

# Productivity Smackdown

# Planner

The three planners we are about to delve into came to my attention as Facebook ads. I get a lot of ads for planners and these three stood out to me. I've had some time to play and now I am ready to break down all the features just in time for the new year.

A note before we begin. Paper planners are my back up and where I like jot down notes, new tasks, and map out projects. Everything in my paper planner goes into a digital system. Also, my dislikes may be your likes and vice versa. We all have our unique styles. That's why there are so many planners out there.

## EVO

This planner hooked me right away. EVO actually has four planners that are suited to your specific brain type. Your brain type is determined by taking a quiz. If you have been following along you might know that I love quizzes and games. When I took the quiz I learned my brain type is an Alchemist and it suits me just great. When I glanced at the sample pages the Alchemist planner was the one I would have chosen. The other three brain types are the Architect, Explorer, and Oracle. You can take the quiz [here](#) to determine your brain type.

So the review of this planner is only for the other Alchemist out there, I guess. I will say the paper used and the construction of the planner is excellent. There is no bleed through with my pens, but you can see the ink through the page. All of the planners are 8.25" X 5" Look at all the sample pages [here](#). Use the drop-down box to select the

planner and scroll down to see a preview of the sample pages.

This planner also intrigued me because it comes with an app to track your daily and weekly progress. The app is available in iTunes and is in beta testing for Android. I was able to join the beta testing program for the Android app and though it has a few bugs it has been great to be able to track my progress on my goals and habits and see it in a visual manner.

Diving into the planner its self you are first given detailed instructions on how to use your planner. There is then a brief description of the Brain Type Relationships and the fundamentals of the brain types. If you are curious as to how you would work with other brain types EVO has you covered and details how you best interact with other types. I highly recommend you read and even reread the beginning of this planner. Such great information that led me to great insights about myself and how I work best with others. If you want even more information on Brain Type and how to use the planner visit their EVO's very active [Facebook Community](#).

The EVO Planner's month at a glance has all the bases covered. You are able to set a monthly focus, list out projects and to do's, and set month goals and your why. I love that there is also space to record the specific actions you are going to take to achieve those goals. For the visual among us, they have done each day of the week in a different color.

The next section is the weekly plan. EVO did something smart and they separated the weekly plan from the daily pages. At first, this annoyed me, but when I started using other planners I realized even though they were undated I could not use the entire planner if I missed a day. With EVO you can take a break and not miss a beat because they have separate sections.

So what's in the weekly plan? There is space to list out the

to do's for the week for both personal and work. I personally prefer one list for both, but that is another blog post. ☐ You then set some goals for 5 categories including Health, Relationships, Cash Flow, Fun, and Contribution. After you have planned you review the week you just had by recording your favorite moments and what you learned. There is also a section for scoring you the categories I mentioned earlier. The final section you select something that would make the next week better. After you are done you scan the QR code and the app will show you visually where you are and how you have improved over the last week. Keep in mind this is specific for the Alchemist brain type. The EVO planner you choose may have a different week at a glance.

The Daily Pages for the Alchemist Planner are just downright fun I think. You start off with gratitude and then you list out how you will share your discoveries today. Us Alchemist love to share. I love that there is space to record two self-care activities. One for wellness and one for fun. The first page in the daily pages ends with a spot for ideas and thoughts. It's ok in its size, but if I really want to take notes I flip to the section in the back.

The second page of the Daily pages is where you list out specific tasks for the day, prioritize them, and estimate how much time they will take. I love this!!! The bottom of the page is dedicated to rating your day and checking off what tasks you completed. There is a QR Code on each page so you can see your daily progress to your goals.

Overall, I love this planner. I love seeing progress but I'm too lazy to track most things. The EVO planner makes it fun and engaging. I do wish it was a little bit bigger. It is the smallest of the three being looked at in this post. It is also, in my opinion, the prettiest! I got the navy blue and I love the texture on the cover and the gold trimmed pages.

# Panda Planner

While the EVO Planner is all about brain type and finding your flow the [Panda Planner](#) is about productivity and finding more happiness in your life. I purchased the Panda Classic, but there are three other types of Panda Planners to choose from. In addition to the Classic, there is the Pro, Weekly, and the collaboration planner with VIA. The classic measures 5.25" by 8.25" and comes in 4 different colors. I chose the Tiffany's Blue.

I love that all three planners come with instructions and a community or tutorials to help you make the most of your planner. Panda Planner has a series of YouTube videos to help you skyrocket your productivity and an active FB Group

After the instructions in the Panda Planner Classic, we jump right into the month at a glance. This may be my favorite month at a glance of all three planners. I love that there is a section for planning and review where you not only consider your goals and wins but also the distractions to avoid. Being aware of your obstacles will help you succeed in reaching your goals.

The weekly pages contain more review and planning. There is a lot of room to note your current projects with the next actions for each. While I love all the space for mapping out goals and projects, remember that you can repeat and leave items blank. For example, there are four slots for projects on the weekly pages. If you don't have four projects going don't try to create more for yourself to do because you want to fill in the entire page. Having two projects is fine. If the blank space bothers you grab some washi tape and a marker and fill it in with a great quote. Another example is the

Passion Project Section. You don't need a new Passion Project every week. Most likely this section will carry over weekly until the project is done. You can also list your Passion Project in one of the four project spaces on the second page.

The daily pages are where the magic happens in this planner. Every day you start by writing down what you are grateful for and what you are excited about. There is a section for a daily affirmation. Like the Passion Project section in the weekly pages, this section can repeat day to day. No need to come up with a new affirmation every day. There is also a space to set a focus for the day and you exercise. There is also a lot of room to plan your priorities for the day on the Daily pages. Use your weekly pages to inform your priorities for the day to reach your goals.

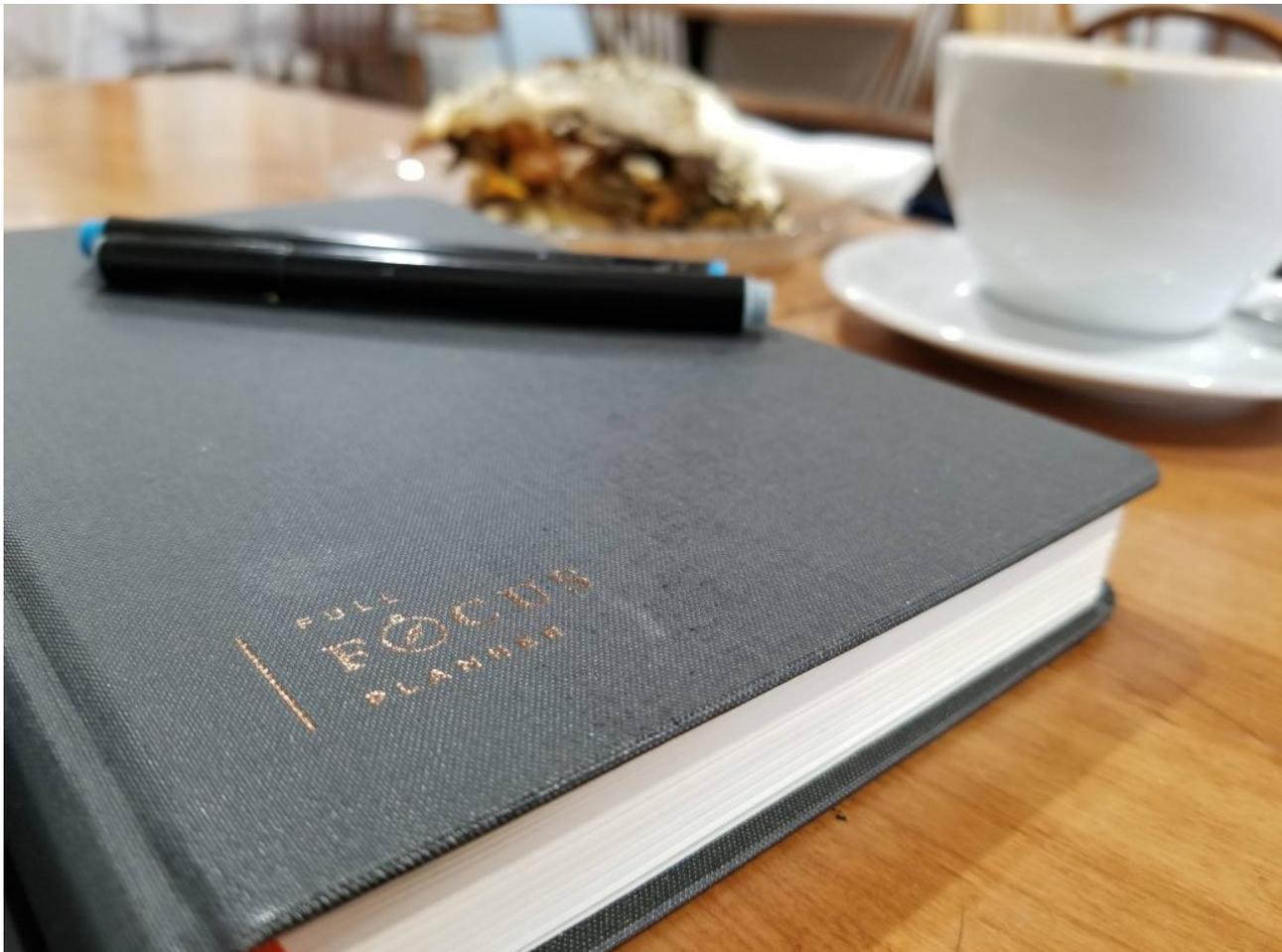
I love that this planner includes a daily schedule. The EVO Planner does not have this. I like to map out my tasks on my schedule so I know if I am committing to too much in one day. The notes section is not very large on the daily pages and I like to take a lot of notes. There is a section for notes in the back of the planner, but I don't feel there are quite enough pages.

The daily pages end with a review of the days wins and how you will improve tomorrow. If gratitude and happiness are as important to you as productivity this is the planner for you.

## **The Full Focus Planner**

[The Full Focus Planner](#) is all about, you guessed it focus! This planners intention is to help you set and achieve your goals. It is the only planner I have seen that allows you to map out your ideal day. This is work that I do with my productivity clients and love that it is included in this planner.

There is a brief how to use your planner description on the beginning page of the planner. For a detailed explanation watch the tutorial videos. Michael Hyatt goes into detail on each section of the planner. It was great information and I learned a ton.



This is a thick planner and I love that a table of contents is included. There are two ribbon bookmarks to help you keep your place in the planner, but sometimes it's nice to look at your table of contents to flip to where you need to be.

Although this planner is built around quarters there is a section for annual goals so you can have a bird's eye view of where you are heading in the year ahead. Michael Hyatt recommends having no more than 7-10 goals at any given time so the planner allows you to record what quarter you will complete the goal.

Once you have established your goals it is time to map out the

detail to get there. The Full Focus Planner has you covered. There are 10 goal detail pages where you can flesh out your achievement goals and your habit goals. I love the tracker at the bottom of the page to track your habit goals. I also like that in the goal detail you talk about your key motivations for completing the goal. That way when your motivation is lacking you can quickly refer to your planner to get yourself back on track with why the goal was important to you in the first place.

The next two sections the Monthly Calendars and Rolling Quarters give you the ability to see the bigger picture. The monthly calendar is pretty standard. There is a section for notes and each day has a habit tracker built in. You can either track up to 8 different habits or track the frequency of one habit in a day. The Rolling Quarter pages allow you to see a year at a glance and plan ahead of the quarter that you are currently in.

One of the simplest ways to simplify your life is to create checklists of routines that you perform every day. The Full Focus planner allows for four daily rituals: Morning, Workday Startup, Workday Shutdown, and Evening. Writing down your routine will go a long way in committing to your routine. It is nice to also know how long your routine takes so you can plan for your other daily tasks accordingly.

The next section of the planner is the ideal week where you can map out your repeating commitments and use time blocking to focus your days for maximum productivity. I love this technique of creating your ideal week. When you are feeling stuck and not sure what to work on you can refer to your ideal week and see exactly what you want to be working on.

That is a lot of foundation work to living and achieving your goals. In this planner, you have mapped out your goals, planned your quarter, recorded your routines, and created your ideal week. Now, it is time to get to the daily grind.

The daily pages are informed by all the foundation work you have done. Michael Hyatt actually recommends using the daily pages for a while before filling in your goals and routines so you can get used to how the planner works. I actually did a lot of the foundation work in a separate notebook and then transferred it over. If you dive straight in maybe consider using a pencil to erase mistakes or in case you change your mind on the direction you want to head.

Here are the sections of the daily pages:

- Weeks Left in Quarter
- The Date
- Check Boxes for your rituals
- The Daily Big Three
- Other Tasks
- Agenda
- Notes

These sections are all pretty self-explanatory. I love the weeks left in quarter section to keep you on track to meet your goals by the end of the quarter. The blank date allows you to start using the Full Focus Planner whenever you like, but keep in mind if you don't start at the appropriate place in the planner your weeks left in the quarter will not be accurate. If you complete your morning and workday start-up rituals check off the boxes. Using your goals as a guide determine your top three tasks for the day. These are the items that have to be done. You can list additional tasks under the other tasks section. In the agenda section, write down any appointments you may have and where possible schedule time to work on your tasks. I absolutely love the full page given to notes. I take a lot of notes and this is something the other planners lacked.

Another positive about this planner is that the weekly preview is located within the daily pages after Sunday. In the EVO Planner and Panda Planner, there is a separate section for the

weekly preview/review so you can truly use the entire planner even if you miss a few days. This is one con about the Full Focus Planner. You must begin at the beginning of a quarter and if you miss planning for a day or two you have to skip those days in the planner.

I find the weekly preview to be a bit different than your typical planner. Yes, it has a section for your biggest wins from the previous week and a section for mapping out your big three for the coming week. There are even sections for what worked and what didn't, and a space to plan out what you will continue to do based on your reflections. What is different and what I love about this planner is that it recognizes that it is not a planner for task management. I love the list sweep section which reminds you to update your task management system. The final section in the weekly preview is to plan to optimize your weekend.

The last section of the planner is the Quarterly Preview. It covers the same material that is in the weekly preview but also reminds you to look back at your goals and what did and didn't work. The quarterly preview walks you through the steps of setting up your next full focus planner.

There you have it. Three planners each with a slightly different focus. Which one will you try?