

Time Value Matrix™ Instructions

You know that time is one of the most powerful variables you control in the success equation. You already know what some of your biggest time wasters are, both in and out of the office, but seeing them in stark black and white may drive the point home.

Before beginning the Business Coaching Program, the business leaders we work with averaged 18 hours per week of wasted time – *18 hours each week!*

The good news is that you'll learn to restructure your day and week to reclaim 8-12 of these hours each week and invest them in higher value activities. The results will be nothing short of magic.

Your Turn: Complete the quick calculation below to see how much of your time is being wasted on low value activities every week.

Now multiply your total by fifty weeks per year. That's how many hours you are personally wasting on low-value work at present. Considering that before the coaching program, the business leaders we work with averaged eighteen hours per week of wasted time, that's over nine hundred hours each year, or a full twenty-two working weeks a year that were wasted.

Top 10 Low-Value Time Thieves

How many hours on average do you spend per week doing the following activities?

Hours	Event
	Sitting in non-productive or wasteful meetings.
	Dealing with low-level interruptions that easily could have been handled by someone else.
	Handling low-value emails.
	Handling low-value requests from co-workers.
	Writing reports that have no impact on the bottom line and that nobody bothers to read.
	Streaming YouTube cat videos, checking social media, or indulging in other forms of escapism for a "mental health break".
	Doing low-level business activities that the company easily could outsource at a much lesser cost to the business than your time.
	Putting out fires that easily could have been prevented.
	Doing office work you could pay someone \$25/hour or less to do (laundry, cleaning, yard work, simple repair work, picking up dry cleaning, etc.)
	Total: hours per week

The cost doesn't stop there; it continues with your key staff. Assuming that they use their time as well as you do, multiply these wasted hours per year by the number of key staff on your team. This is the direct cost to your company of operating "business as usual".

And what about the follow-on indirect cost of burnout, employee turnover, and disengagement? When you factor in all the direct and indirect costs of "business as usual," the real cost is staggering.

Imagine if you and your company reinvested these wasted hours into your highest-value activities. What kind of impact would that have? The Time Value Matrix tool is designed to help you and your team reclaim 8-12 hours of your best time each week and reinvest these hours into your highest value producing activities.

Step One: Clarify What You Do that Creates Value for Your Company

To upgrade your use of time, you first have to identify what you do that truly creates value for your enterprise. The first step to creating more value per unit of time is to concretely define what your real value-creation activities are.

This is why in Step One of the tool you begin by listing the 3-5 most important results that you are on the payroll to create. Once you've listed them, detail the three most important behaviors or activities that you do that actually create each of these results. It's important that you bring it down to this concrete, observable level.

Step One: Example

Top 3 results I'm on the payroll to create:	3 most important behaviors and activities I do that generate this result:
1. Spokesperson for company to bring large numbers of prospective clients into the door of our business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Write and promote bestselling new books. Lock down large-scale promotional opportunities for our company, like regular columns with leading business websites and publications. Give large-scale keynote talks to groups in our target audience.
2. Strategic visionary and decision maker	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Make high-level strategic decisions about what to invest our staff time and attention into and where to invest company resources (and what tempting distractions to say no to). Regularly ask and prod my company to think about what comes next, and make sure that a portion of our best resources is focused on testing, exploring, and preparing for future growth engines for the company. Communicate, both in words and actions, our values and culture throughout the company.
3. Coach, develop, and lead our leadership team	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Invest one-to-one time with our key leaders to help them grow and effectively lead their respective areas of the company. Make sure that each of our key leaders has a clear understanding of our company strategy and how their part of the company needs to contribute to the overall plan so that we accomplish our most important goals. Hold our leadership team accountable for their pillar plans and key results.

Step Two: Determine Your A and B-Level Activities

If you've read anything on time management, you've come across Pareto's Principle, inspired by the work of nineteenth-century economist Vilfredo Pareto. Commonly called the "80-20 Rule," Pareto's Principle states that 20 percent of your actions generate 80 percent of your results (high value) and 80 percent of your actions generate the other 20 percent of your results (low value). I've used this valuable distinction as the foundation for a refined time-value model.

If you take the 20 percent of your actions that generate 80 percent of your results and apply the 80-20 rule to it a second time, then 20 percent of that 20 percent produces 80 percent of 80 percent of your results. That means 4 percent of your effort (the 20 percent of 20 percent) generates 64 percent of your results (80 percent of 80 percent).

Hang in here with me for one more math moment and apply the 80-20 rule one final time. That means that just 1 percent of your effort (20 percent of 20 percent of 20 percent) generates 50 percent of your results! That's right—a tiny fraction of your highest-value work produces half of all your results.

No, this is not an exact science. Nor does this just work automatically. But Pareto's Principle illustrates a valuable point: all time is not valued equally. Four hours of your best time on Tuesday may have produced a far greater return than thirty hours of low-value tasks you "checked off" on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

The goal is to reclaim blocks of your best time, structured in a way that enables you to focus on your highest-value activities. The starting point is to create your own personal Time Value Matrix, sorting your activities into four types of time:

Time Value Matrix™

	INPUT	OUTPUT	RELATIVE VALUE
A TIME Magic 1%	1%	50%	200 x D
B TIME 4% Sweet Spot	4%	64%	64 x D
C TIME Leveraged 20%	20%	80%	16 x D
D TIME 80% Mass	80%	20%	1 x D

The Time Value Matrix is about taking Pareto's Principle to its most productive extreme.

» **D time** is the 80 percent of unleveraged, wasteful time that only produces 20 percent of your total return. I call this the 80 Percent Mass and give it a relative value of 1.

» **C time** is the leveraged 20 percent of your time that produces 80 percent of your results. I call this Leveraged Time. It has a relative value of 16 (1/4 less input generating 4 times more output). That means every hour of C activities creates 16 times the economic value of one hour of D time.

» **B time** is the highly focused 4 percent that generates 64 percent of your results. I call this 4 percent your Sweet Spot. It has a relative value of 64: one hour of B time produces 64 times the value of the same time spent on a D activity.

» **A time** is the top of the pyramid—the Magic One Percent. Fully 50 percent of your results come from these activities. (A time has a relative value of 200 times that of D time.)

Your low-value, D-time task might include screening out phone solicitations, filling out your expense reimbursement spreadsheet, or creating a low-stakes, time-consuming report that no one really looks at or uses anyway. If you didn't have to do these tasks, or if you only fit them into your least productive remnant time, you'd have more of your best time for your higher-value work.

Your C-time activities could include delegating to a staff member, working one-to-one with a client, or sending a progress update to your team. These things matter, but they don't matter the most. You need C-level activities; they make up much of how you push projects ahead and take care of your day-to-day responsibilities. The key is to recognize and remember that there is a higher order of activities, your A- and B-level activities, that are a magnitude more valuable.

Your B-level activities might include working one-to-one to coach and develop a key team member, planning out your high-value activities for the week, or participating in a key brainstorming session.

Your A-level activities might include creating your one-page quarterly Action Plan for your company or department, making a key hire, or working with one of your top alliance partners to launch a new joint campaign.

At this point, it's normal if the line between A- and B-level activities is blurred. Over time, as you start to pay attention, it will become easier to discern the finer distinction between your particular A-level activities and your B-level ones. What matters now is that you see that A- and B-level activities are a magnitude more valuable than the mundane C- and D-level tasks that clog your to-do list.

Understand that these lists are not static. What you currently consider A- or B-level activity will inevitably change as your business grows or your role evolves within an organization. For example, if meeting one-to-one with a prospective client currently is an A-level activity for you, make sure that in six to twelve months, you've increased the value you create for your company so this activity is pushed down to a B- or C-level activity. Ideally, working with a joint-venture partner who can generate dozens of leads for you every month will become an A-level activity, or training your sales team to meet with prospective clients one-to-one, or creating a sales video that generates passive sales. By that point, meeting one-to-one with a prospective client is no longer as important for you to do personally. This is good. This is growth.

Understanding the distinctions between A-, B-, C-, and D-level activities will help you shift your focus from putting in hours to upgrading the type of work you do. Over time, this will create huge business breakthroughs. If you are an entrepreneur, you can grow your business by 25 to 50 percent or more if you just create an extra day or two each week to focus on taking those action steps that would grow and expand your business. If you are an executive, you can meet corporate targets faster and demonstrably increase the growth and success of your division, without working every weekend. If you practice law or some other profession, you can increase your firm's profit without simply cranking out more billable hours or personally performing more procedures. Whatever your field, the result of upgrading your existing hours to better and higher uses is magical—greater value created in less total time worked.

Step Three: Create Focus Blocks of Time for A & B-Level Work

A Focus Day is a specific day of the week you set aside to work primarily on a few key A- or B-level projects. On your Focus Day, you'll block out three to four hours of your best time to invest in your highest-value A- and B- level activities.

Push Days are all the other days of your work week that you use to just "push" your normal projects another step forward. Focus Days help you create long-term impact on your business; Push Days help you keep your day-to-day operations rolling forward.

We suggest that you start by designating one day each week as your Focus Day, and within that Focus Day you permanently schedule one three- to four-hour "focus block" that you reserve for your highest-value activities. On your "Push" days, do your best to block out one hour of focus time for higher value activities.

Enroll your team in supporting your Focus Day. Encourage your key staff to set aside their own Focus Days, too. What do you do with the other four to five hours of the day that aren't in your focus block? Whatever you normally would do. Your focus block is so valuable for your organization that it is okay to let the rest of the day go to your C- and even a few D-level activities.

To the right is a sample weekly schedule showing how your week might work when you use this simple yet potent concept.

On your Focus Day, get outside of your old business routine and instead work on the highest-leverage, highest-value, highest-return part of your business. This could mean building out a baseline operational process to use with new clients, investing time in coaching your key team members, refining your hiring system, or visiting your two most important customers or prospects to deepen the relationship or close the sale.

Think of your focus block as an appointment with yourself, when you are at your best, in the morning or the afternoon, whenever you feel sharpest, to do those highest-value A- and B-time items only you can do for your company. Put it in your calendar to guarantee yourself a focus block of at least one hour of uninterrupted time even on your Push Days. Even if you do this in small, incremental steps with two Push Days a week, you'll start to notice a significant impact on your productivity level.

This simple methodology allows you to reclaim those critical blocks of your best time. **Remember, the world won't volunteer to turn off; it takes a structured, well-designed approach to make these blocks of time to invest in your highest-value activities.** If you're passive about this, your time will be fractured into small pieces. Ten minutes here, five minutes there.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
8	Focus Block	8	Focus Block	8	Focus Block
9		Focus Day			
10					
11					
12					
1					
2					
3					
4				Focus Block	
5					

This is about using all this extra time wisely, because it's actually *not* time that's the scarcest resource—attention is. Your best attention, the time when you are at your best in terms of productivity and focus, is the most powerful weapon in your arsenal.

For many of us, that first hour of the day, when we are sufficiently rested and fresh, is the most valuable. Lesser organizational leaders and managers crave control and immediate emotional rewards, so the first thing they do when entering the office is check their email. In fact, they likely already checked it twice before reaching the office. What a wasted opportunity! Most email just helps you tread water. Instead, when you get to your office, invest your golden hour in something that truly makes a difference.

Imagine the power of a four-hour Focus Day block and four days of one-hour focus blocks, giving you eight uninterrupted hours each week to invest in your top priorities. Now multiply that by the forty-eight weeks a year you work (you *are* taking off a minimum of four weeks' vacation a year, right? If not, why not?). That's the equivalent of forty-eight full eight-hour days of your very best time—nine working weeks of you at your best doing upgraded activities. You can see how this is a key early step in breaking the link between one hour of time worked and one hour of value created.

The more you create these uninterrupted blocks of time, the more you can upgrade your use of that time and inject value into your daily activities. Instead of going from one thing to the next, to the next, you'll be amazed by how much you get done when you are more intentional, keeping this principle of quality blocks of time in mind. Many business leaders allow their time to be "sliced" to death. They have five minutes to focus on a project before an email interrupts them. Then they move to a meeting, only to have fifteen minutes to prep for the next meeting that starts soon after the first. Then they get hit with two staff requests as they leave that meeting on their way back to their office. And so goes their day. You already know it's extraordinarily difficult to create your best value in small slivers of time. You need those blocks of uninterrupted best time in which to think, plan, create, and execute on key items.

As you progress, add a second, even a third Focus Day to your week so that you can create even more value for your organization. Here is what David's typical week looks like on his calendar:

RECAP: Set aside one Focus Day every week. Block out a three- to four-hour block of focus time during which you'll work exclusively on the highest-leverage, highest-value, highest-return activities (A and B) that add real value. Then, schedule in a focus block of at least one hour every Push Day.

David's Typical Week
with Focus Days and Reserved Focus Blocks

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
8	Focus Block		Focus Block		
9		Focus Day		Focus Day	Focus Day
10					
11					
12					
1		Focus Day		Focus Day	
2					
3	15.5 Hours / Week				
4					
5					

Step Four: List Your Recurring D-Level Activities and "4-D" Them Away

After you've identified what you do that truly creates value (your A and B activities), look closely at your recurring D activities as the place to mine the raw ore of more time. These are the tasks and recurring responsibilities that eat up your day but contribute very little to your business's bottom line. On the Time Value Matrix tool, you'll see a blank for you to list your best estimate of the average number of hours per month you currently spend on each of these ten D-level activities.

At the bottom of that column on the tool, add up the total number of hours per month you'll be able to reclaim when you get these low value activities off your personal plate. It's typical for a new business coaching client to identify 40 hours or more of low value, recurring D-level activities to reclaim. Think about that for a moment – *that's one full week per month of reclaimed time!*

Once you've identified ten of your recurring D-level activities, you'll "4-D" them away.

Here are the four "D's":

Delete It.

Some D activities just plain shouldn't be done by anyone. Look at the action item and ask yourself what would be the consequences if no one did it. If the consequences are small, then consider just crossing it off your list altogether.

Delegate It.

Maybe it's a task that needs to get done but not necessarily by you. Hand it off to your assistant, a staff member, or a vendor. Anytime you can hand off a D-level activity to someone, you free up both your time and your focus to do more valuable work for your organization.

Defer It.

Maybe this task needs to be done and done by you, but should it happen right now? Sometimes delaying the action item is the smartest choice.

Design It Out.

If you find yourself handling a recurring D activity again and again, find a way to design it out by improving the process or system to keep the task from coming up in the first place. For example, if you get the same seven customer questions, post an FAQ page with the answers on your website. Or perhaps you can preempt questions by giving new clients a "quick start" booklet that proactively answers these seven questions. Or, post an instructional video on your website that gives new clients your best presentation while answering these common questions. You get the idea. While it may take a little more time to "design out" a D-level activity, if it is one that comes up again and again, a little more time upfront will yield real time dividends down the road.

In the final column of the tool, list the next action step you will take to actually 4-D away each of your ten listed recurring D-level activities.

The bottom line is that you are already wasting more than enough hours each month to scale your company, but you just need to apply the four D's of Deleting, Delegating, Deferring, and Designing Out your low value work to free up five or more hours each week to reinvest in A and B activities. This is how our clients are able to double, triple, even 10x their companies, while working fewer hours.