QUARTERLY FOCUS PLANNER

A thinking tool — not a schedule

From The Cognitive Performer Podcast

How to Use This (Read First)

This planner is not about controlling your year.
It's about keeping your hands on the wheel when things get noisy.

You're not trying to predict everything.

You're choosing a direction, setting feedback points, and giving yourself a place to return when friction shows up.

This is actually the challenging part of the whole thing. Thinking of each entry, but don't let that bog you down. Remember it's not meant to be perfect, it's meant to be a start. Something you can measure and adjust from if needed.

Print this out. Use a pen.

Research shows that handwriting creates stronger neural connections than typing. When you physically write your focus, your brain processes it differently - more deeply, more deliberately.

You're not just documenting a plan. You're committing it to paper in a way that makes it harder to ignore.

Fill this out once per quarter.
Revisit it weekly.
Adjust without guilt.

Key Principles
• This is a **direction-setting tool**, not a productivity system
• The questions at the end of each quarter are **more important** than the planning at the beginning
• Your focus can change — pivoting isn't failure, it's learning
• If you can't remember your weekly actions without looking, they're too complicated
• **Don't plan too far ahead** — fill one quarter fully, sketch the next, leave the rest blank

Year at a Glance

Fill this in as you complete each quarter

Quarter	Primary Focus	Decision
Q1 (Jan-Mar)		☐ Continue ☐ Adjust ☐ Pivot
Q2 (Apr-Jun)		☐ Continue ☐ Adjust ☐ Pivot
Q3 (Jul-Sep)		☐ Continue ☐ Adjust ☐ Pivot
Q4 (Oct-Dec)		☐ Continue ☐ Adjust ☐ Pivot

Quarter Focus (90 Days)

Quarter: □ Q1 □ Q2 □ Q3 □ Q4
Dates: _____

Primary Focus (ONE thing only)

If I could only move one thing forward this quarter, it would be:

_____

_____

(Example: "Build relationships with political ad agencies"
Not: "Grow my business")

Why This Focus Matters (Agency Check)

I'm choosing this focus because:

_____

_____

_____

(If this feels fuzzy, stop and refine the focus.)

Quarter Outcome (What "Worked" Looks Like)

By the end of this quarter, I'll know this focus worked if:

_____

_____

_____

(Concrete. Observable. Not perfect.)

Backward Planning (Competition Day → Today)

If that outcome happens by the end of the quarter, then:

• What must be true by Month 3?

_____

• What must be true by Month 2?

_____

• What must be true by Month 1?

_____

This is your map — not a promise.

Weekly Translation (Feedback Loop)

Each week, I will consistently do these actions:

• Action 1: _____
• Action 2: _____
• Action 3 (optional): _____

If I miss a week, I don't quit. I resume.

What I'm NOT Focusing On (Boundary Setting)

To protect this focus, I'm intentionally deprioritizing:

_____
_____
_____

(This doesn't mean "never." It means "not now.")

Friction Plan (When Life Interrupts)

When things go sideways, my rule is:
Return to the next doable action — not the perfect plan.

My fallback action when I feel stuck is:

_____
_____

Weekly Check-In (5 Minutes)
Once per week, answer these three questions:

1. What did I actually do?

_____
_____

2. What moved the needle (even a little)?

_____
_____

3. What needs adjusting next week?

_____
_____

That's it. No journaling marathon.

Quarter Reflection (End of 90 Days)

At the end of the quarter:

• What worked?
_____
_____
_____

• What didn't work?
_____
_____
_____

• Do I continue, adjust, or pivot this focus?

☐ Continue   ☐ Adjust   ☐ Pivot

This decision becomes the starting point for the next quarter.

Final Reminder

This planner is not here to judge you.
It's here to help you see clearly.

Friction is expected.
Drift is normal.
Returning is the skill.