

Twitter Thread by [Lenny Rachitsky](#)



[Lenny Rachitsky](#)

[@lennysan](#)



Earlier today, I gave a talk at the [@SubstackInc](#)'s writer conference about building a writing habit. Below are the ten concrete strategies I shared that have helped me publish a post every week for 1.5 years ■

0/ First of all, just sharing advice about this topic gives me serious impostor syndrome because writing is still pretty new to me, and I have much to learn. But these are things that have helped me, and I hope they'll help you.

1/ Strategy 1: Commit publicly

This was maybe 50% of my initial motivation. Having told people I was going to write weekly made me feel bad when even thinking about skipping a week. It gave me just enough nudge to keep going.

<https://t.co/R0EWblrHnW>

I'm kicking off an experiment. Inspired by the great [@joulee](#), and building off of the great inbound questions I continue to get from ya'll -- I'm going to start using my newsletter to answer your questions. \U0001f44b

Sign up below <https://t.co/z1F1efMcue>

— Lenny Rachitsky ([@lennysan](#)) [September 12, 2019](#)

1b/ You don't need to make this super public. Just sending an email to a few friends regularly with your concrete goals about writing (and anything else) works wonders.

Lenny Rachitsky <lennysan@gmail.com>
to lennys-sprint-updates ▾

Sun, May 3, 2020, 3:03 PM



Theme: Build

Work:

1. Publish two newsletters 🏁
2. Stay four weeks ahead on future newsletter posts 📅
3. Make a ton of progress on First Round Review post 📝
4. Do a great job in presentations this week 🔔

Personal:

1. Exercise 6 times 🚶
2. Get out of the house at least twice a day (to walk Einstein) 🐕
3. Bike twice 🚲

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As a reminder, this is my ongoing and ever-evolving experiment in self-imposed accountability. Every two weeks I will commit to a series of goals, and send those goals to this group. There's no responsibility on your part to reply. The act of sending this email automatically makes me feel accountable. However, if you have any advice or wisdom at any time, please share. And if you ever want to unsubscribe, [click here](#) (it doesn't notify me). Thank you for being a part of this experiment with me.

1c/ If you *really* want to be motivated, ask people for money. Nothing motivates you more than people paying you for regular content.

<https://t.co/ZH6Dm87jFr>

Life alert: I'm adding a paid plan to my newsletter 🎉

After much prodding from readers and friends, I'm going to take the leap and give this life-path a shot.

Consider subscribing and joining me on this journey 🙌 <https://t.co/gtFm4POGSQ>

— Lenny Rachitsky (@lennysan) [April 7, 2020](#)

2/ Strategy #2: Stay close to what interests you

Writing is hard enough. Write about things that you're genuinely energized by, excited to learn more about, or curious about. Don't force yourself to write things you think you *should* or *need* to write about.

It won't last.

2b/ On that, the classic advice is to find a tiny niche and become the best person in that niche. I ignored this advice. I didn't want to spend all of my time thinking about *just* PM, or just growth, etc. I stayed broad so that I'd stay interested in the topic(s).

3/ Strategy #3: Maintain a sustainable pace

Here's what your pace should feel like, IMHO. Writing a newsletter is a marathon. Don't burn yourself out. I personally love the weekly cadence. Daily newsletters blow my mind.



3b/ Important: People don't want MORE emails. They want better, more valuable, emails.

Consistency + quality = you win.

4/ Strategy #4: Protect deep work time

Valuable, interesting, creative work always comes from focused, distraction-free time. But the world is always trying to take this time away from you. You need to find strategies to protect this time. Read this book.

<https://t.co/cWaAYRzZMd>

4b/ If you don't have a full-time job, my advice is to avoid booking any meetings until 3pm. Try it. It's game-changing.

If you do have a job, can you add 3-hour blocks of time the mornings of M/W/F? Or on a weekend?



4c/ The #1 highest-grossing Substack writer does it part-time, every day, and makes over \$1m. It's possible.

<https://t.co/oZ9qOgC7nW>

5/ Strategy #5: Turn on do-not-disturb mode on both your phone and computer

We have puny brains with no ability to avoid distractions. Embrace "ignorance is bliss." Shut off notifications by turning on DND.


At a minimum, do this during your deep work time. Ideally, all day.

Signal strength bars VZW Wi-Fi




Moon icon Headphones icon 94% 









Not Playing







Screen Mirroring



6/ Strategy #6: Find tools that help you stay focused, organized, and distraction free

1. A TODO app to prioritize your tasks (I use [@centered_app](#))
2. A doc tool to organize your content (I use [@coda_hq](#))
3. A note-taking tool for quick notes (I use <https://t.co/YHvgJvV9dt>)

6b/

4. Tools to help you with writing (I use [@Grammarly](#) and <https://t.co/tTNv9IH9Ik>)
5. Nutrients to boost energy and focus (I drink tea and [@magicmind](#))
6. A platform for hosting/sending content (I use [@SubstackInc](#))

7/ Strategy #7: Have an idea dumping ground

When you have time to write, you want to avoid the blank page as much as possible. What helps me is having a place to dump random idea as they come, which I can build and add to over time. I use Coda pages for this.

The screenshot shows a Coda workspace titled "Lenny's Newsletter". On the left is a sidebar with a search bar and a list of 17 topics, each with a checkbox icon. The last topic, "Types of business models", is highlighted in light blue. The main content area on the right has a heading "Types of business models" and a list of items:

- 1. Types of business models
 - i. SaaS - monthly subscription (e.g. Figma)
 - ii. GMV - % of transactions (e.g. Stripe)
 - iii. DTC/e-commerce - one-time purchase (e.g. Amazon, Airbnb)
 - iv. Membership - monthly subscription (e.g. Prime, Gym)
 - a. <https://twitter.com/gaganbiyani/status/1269331365553745921>
 - b.

8/ Strategy #8: Turn this idea backlog into a prioritized list of your upcoming content

Give your brain a chance to marinate on what's coming up next, and let go of the things that are way out in the future. And once it's fleshed out enough, throw it into your email system.

Lenny's Newsletter

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Share

Explore NEW!

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Search

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Topic ideas

Inspirations

Upcoming content

26 - Prioritizing growth le

27 - Many roadmaps

28 - Sharing bad news ab

29 - Retention benchmark

30 - PMF user research

31 - Bringing your team al

32 - Elizabeth's post

33 - Evaluating marketpla

34 - Product Teemplates

Reference

Testimonials

Marketing ideas

Writing advice

Guest post candidate

New page

Upcoming content

🔒

27 - Many roadmaps

Q: One of the more frustrating challenges I've encountered in my role has been the disparate sources of truth. As an example, the UX team has a prioritized backlog and roadmap, created in partnership with Product Managers AND Product Management and their eng teams having a different roadmap (even different tools). That's broken right?

Yep! This is broken. Nice work recognizing an opportunity to level up your teams.

Though it's normal at a high-growth company to go through periods where there are more tools than people, and to even have a doc who's job it is to keep track of all of the other docs, as a rule, the fewer documents and tools you have to rely on, the better. This is *especially* true for roadmap docs.

To zoom out, what's the point of a roadmap doc? In my mind, there are five primary benefits:

- 1. Prioritization:** A forcing function to prioritize all of your team's great ideas
- 2. Alignment:** Everyone on the team can see what those priorities are
- 3. Transparency:** Everyone on the team can see who's working on what
- 4. Accountability:** Clear dates and deadlines for each project and person
- 5. Dependencies:** Highlight which tracks of work are dependent on others

If your team is using multiple roadmaps for a single team/project, you significantly reduce the benefits of having a roadmap. Particularly when it comes to Alignment, Transparency, and tracking Dependencies. It's totally fine for individual functions (e.g. the research team) to keep

9/ Strategy #9: Go where the energy takes you

Give yourself permission to change course on your next topic if you aren't feeling it. Go where your energy takes you.

You don't owe anyone anything (usually). More excited about something else? Roll with it! It'll be better also.

