SDS PODCAST
EPISODE 60
FIVE MINUTE FRIDAY:
MAKER'S SCHEDULE VS. MANAGER'S SCHEDULE

Show Notes: http://www.superdatascience.com/60
Hello and welcome back to the SuperDataScience podcast. Today I’ve got an interesting thought which I would like to share with you. There is this person called Paul Graham, who is one of the founders of Y Combinator, which is a startup seed capital firm. So they basically invest money into startups. And here on their website, it says that twice a year they invest a small amount of money, $120,000, in a large number of startups. Recently, it was 105. And he's got his own blog. His blog is www.paulgraham.com. There I found an interesting article. I think I actually heard about it for the first time from Tim Ferriss. I'm not sure about that one, but I think it was from there. And the article is called "Maker's Schedule vs. Manager's Schedule". You can find it there, it's from July 2009, and it's got a very interesting thought behind it. That in our lives, not always, and not everybody, should have the same type of schedule in their day. And I'll explain a bit more what this means.

This means that depending on what task we’re undertaking, or what role we're performing, we can actually participate in two different types of schedules. So basically right now, in the workplace, most of the time, you’ll find that you have a calendar and that you might have a meeting here, a meeting there, a catch-up with somebody at 1 pm, then somebody wants to talk to you about your project, or you have to get a project update at 5, and so on. And so everybody, or in many companies, and I know this especially coming from consulting and working in industry, many companies expect that you work according to the schedule, where they can put in any time into your calendar, and unless you have a very specific reason, you need to attend that meeting, or you need to participate in that conversation, and so on.

And that is valid in many cases, but that is called the "manager's schedule", where your day is broken down into hourly blocks. Hourly, or even half-hourly blocks where every hour, or every half hour, your nervous system is
trained to switch over to a new task because usually that’s how long meetings run, and/or you do something, like you clean your emails for an hour, then you just switch over to the next task, you work on that for an hour, then your next task, and so on. And the reason Paul Graham calls this the "manager's schedule" is because that's how managers work. They're used to that and especially if they have assistants, they just switch over, switch over, switch over, and they're ready to go on the next task. And they just do that day in and day out.

But at the same time, there is a place for a different type of schedule, called the "maker's schedule". And the maker's schedule is something I can really relate to, because when I create courses, I can't just switch over between tasks. Or when I create content for the internet, I can't just switch over between different tasks every hour. I need time to focus. I need time to get into the zone. I need time to get into the state of flow, to really start enjoying what I'm doing and immerse myself in it. And that takes way longer than an hour. And in that type of schedule, in the maker's schedule, when you're creating content, or creating things, or you're writing a piece of code, or you're doing analytics around – especially in data science. When you're doing analytics around a project, or you're cleaning your data, or something like that. That can take sometimes a very long time. It could take days, maybe even weeks to finalize. And therefore, your day cannot be broken down into hours. It is unreasonable for people to expect that you can switch over to different tasks every hour.

In the maker's schedule, according to Paul Graham, you need to have your day broken down into maximum two blocks, so half a day each. Or ideally, you need your whole day free. You need your whole day to devote to that one thing where you really need your creativity to come out, where you really need to give yourself 100% to that one objective in order to accomplish it. And that is the main difference between the two schedules, that in a manager's schedule, you have lots and lots of little blocks, an hour, or half
hour, even 15 minutes long, and that's how your day is broken down, and
your nervous system is prepared to take on the day like that. In a maker's
schedule, it's very different. It's either half a day, or even a full day. And I can
attest to that. When I have a full day in my calendar blocked out, I don't have
anything interfering, I am much more likely to produce very outstanding
results, as opposed to even if I have one meeting somewhere in the middle of
the day, it's going to completely just sit in the back of my head, it's completely
going to distract me.

So something for you to think about. Check out the article, it's at
paulgraham.com/makersschedule.html. You can find it there and read a bit
more about this and see how that affects your role and maybe you can talk
to your manager or just structure your day in such a way that you know
which days you can have a maker's schedule and which days you can have
a manager's schedule. So for instance, for me, I prefer to have just one day a
week where I have the manager's schedule, like a Tuesday. Or maybe twice a
week, Tuesday and a Friday, where I have the manager's schedule, and the
rest of the week is maker's schedule, because I really need to focus on
creating courses or being creative. And again, it depends on the objective that
you have for yourself and the projects that you're working on, and the role
that you're performing.

So there you go, I hope that was helpful, and I hope you have a fantastic
weekend ahead. Can't wait to see you next time. And until then, happy
analyzing.

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