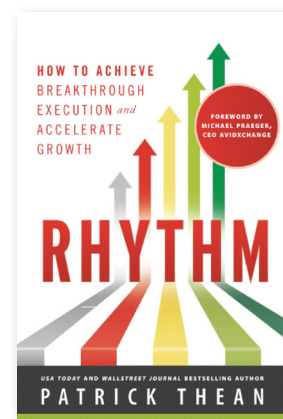


# Rhythm

How to Achieve Breakthrough Execution and Accelerate Growth

by **Patrick Thean**



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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Companies in all industries experience patterns of success and failure. In fact, recent statistics show that 4% of businesses in the US ever surpass \$10 million in revenue and almost 17,000 ever see more than \$50 million. Patrick Thean talks about how the rhythm of success and failure need to be approached with a “Think Plan Do” process in his book *Rhythm: How to Achieve Breakthrough Execution and Accelerate Growth*. With his experience helping numerous businesses over the years, Patrick’s influence can be seen in companies like AvidXchange who used the rhythm of quarterly planning and has grown to over 1600 employees from 5 in the beginning.

With the help of his colleagues and customers, Patrick’s book is a testament to what it takes to change the rhythm of your business and excel toward success. Patrick’s Rhythm of Work™ provides the fundamentals necessary to implement the Think Plan Do approach successfully.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The problems currently plaguing our communication today.
- Real-life scenarios where digital pollution has hindered communication.
- How to move toward a more human-centric communication.
- How humans are to blame; not the technology.
- How to correct the error and miscommunication we face.

## Introduction

All growth companies encounter ceilings of complexity, usually when they hit certain milestones. Most of the tipping points vary based on the type of business, past experiences, and growth rates of firms. Things don't always go according to plan, but when there is a rhythm introduced, it can ensure long-term growth when making the right decisions.

When it comes to using rhythmic thinking to increase results, Think Plan Do, brings about changes that can ensure long-term growth and results.

- **Think Rhythm:** strategic thinking that creates a rhythm focused on the future of the business
- **Plan Rhythm:** the execution of planning to let all teams and individuals know what they are supposed to do
- **Do Rhythm:** the rhythm of doing the work to keep the plan on track

When the right rhythm is implemented, it gives you focus, alignment, and accountability – all factors that need to be considered for success.

## Think Rhythm

### The Secret To Growth Is Developing A Habit To Think

For some companies, the excuse of not having time comes up quite often. What this translates to is that taking the time to create a strategy for growth was not important enough. By being proactive about scheduling time to work on strategy and future growth within the business, big changes can begin to occur. All it takes is a weekly lunch meeting with your team to focus on strategy to begin seeing progress. It becomes important when your company wants to grow to take out the time necessary to think – but it requires developing the habit to ensure consistency and a rhythm that pushes toward success. When you clarify and communicate the elements of your strategy, it gives you a strong foundation to scale your company, which permeates to all operational priorities.

### Winning Moves To 2x Your Business

Having clear winning moves is one of the most important things you can do when getting your team focused and aligned. These winning moves do not come from those one off eureka moments that occur from time to time. Winning moves drive revenue – more specifically doubling your

business revenue in three to five years. If your company is growing slower than the industry, it means that you are losing market share to the competitor, despite your ability to grow. In order to grow, you have to think about how to grow, if you do not work on finding the winning moves through strategic thinking, you are missing out to the competition who is already utilizing this type of thinking. Developing the right winning moves requires thinking outside the box, especially if you find yourself stuck in the same old patterns. It requires looking outside the same routines to explore what others are doing if you want to differentiate yourself from them.

### 5 Steps To Developing Your Winning Moves

To craft the winning move, you have to make assumptions – which don't always pan out. The great thing about these assumptions is that you can adapt them and make them more focused on your winning outcome. Just because your winning move is good and the assumption doesn't work, you don't need to throw out the entire idea, but simply change the assumption and test it again. When developing winning moves within your company, you need to:

1. **Name Your Winning Move** – give your winning move a name that will help you better communicate the idea. The name helps to motivate your team, as well as clearly communicate the goals.
2. **Find the “Who”** – figure out who can accelerate your progress. Before you set up and execute a winning move, you need to set yourself up for success. How do you do this? Set yourself up with the right people who have the knowledge necessary to achieve the goals you set out for with this winning move.
3. **Develop Revenue Projections** – Your winning move should bring you revenue growth. Plan your growth ahead of time by projecting it into the next three to five years. While these projections will likely change, the objective is to view the strategy and adapt the revenue projection to help meet the targeted goals.
4. **Identify and Test Assumptions** – Your revenue projection will be formulated based on assumptions. You should document these assumptions so that you can test them in the real-world setting. Remaining open to the need to adapt assumptions will help ensure that each of the goals you plan to hit in terms of revenue are accounted for and adjusted to help meet those goals.
5. **Adjust** – Just because you have gathered information

and tested your assumptions doesn't mean that the winning move is perfect. It requires constant work and adjusting to maintain a rhythm that will set your company up for more growth.

### Your “Stop Doing” List

When you find your growth becoming stagnant, you need to use Think Rhythm to regain clarity and focus on a few winning moves. When you find yourself with multiple losing moves, it can trap you. They take your energy, resources, and prevent you from developing winning moves. Nothing changes if nothing changes – meaning that if you don't stop your losing moves and develop a Think Rhythm to create winning once, you won't succeed in what you are setting out to accomplish. Stop trying to give excuses, when you are looking for focus, you have to recognize the excuses you use, change the outlook, and begin executing the strategies that turn into winning plays for your company. The best way to leave the losing moves in the dust is to stop, think, and execute.

## Plan Rhythm

### Get Your Team Focused And Aligned With A Great Plan

The Plan Rhythm is essential to great execution planning. This helps build alignment throughout the organization. The best ways to implement this is by meeting annually and quarterly to plan execution for the year and the quarter. You should be separating your execution planning from your strategic thinking. Your execution planning is to help figure out how you will get the work done to move the company forward during any given timeframe. This will require you to slow down and think, which results in faster executions with less waste. When there are good planning sessions, the team is inspired, and it prepares them for a great quarter.

### Develop An Inspiring Plan

The plans you create with your team need to be inspiring and practical – one that connects with people's hearts and minds. This connection is what helps to push your strategy forward every year. Envisioning your main focus for your plan helps you with developing it, once you have that main focus you can begin executing on it. To keep your plan practical, it should have no more than five priorities in any given year, this allows you to focus on the main objectives and evaluate where you are with them during each quarter. Once you have your focus, make sure you are overcommunicating it. Keeping your plan a secret only limits what your depart-

ments can do if you don't include them. Make sure to keep communication open and even overcommunicate the plan so that everyone can be involved in making growth happen.

### Every Quarter Is A 13-Week Race

Instead of seeing a quarter as something that happens four times a year, look at it as a 13-week race. You have a set of objectives to meet every 13 weeks if you want to win that race, which helps execute your overall annual plan. Before any race, you have to create the objectives and a strategy that will set you on course for a win – before the start of every quarter, set aside the time for a two-day execution-planning session to define the focus and priorities for that race. During this planning session you need to take the time to share and discuss priorities, including searching for any opportunities where you can provide assistance. Don't expect that one department plan will be enough, it should cascade to all departments because you are in the race together and it takes everyone working together to pull off a successful race that facilitates overall company growth.

### The Power Of Leading Indicators And Dashboards

The recipe for a successful quarter, every quarter, requires establishing leading indicators with clear success criteria. You need to make it possible to track them publicly on visual dashboards so that everyone can monitor the success during the quarter. The two types of key performance indicators to focus on are results indicators (telling you what has happened) and leading indicators (predict the future). When you are looking for the right indicators, you should be asking “why” at least five times – this requires you to dig deeper and will drive you to better results in the long run. The red-yellow-green approach to your success criteria alerts members what areas need immediate improvement and where goals are on pace within your strategies. The use of the red indicator also helps drive team members to improve the areas necessary to bring the color level to a more attractive shade of success. Communicating amongst team members and management through dashboards allows for accountability without the drama – addressing areas faster and spread communication quickly throughout the organization to achieve higher rates of success.

## Do Rhythm

### Nothing Happens Until You Do The Work

Do Rhythm is the path to focused and aligned execution that

strives for achieving short-term plans and long-term strategies. Developing a Do Rhythm helps overcome the feeling of “doing work is hard, but nothing happens until you do the work.” Setting up meetings is important with the Do Rhythm – meet with yourself, meet with your team, and meet with those critical to achieving the success you are looking for. You have to use this time to make adjustments and solve the problems that you may find within your quarterly strategies. During your meetings, use the success criteria and the red-yellow-green indicators as action-oriented tools meant to move toward success, not focus on individual faults.

## Prepare To Have A Great Week

Preparation is a critical part of a successful Do Rhythm and sets you up for a great week. When scheduling your meetings, look for those bright spots that will help scale solutions across the company while developing the corrective action plans that overcome the obstacles you are facing. Another way to take on the obstacles is to get group input using an idea-generating session that allows for collaboration and the search for making critical adjustments to keep things on track. During your preparation, make sure you are including the victories and what was learned from the week prior, while also touching on the success goals for the next week that brings your company another step closer to keeping the quarterly priorities on track.

## Make Adjustments To Keep Your Plan On Track

To have a great plan execution, you have to be willing to make the necessary adjustments – but in a smart way. The Do Rhythm can help you explore when and how to make these adjustments. Having weekly Adjustment Meetings allow you to review where you are and discuss what ad-

justments need to be made. These meetings can be used to focus on the specific problems and if you find yourself stuck, you can ask questions until you discover what levers need to be pushed to bring forth a solution. When plans begin to veer off track, it is best to pull the trigger early to ensure they regain their course and move forward instead of derailing altogether.

## Conclusion

Implementing the Think Plan Do Rhythms is a process, not an event. These things take time to implement and successfully execute within your company. These rhythms help to keep your teams focused, aligned, and accountable. Having actionable plans allows you to stay on track as you grow your company. Even if you are doing good right now as a company, you can go from good to great through a rhythm plan – encouraging you to continue learning and improving no matter what level you are at.



Patrick Thean is a successful serial entrepreneur who has started and exited multiple companies. As founder and CEO of Metasys, Inc., he grew Metasys to a ranking of 151 on the Inc. 500 list. An international speaker, Patrick has spoken to thousands of businesses in the United States, Canada, Asia, and Australia. Currently a cofounder and CEO of Gazelles Systems, he is the creator of Rhythm Software. Patrick received his Masters of Engineering and Bachelors of Science in electrical engineering from Cornell University.

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