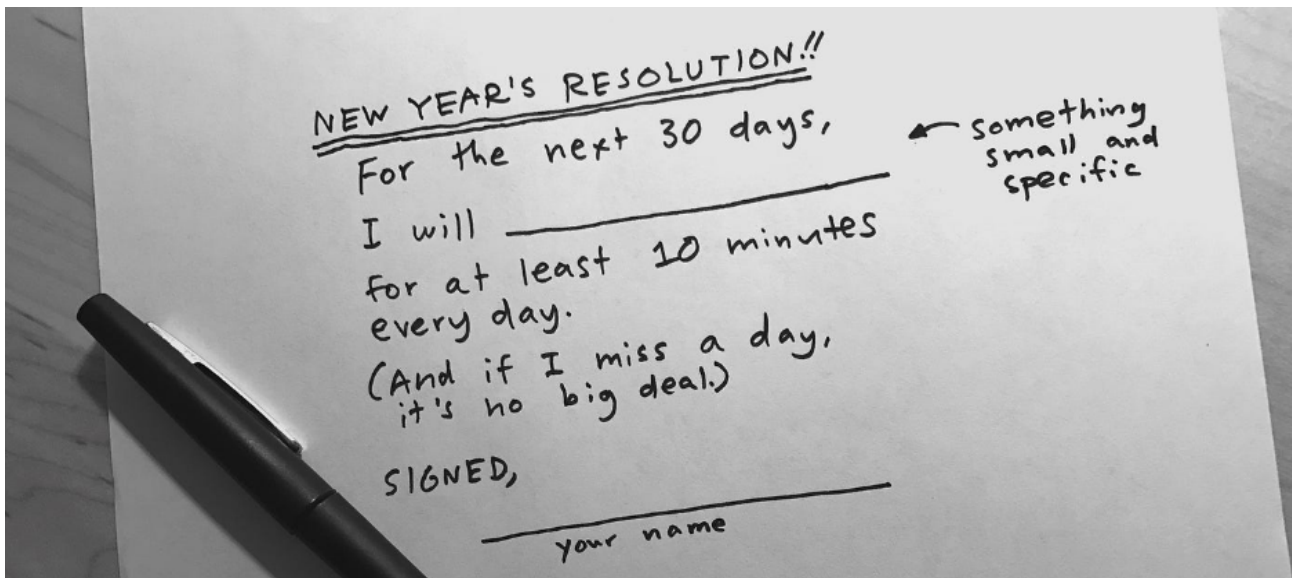
Simple -

**MAKE A CHOICE** To either do everything in your power to indulge as much as you can in whatever detrimental behavior you're mistakenly enjoying, with the hopes that before your demise you'll reach a certain level of boredom which will make you walk away from said behavior... or #2...Make another choice, a daily one, to set safe-rails which will help you stay on the road to your target and catapult you into a place of growth and confidence.



**“When I was 5 years old, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down ‘happy’. They told me I didn’t understand the assignment, and I told them they didn’t understand life”**

**-JOHN LENNON**



Either way, commit. Commit to being either the biggest underachiever in the world, or to the positive contraire, commit to being the best version of yourself. I have realized that for too long, many of us straddle the frontier which separates a world of mediocrity and a universe of achievements.

We scarily and carefully chose to live on the narrow yellow lane of a 2 way road, one which separates one way traffic to a wasted life, and the other to an arduous but satisfying road to success.

If you are not meeting your 2024 goals it is solely because you chose not to. If the consequences of not achieving your resolutions were to be as severe as the loss of something completely irreplaceable, say the life of a loved one, do you really think you wouldn't be able to stay committed to the task at hand?

The human brain is so powerful, it can easily trick the self into a world of rationalizations and excuses, therefore a daily routine with flags and markers to remind you of what's at stake, is truly mandatory in order to stay diligent with your goals.

So ask yourself.. What is at stake if your goals and resolutions are not met?

If the answer to that question doesn't hold any weight, then the resolution need not be made. If the thought of failure to a goal has no negative long term consequence, it will eventually become nothing more than an aspiration. Let's stop making the capital error of confusing wants with needs, which will ultimately prevent you from forward progress.

Time is passing us by and if you've hit 40 years of age, coming to terms with the fact that half of our lives are already gone, that there are only so many summers in stock left for you travel, see, experience the world with those you cherish, why not be more intentional with the day to day and finally begin making choices, daily ones, to help us finally become the best version of ourselves, all whilst remembering to enjoy the journey as much as the destination.

# Customer Success Stories:

## How We Closed Major Deals; (Storytelling Point of View)

Written by: Daniel DeLeon  
S. East District Sales Manager

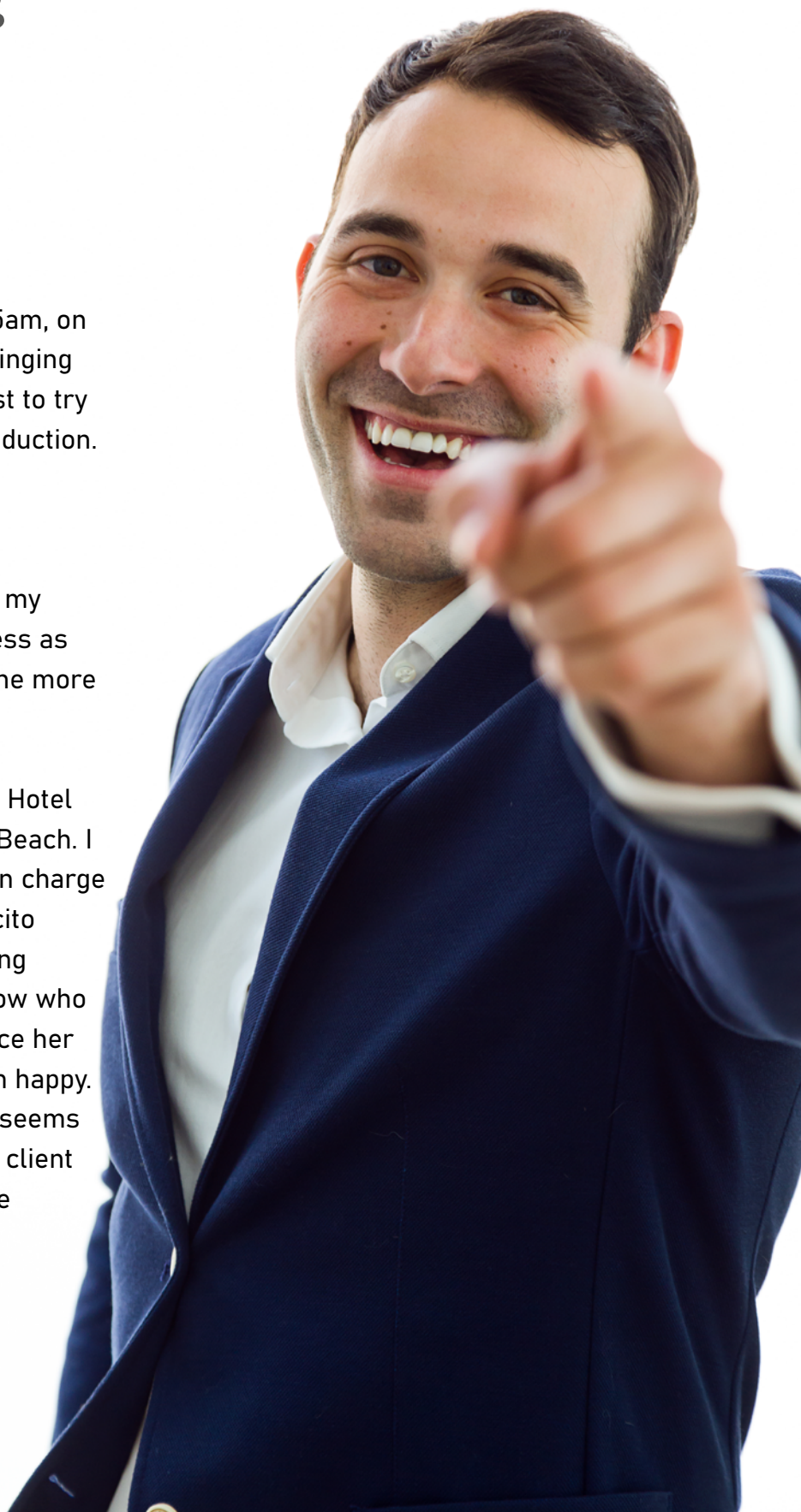
First Impressions are Everything.

Life of an Old School Sales Rep: Up at 5am, on target location by 7am, door to door, bringing coffee to everyone and their mother just to try and charm your way into a simple introduction.

This was me... is me.

Here's a little story of how I met one of my favorites and most loyal clients. Business as usual. I'm on site, making my rounds. The more No's the closer I am to a yes!

I walk into the lobby of a little Boutique Hotel known for a very popular bar in Miami Beach. I ask the front desk to meet the person in charge of the housekeeping department (Cafecito in hand) and out walks the Housekeeping Manager. I introduce myself, let her know who I represent, and lo and behold, I convince her to give me a chance. Got my Yes and I'm happy. First order comes through. Everything seems to be going smoothly. I reach out to the client just to see how I can make myself more helpful to make her life easier.





A few days go by...no answer. 1 week goes by... She tells me she apologizes as has been working on Capex projects. 2 weeks... I'm getting ghosted. I smell it a mile away. I stop by for a visit and bam! She's on leave of absence with no return date on site... just my luck, and of course as our relationship was just developing, corporate purchasing reverted to their previous more expensive vendor.

It's been a few weeks now. They're a business and the business can't run without product, my product! This business is about relationships and no matter what, I have learned to always look for the best interest of the client. Scene 2 - I swing for the fences and get in contact with the General Manager of the Hotel to set a meeting with him. I'm saving the hotel at least 10-15% on their overall budget costs. I'm not worried. Meeting is set.

I come into the meeting with a pack of imported Colombian Coffee from a recent trip I had

earlier in the year (I did my research and confirmed he enjoys a good cup of Joe). Meeting goes well. The GM is in his mid-late 30's, well dressed, great sense of humor and we get to know each other and share some laughs. Now... down to business!

He goes on to tell me that unfortunately, he's very hands off when it comes to the housekeeping department and procurement, and lets his managers have full reign over who they decide to work with. It makes his life easier, and this manager sadly already had a preferred vendor whom she had strong ties with. Loyalty - Loyalty and trust are everything in this business and so are temporary defeats. I politely offer back up service and ask for an opportunity to earn business with any hard to procure items, or at least assist it. We part ways and over the following months, I check in.

About a year goes by.

I get a call from one of my clients telling me that there's new management at the property she works in, and that the new GM is bringing in his preferred vendors and forcing her to purchase from them. I need to act quickly. I call the property and ask her to introduce me to the new GM, and she tells me she would connect us next time I'm there.

Meeting is finally set and I walk into it with a Cafecito and some Cuban Guava and Cheese Pastelitos in hand (My father and mentor always told me "Never Walk into another person's house empty handed"). After pleasantries she walks me over to the General Manager's office and to my surprise, out walks the same GM from the little Boutique Hotel from a year ago.

The second we make contact; we both start bursting out in laughter. No questions asked!

Not only does he let me keep the business but now a relationship is building.

The GM and I became more acquainted, and after a year or so he shares he's moving on to a new project. He's going to run a new Hotel that's opening in the next few months, and he wants me to help him supply the property for the opening, with not just one product line, but everything else we offer!

It's been about 8 years since that fateful day, and several different properties later with this GM, now a Friend, continues to bring me along for the ride every time he starts on a new venture. First impressions are everything, they will get you in the door, and couple that with consistency, service, and the client's best interest at heart, and they will propel you to new heights and to meaningful relationships which go far beyond the business.



# Empowering Leadership:

## Trusting Team Leads with Autonomy and Growth

Written by: Elizabeth Castillo  
Chief of Staff Fort International



As a Chief of Staff, one of my key projects this year is focused on fostering autonomy and growth among our department team leads. I firmly believe that by empowering these leaders, we can build trust and drive significant growth, even if this journey involves navigating some growing pains and potential errors along the way.



## Independence

Granting autonomy to team leads is not just about delegating tasks; it's about entrusting them with the responsibility to make decisions, take ownership of their projects, and learn from their experiences. This approach is instrumental in developing their leadership skills and enhancing their confidence in managing their teams. However, it's natural for this process to come with challenges, including mistakes and setbacks which can give anyone minor anxiety, navigating this can be difficult.

### “Not Important”, but “Urgent”, Delegate It!

To navigate these challenges effectively, I rely on the Eisenhower Matrix. This time-management tool helps me prioritize tasks based on their urgency and importance, allowing me to identify which tasks are suitable for delegation. By categorizing tasks into four quadrants—urgent and important, not urgent but important, urgent but not important, and neither urgent nor important—I can strategically assign responsibilities to team leads.

Tasks that fall into the “important but not urgent” quadrant are ideal candidates for delegation. These tasks are crucial for long-term success but don't require immediate action, providing team leads with the space to learn and grow without the pressure of immediate deadlines. This approach minimizes the risk of errors

impacting critical deadlines or high-stakes projects.

For example, a strategic planning task might not be urgent but is essential for our department's future direction. By

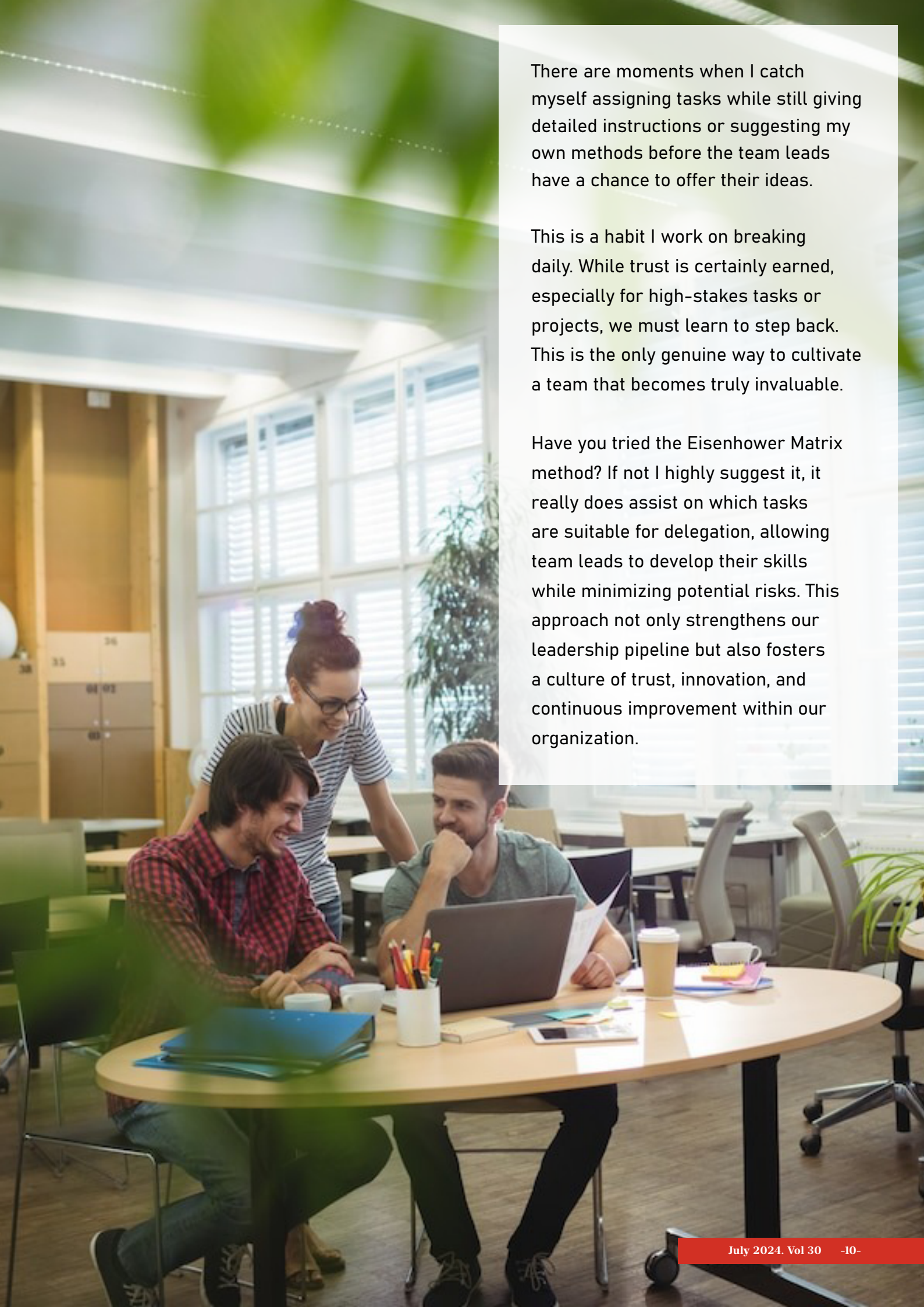
allowing a team lead to spearhead this project, they can develop their strategic thinking and decision-making skills. Even if they encounter challenges, these experiences are invaluable learning opportunities that contribute to their professional growth.

### Trust The Team, Trust The Process...

Building trust through autonomy also involves providing the necessary support and guidance. Regular check-ins, constructive feedback, and access to resources ensure that team leads feel supported as they navigate their responsibilities. This balance of freedom and support cultivates an environment where team leads are encouraged to take initiative and innovate.

## The Eisenhower Decision Matrix





There are moments when I catch myself assigning tasks while still giving detailed instructions or suggesting my own methods before the team leads have a chance to offer their ideas.

This is a habit I work on breaking daily. While trust is certainly earned, especially for high-stakes tasks or projects, we must learn to step back. This is the only genuine way to cultivate a team that becomes truly invaluable.

Have you tried the Eisenhower Matrix method? If not I highly suggest it, it really does assist on which tasks are suitable for delegation, allowing team leads to develop their skills while minimizing potential risks. This approach not only strengthens our leadership pipeline but also fosters a culture of trust, innovation, and continuous improvement within our organization.

# Efficient Budgeting:

## How we keep our finances in check

Written by: Goretty González  
Accounts Payable/Receivable Senior Manager

In today's competitive business environment, efficient budgeting is more crucial than ever. It ensures financial stability, supports strategic planning, and provides a framework for effective decision-making. The idea of this article is to explore the strategies and best practices our organization employs to maintain tight control over our finances through efficient budgeting.

Incidentally, this can also be useful at a family or individual level by adapting some concepts according to each case.

A budget is not merely a forecast of future expenditures and revenues; it is a strategic tool that guides an organization towards its financial goals. Effective budgeting enables companies to allocate resources wisely, anticipate potential financial challenges, and make informed decisions that promote growth and sustainability.

The first step in efficient budgeting is setting clear, achievable financial goals. These goals should align with the organization's overall strategic objectives and be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). By having well-defined goals, our organization can focus its resources on areas that drive growth and profitability.



An accurate and comprehensive financial analysis is essential for creating an effective budget.

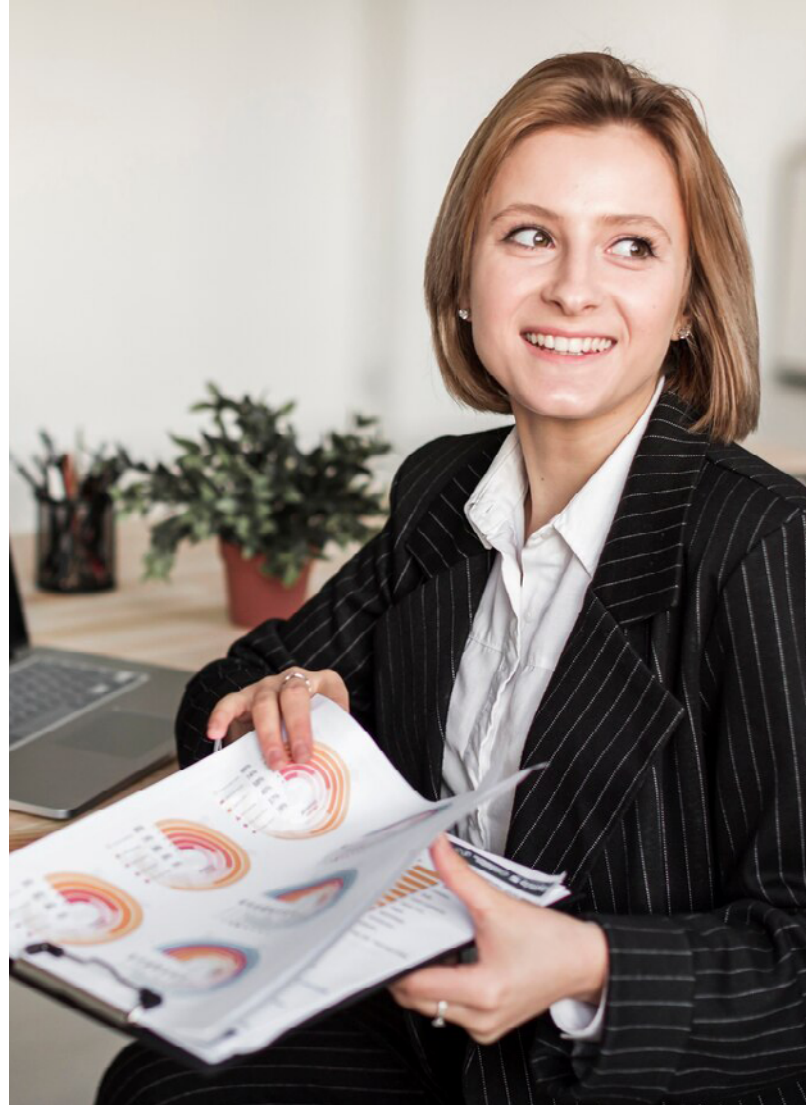
This involves reviewing past financial performance, analyzing current financial conditions, and forecasting future financial trends. Key financial statements such as the income statement, balance sheet, and cash flow statement provide valuable insights into the organizations financial health.

Budgeting should not be a top-down process. Involving key stakeholders from various departments ensure that the budget reflects the needs and priorities of the entire organization.

By engaging stakeholders in the budgeting process, we can identify potential risks and opportunities, and foster a sense of ownership and accountability.

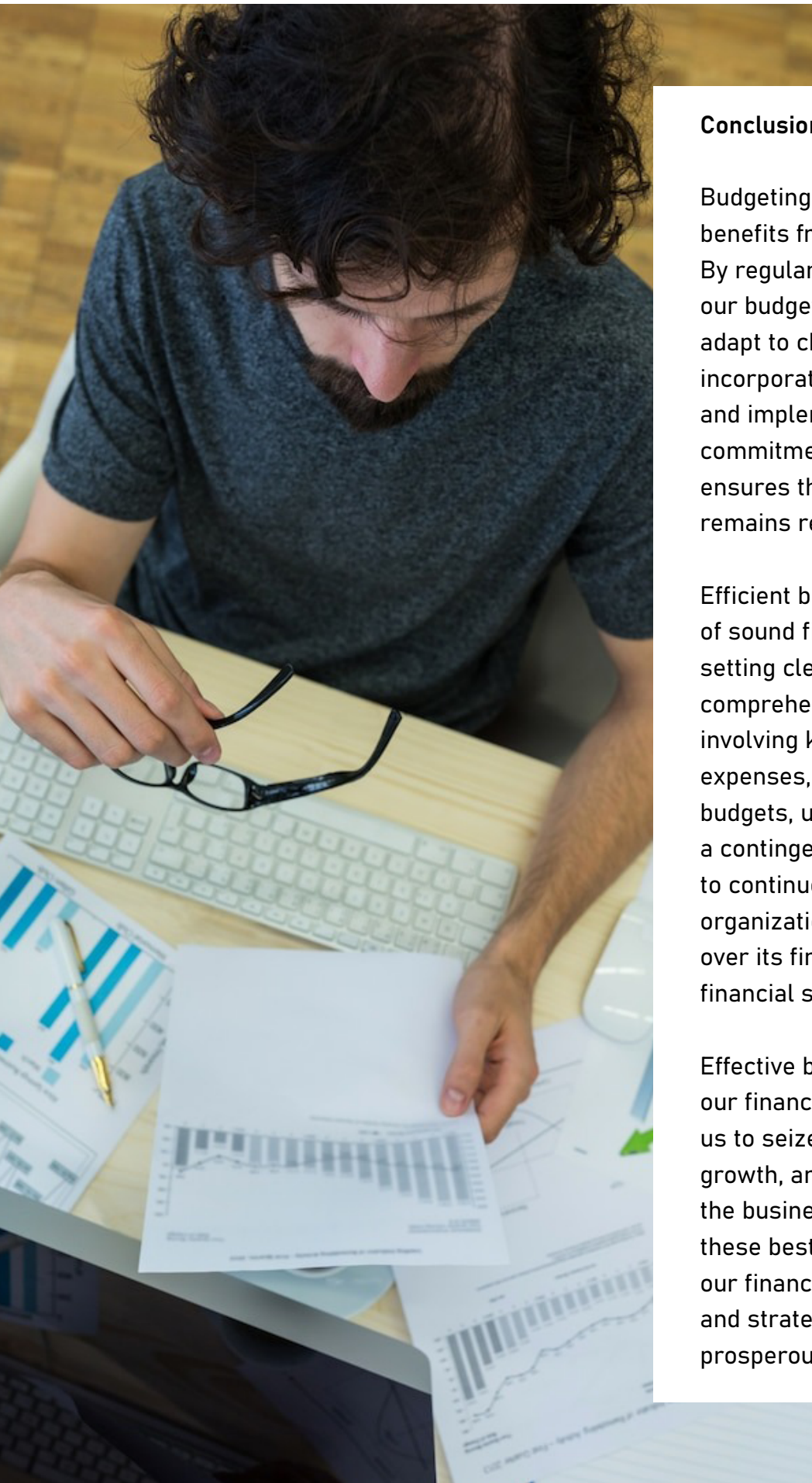
Efficient budgeting requires a careful examination of expenses. It is essential to distinguish between essential and non-essential expenditures. By prioritizing expenses, we can allocate resources to critical areas such as research and development, marketing, and talent acquisition, while minimizing costs in less impactful areas.

Creating a budget is only the beginning. Regular monitoring and review are crucial to ensure that the organization stays on track. By comparing actual performance against the budget, we can identify variances, understand their causes, and take corrective actions promptly. This the ongoing process helps in maintaining financial discipline and achieving budgetary goals.



Modern budgeting tools and software have revolutionized the way organizations manage their finances. These tools offer features such as real-time data analysis, automated reporting, and collaborative platforms that streamline the budgeting process. By leveraging these technologies, we can enhance accuracy, efficiency, and transparency in our budgeting efforts.

A robust budget should always include a contingency fund to handle unexpected expenses or financial setbacks. This fund acts as a financial buffer, allowing the organization to navigate through unforeseen challenges without disrupting its operations or compromising its financial stability.



## Conclusion

Budgeting is an iterative process that benefits from continuous improvement. By regularly reviewing and refining our budgeting practices, we can adapt to changing market conditions, incorporate feedback from stakeholders, and implement best practices. This commitment to continuous improvement ensures that our budgeting process remains relevant and effective.

Efficient budgeting is the cornerstone of sound financial management. By setting clear financial goals, conducting comprehensive financial analysis, involving key stakeholders, prioritizing expenses, monitoring and reviewing budgets, utilizing technology, building a contingency fund, and committing to continuous improvement, our organization can maintain tight control over its finances and achieve long-term financial success.

Effective budgeting not only supports our financial stability but also empowers us to seize new opportunities, drive growth, and navigate the complexities of the business landscape. By adhering to these best practices, we can ensure that our financial resources are used wisely and strategically, paving the way for a prosperous future.

# The Role of Technology in Modern Operations

Written by: Brian Jiménez / Operations Coordinator

Nowadays technology plays a pivotal role in modern operations across various sectors. In my field specifically, technology is, and is becoming even more vital, as it is intertwined with everything I do, from sending a simple email to running a detailed report, it is in each action that I perform.

Technology impacts all aspects of modern operations, but I would like to describe the three main categories.

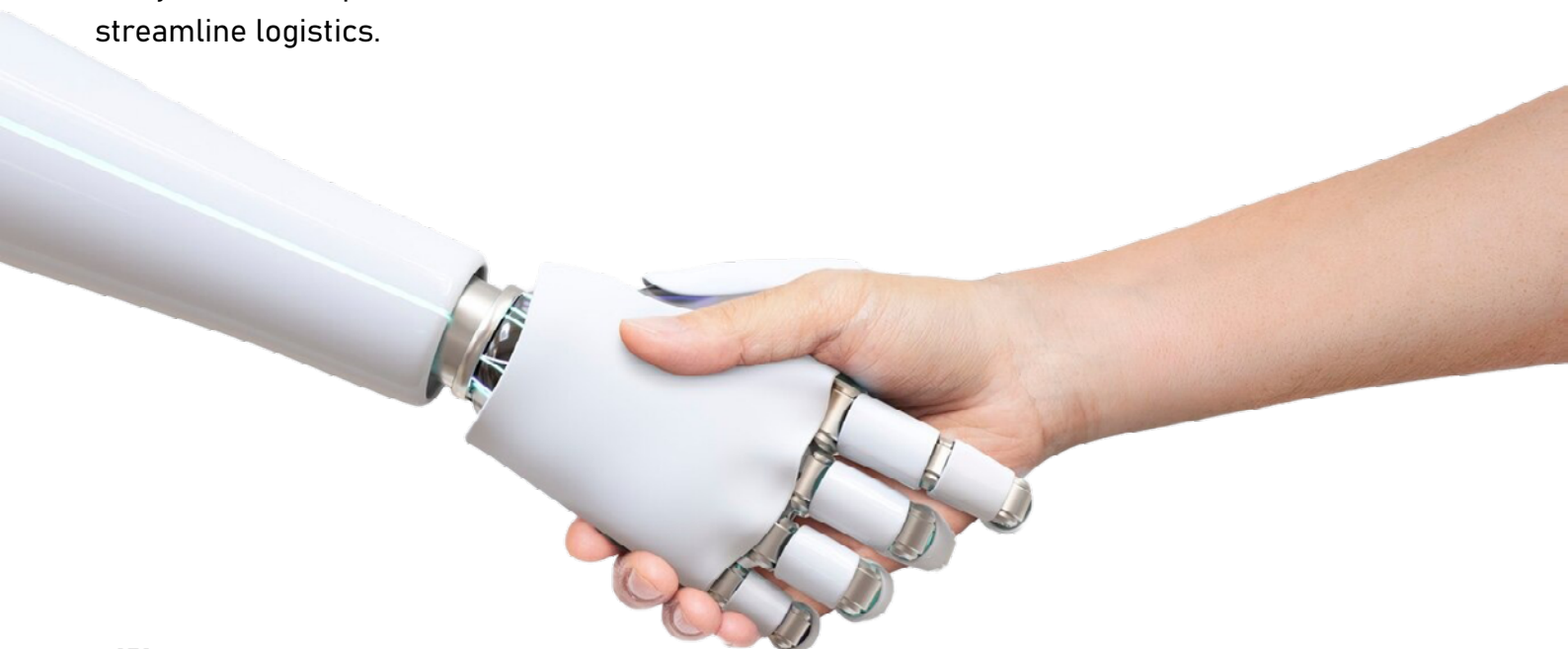
**Automation and Efficiency:** It enables automation of tasks and processes, improving efficiency and reducing human error. This includes manufacturing processes, and automated customer service systems.

**Supply Chain Management:** It helps in optimizing supply chain operations through tools like inventory management software, supply chain visibility platforms, and predictive analytics to anticipate demand fluctuations and streamline logistics.

**Data Management:** Advanced technologies facilitate the collection, storage, and analysis of vast amounts of data. This data-driven approach allows organizations to make informed decisions, predict trends, and optimize operations.

This is not even mentioning technologies such as video conferencing, project management software, and collaborative tools enhance communication and coordination among teams, including remote and distributed teams which is our case.

In essence, technology has become integral to modern operations by enhancing productivity, improving decision-making, fostering innovation, and enabling organizations to adapt quickly to changing market dynamics and customer expectations.



# The Creative Process:

## From Concept to Final Design

Written by: Sebastián Vásquez  
Graphic Design

As a graphic designer, creating advertising pieces for social networks is a somewhat complex and somewhat careful creative process, which goes from the conception of an original idea to the realization of a final design. This journey usually involves several stages, each designed to transform an abstract vision into a striking and coherent creation.

Idea generation is the starting point of any creative process. Take our time to discover what message we want to convey and how we want to convey it. Our goal is to produce a large number of ideas, regardless of their quality, so that, once we have enough, we can choose the best ones and give them a more appropriate form.

Research is crucial to support our ideas. Knowing our product or service in depth will help us give our message a better perspective.

Our objective is to select the most innovative, original and relevant ideas, in order to ultimately refine and develop them further. I always find using paper and a pencil faster than using a computer directly, and it also allows me to see all the ideas that come to me together.



Creating sketches to design always helps save time and effort, and allows me to better detail different versions of the design, allowing me to test, evaluate, fail and change quickly on a simple sheet of paper.

Knowing our target audience or our main market will always be essential, since based on them it will be the style we give to our projects.

use pages with free photographs or take them ourselves. Today, creating designs has become an easier and more bearable exercise. We have a large number of applications such as Canva or Adobe Express to name a few, each of them with templates already made by other designers that save us time, and that we can generally edit to use based on our ideas.

It's always good to show our designs to new eyes for a final review, and perhaps to give us a new idea we haven't thought of.

We must take into account where our design will be used. Different social networks have different proportions and characteristics and a quick search on the Internet will help us choose the most appropriate ones. Furthermore, a design for social networks is not the same as one that we are going to send to print. Here a series of totally different characteristics come into play that we must know to avoid any disappointment that could cost us time and money. The creative process is a dynamic, multifaceted sequence of stages, each of which is crucial to transforming an abstract

idea into a tangible, successful design. From idea generation to production and launch, each phase requires a combination of creativity, planning and meticulous execution. Understanding and mastering this process is essential for anyone in the field of design and creativity, thus ensuring the creation of works that are not only aesthetically pleasing, but also functional and meaningful.

After these evaluations all we have left to do is take our creation from initial idea to execution. Without a doubt, learning to use slightly more complex programs such as Photoshop, Illustrator or CorelDraw not only takes time, it will force us to invest in them to use them. We must also keep in mind that we may need stock photographs, although we can always







# The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Business Success

Written by: Helina Awayehu  
Social Responsibility and Support Coordinator

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is not just a peripheral aspect of business; it is integral to long-term success. CSR ensures that a company remains connected with its audience and the broader societal context. In today's evolving landscape, marked by significant generational shifts, CSR becomes even more crucial.

For the first time in history, the corporate workforce spans the widest age gap ever seen. This diversity results from various factors such as experience, education, and even nepotism. Understanding this dynamic is essential.

CSR plays a pivotal role in bridging these generational divides. It fosters an environment where diverse perspectives are valued and integrated into the company's core strategies. By prioritizing ethical practices, sustainable operations, and community engagement, businesses can cultivate a culture of inclusivity and responsibility.

Moreover, CSR initiatives resonate strongly with younger generations, who increasingly demand that companies stand for more than profit. They seek employers and brands that align with their values, such as environmental sustainability, social justice, and ethical governance. Therefore, businesses that proactively engage in CSR can attract and retain top talent, enhance their brand reputation, and build stronger customer loyalty.

In conclusion, CSR is more than a moral obligation; it is a strategic imperative. Companies that embed social responsibility into their DNA are better positioned to navigate the complexities of the modern workforce and achieve enduring success.



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# Celebrate Environmental Services Housekeeping Week & National Healthcare Food Service Week

## With Our Bundles!



We're thrilled to announce that pre-orders are now open for the upcoming special occasions in September and October! What better way to honor your staff than with thoughtful gifts from our collection?

Interested in adding a personal touch? Whether it's your facility's name, logo, or any special requests, our products are fully customizable to suit your unique needs.

Given the high demand, we recommend placing your orders promptly to ensure timely delivery. Let's celebrate together with unforgettable gifts for your team!

### Featured Bundles Can Include:

- **Personal Totes:** Carry your essentials in style with our practical and stylish totes
- **Reusable Water Bottles:** Stay hydrated throughout your shift with our durable, eco-friendly water bottles.
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- **Appreciation Pens:** Show your staff how much you value their hard work with our Appreciation Pens. Every time they use these pens, they'll be reminded of your gratitude!

### And Much More!

Don't see what you want? Contact us for more options.  
Make your staff's workday a little brighter and more comfortable, don't miss out!

### How to Order:

To place an order or inquire about our products, please contact us at:

Email: [sales@fortinternational.com](mailto:sales@fortinternational.com)

# Word Search

Entertain yourself for a while and solve this word search as quickly as possible. If you prefer you can click on the link below and solve the challenge from your cell phone or computer.

## Goal setting Basics

O	L	A	O	G	C	I	M	E	D	A	C	A	D
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T	L	U	S	E	R	D	N	E	L	S	S	L	O
R	B	P	G	O	J	E	C	T	I	V	E	K	D
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- DAY TO DAY
- COMPLETE
- PERSONAL TRAIT
- PERSISTENCY
- SUCCESS
- WILLINGNESS
- SPECIFIC ACTION
- FEELINGS
- PERSONAL GOAL
- GOALS
- BUSINESS GOAL
- ACADEMIC GOAL
- END RESULT
- ACCOMPLISHED
- GOJECTIVE
- TASK
- SMART GOAL
- HABITS

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/1054221>

## TEAM FORT



Damian



Ely



Danny



Sebas



Goretty



Helina



Brian

## The Social FORT

Are you a Social media buff join us!  
Comment and see what the FORT difference is all about!



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