

ADHD HACKED



A PRODUCTIVITY GUIDE FOR FOUNDERS



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IN THIS GUIDE...

ADHD SPICED

Those with ADHD often struggle with tasks that don't align with their natural motivators. The SPICED model captures six key drivers that influence our ability to focus and take action.

ADHD CHALLENGES

Entrepreneurship requires self-motivation, consistency, and execution, but ADHD brains often resist structure and routine. Understanding common challenges faced by the ADHD mind, how these interact with the demands of being a founder, and how we can use the SPICED model to hack them is the key to unlocking productivity.

ADHD QUIZ

Explore your own potential ADHD challenges - take the "What's blocking my productivity?" quiz to find out which ADHD tendencies might be hindering you on your entrepreneurial journey.

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STIMULATION

ADHD brains crave novelty, variety, and sensory or mental **stimulation**. They struggle with low-stimulation tasks but thrive when something is dynamic, interactive, or piques their curiosity.

ADHD MOTIVATORS

PASSION

When something aligns with their deep interests, ADHDers can hyperfocus for hours, losing track of time. **Passion**-driven work feels effortless.

IMMEDIACY

Urgency is a powerful motivator, creating the adrenaline rush needed to start tasks. Many with ADHD struggle to get going unless faced with a looming deadline.

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CHALLENGE

Many ADHDers perform best when something is *hard but not impossible*. The right level of difficulty (gamification, competition, problem-solving) keeps them engaged.

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is about being absorbed in an activity. It reflects the hyperfocus state, where distractions fade, and an ADHD mind becomes fully immersed.

DISCOMFORT

The need to fix or escape frustrating, overwhelming, or uncomfortable situations or sensations can push ADHDers into action. **Discomfort** avoidance can be a powerful motivator.



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9 COMMON CHALLENGES



SENSORY OVERLOAD



Overview: Becoming overwhelmed by an excess of sensory input, making it difficult to focus or process information. For individuals with ADHD, sensory overload can be a frequent trigger for anxiety, stress, and difficulty staying on task.

Founder Impact: Entrepreneurs with ADHD may struggle to manage environments or situations that overstimulate them, leading to decreased productivity, burnout, or emotional exhaustion. Sensory overload can be particularly disruptive when you're juggling multiple tasks or interacting with various stimuli.

SPICED Hacks:

1. **STIMULATION** - Create a stimulating environment that helps you stay focused. For example, listening to calming music or using noise-canceling headphones can minimise unwanted distractions, allowing you to channel your focus.
2. **PASSION** - Engage with tasks that you feel passionate about. Working on projects that you love can reduce the impact of sensory overload by creating a motivating focus that helps drown out distractions.



EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION



Overview: Struggles with planning, organising, prioritising, and following through on tasks, often leading to procrastination or feeling overwhelmed.

Founder Impact: Entrepreneurs with ADHD often generate brilliant ideas but struggle to execute them consistently. Without the built-in structure of a traditional workplace, tasks like financial tracking, client follow-ups, or content creation can be deprioritised or forgotten, leading to lost opportunities and last-minute stress.

SPICED Hacks:

1. **IMMEDIACY** - Set artificial deadlines or schedule accountability check-ins to create external pressure and a sense of urgency.
2. **DISCOMFORT** - Use strategic friction: place distractions (like your phone) out of reach, set up annoying reminders, or withhold a reward (like coffee or music) until a key task is completed.

TIME BLINDNESS



Overview: Difficulty estimating how long tasks will take, leading to overcommitting, running late, or spending too much time on the wrong things.

Founder Impact: Entrepreneurs with ADHD may struggle to meet deadlines, accidentally overbook their schedules, or lose track of time while deep in work, affecting client relationships and business growth.

SPICED Hacks:

1. **ENGAGEMENT** - Use dynamic time-tracking tools that provide real-time feedback (e.g., Pomodoro timers, visual countdowns, or apps that narrate time passing).
2. **DISCOMFORT** - Create external cues to manage time: wear a vibrating reminder watch, set alarms with distinct sounds for different tasks, or schedule physical interruptions like standing up every 30 minutes.



TASK PARALYSIS / AVOIDANCE

Overview: Feeling mentally "stuck" and unable to start a task, even when it's important, because of overwhelm, perfectionism, unclear next steps, or boredom.



Founder Impact: Entrepreneurs with ADHD may find themselves delaying or freezing on key tasks, such as administrative work, client follow-ups, or content creation, leading to missed deadlines and heightened stress. The fear of failure or a need for perfection can create a significant roadblock to progress.

SPICED Hacks:

1. **STIMULATION** - Break the task into tiny, engaging steps that feel easy to start (e.g., instead of "write a proposal," start with "write one sentence").
2. **CHALLENGE** - Turn boring tasks into a game (e.g., "Can I finish this report before this playlist ends?" or track progress like a points system).

OBJECT PERMANENCE

Overview: Out of sight, out of mind! Many people with ADHD forget about objects, tasks, or even people when they're not in their immediate environment.



Founder Impact: Entrepreneurs with ADHD may forget about key clients, projects, or tasks that don't have constant reminders or visible cues, leading to missed deadlines and commitments.

SPICED Hacks:

1. **STIMULATION** - Use visual reminders, sticky notes, or a dashboard for tasks that need attention.
2. **ENGAGEMENT** - Create a visual workflow or Kanban board to ensure tasks and projects are constantly visible and progress is clear.



IMPULSIVITY / INCONSISTENCY

Overview: Acting on ideas or emotions impulsively without fully thinking through the consequences, leading to inconsistent habits and workflows.



Founder Impact: Entrepreneurs with ADHD may start multiple projects at once, constantly pivot business strategies, or lack a structured daily routine, leading to chaos and inefficiency in their business operations.

SPICED Hacks:

1. **CHALLENGE** - Set up self-imposed rules to combat impulsivity, like waiting 24 hours before taking action on a new idea.
2. **DISCOMFORT** - Add friction to prevent hasty decisions by using decision-making processes (like writing down why you're considering a change) or setting a cooling-off period.

HYPERFOCUS

Overview: An intense ability to focus, but sometimes on unimportant tasks that aren't aligned with what needs to be done. Can lead to poor mental and physical wellbeing through forgetting to eat, drink, move, or go to the bathroom.



Founder Impact: Entrepreneurs with ADHD may find themselves dedicating excessive time to tasks like perfecting their website or researching new tools, while neglecting core business activities such as sales, admin, or financial tracking.

SPICED Hacks:

1. **PASSION** - Identify high-priority tasks you actually enjoy and attach them to essential but less exciting ones (e.g. do outreach while listening to music or in a café).
2. **CHALLENGE** - Use a ranking system to rate tasks on importance and give yourself a reward for completing high-priority ones first.



REJECTION SENSITIVITY



Overview: Intense emotional reactions to perceived rejection, criticism, or failure, even when it's unintentional.

Founder Impact: Entrepreneurs with ADHD may avoid sales, shy away from client feedback, or overanalyze every interaction, which can negatively impact their business development and relationships.

SPICED Hacks:

1. **ENGAGEMENT** - Proactively collect and revisit positive reinforcement (e.g. keep a "wins" folder of testimonials, compliments, and achievements to counterbalance negative thoughts).
2. **DISCOMFORT** - Use desensitisation strategies: gradually expose yourself to small, controlled doses of feedback to build resilience over time.

EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION



Overview: Intense, fast-changing emotions that can feel overwhelming and difficult to control.

Founder Impact: Entrepreneurs may struggle with frustration, burnout, or emotional decision-making, impacting client relationships and business stability.

SPICED Hacks:

1. **STIMULATION** - Use physical regulation strategies like exercise, deep breathing, or sensory tools (weighted blankets, fidget objects) to ground yourself.
2. **CHALLENGE** - Treat emotional regulation like a skill to develop: track patterns in your mood and reward yourself for using coping strategies effectively.

NOTE: These are just some of the common challenges experienced by ADHD minds. There will be nuances and differences between each person, their circumstances, and the effects of ADHD on them and their entrepreneurial endeavours.



WHAT'S **BLOCKING** MY PRODUCTIVITY?

Q1. Do you feel stressed, anxious, or unfocused when you're in a busy environment with loud noises or lots of movement?

Q2. Do you often need to escape or take a break when you're surrounded by too much sensory stimulation (e.g. bright lights, loud music, or a crowded place)?

Q3. Do you struggle with planning and prioritizing tasks, even when the deadline is approaching?

Q4. Does your work tend to be disorganized, leaving you feeling overwhelmed by what you need to do?

Q5. Do you often misjudge how long tasks will take and end up running out of time?

Q6. Do you find it hard to stick to schedules or deadlines because you lose track of time?

Q7. Do you experience mental "shutdowns" or "freeze" when faced with a large or complex task?

Q8. Do you often avoid tasks that don't immediately engage your interest, even when they're important?

Q9. Do you forget about tasks, projects, or people once they're out of sight or off your radar for a while?

Q10. Do you have a hard time remembering to follow up on things that aren't immediately in your line of sight?

Continue...



Sensory
Overload



Executive
Dysfunction



Time
Blindness



Task Paralysis
or Avoidance



Object
Permanence



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Continue...

Q11. Are you easily distracted by new shiny ideas or side projects, causing your focus to shift quickly?

Q12. Do you struggle to build consistent workflows or routines in your work?

Q13. Do you regularly get absorbed in one task, even if it's not the highest priority, and realise hours have passed without noticing?

Q14. Do you feel "stuck" or "locked in" on certain tasks, making it hard to switch to others?

Q15. Do you experience intense emotional reactions when you feel rejected, criticised, or overlooked, even in small ways?

Q16. Does the thought of disappointing others or making a mistake stop you from taking action?

Q17. Do you experience intense emotional highs and lows, making it difficult to stay focused or balanced throughout the day?

Q18. Do you often feel overwhelmed by emotions that seem to come out of nowhere?



Impulsivity or
Inconsistency



Hyperfocus



Rejection
Sensitivity



Emotional
Dysregulation

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