

APEX ACADEMY

The Educational Division of Apex Ledger Group LLC

AA-FM-012 · OPERATIONS TRACK · FIELD MANUAL

The Time Audit Worksheet

Where your time actually goes for one honest week — not where you assume it goes.

Clarity beats complexity.

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AA-FM-012 · First issued as part of the Apex Academy Free Resource Library.

Field Manual Details

Field Manual Number	AA-FM-012
Track Classification	Operations
Difficulty Level	Beginner
Estimated Completion Time	5 minutes a day for one week; 20 minutes to review
Prerequisite Manuals	AA-FM-011 — The Delegation Planner (recommended, not required)
Intended Audience	Owners who feel constantly busy but aren't sure their time is going to what matters most

Executive Summary

This Field Manual helps you see where your time is actually going for one real week, rather than relying on a general impression. It directly measures the foundation layer of the Capacity Pyramid™ — Owner Capacity — the layer every other layer depends on.

Learning Objectives

- Categorize a full week of your own time honestly.
- Identify at least one mismatch between where time goes and where it should go.
- Connect audit findings directly to a delegation or elimination decision.

Educational Introduction

Impressions of Time Are Almost Always Wrong

Ask most owners where their time goes, and you'll get a reasonably confident answer. Ask them to actually track it for a week, and the answer is often very different. Time, unlike money, doesn't leave a paper trail unless someone deliberately creates one — so impressions of where it goes tend to be shaped by whatever felt most stressful, not by what actually took the most hours.

A time audit is simple and slightly uncomfortable: for one week, log what you're doing in short intervals and categorize it. At the end of the week, the actual pattern — not the assumed one — becomes visible.

The goal isn't to fill every hour productively. It's to notice the gap between where your time should go, given what only you can do, and where it's actually going.

Clarity beats complexity.

How to Use This Manual

- Log your time in short blocks (15–30 minutes) throughout the day, rather than reconstructing it from memory at night.
- Use broad categories rather than granular ones — precision isn't the point, pattern is.
- Do this for one full, reasonably typical week — not your busiest or quietest week of the year.
- Resist judging the log as you go. Save the reflection for the end of the week.

Core Framework: The Capacity Pyramid™

This manual measures the base of the pyramid directly. If Owner Capacity is consistently overloaded with work that belongs higher up the org chart, nothing above it — Team, Systems, or Growth Capacity — can stabilize.

- Owner Capacity — the foundation. Measured directly by this audit.
- Team Capacity — enough of the right people, trained and trusted (see AA-FM-011).
- Systems Capacity — documented, repeatable processes (see AA-FM-008).
- Growth Capacity — the top layer, only stable once the three below it are.

APEX INSIGHT

Owners rarely have a time-management problem. They usually have an Owner Capacity layer absorbing work that belongs on a different layer entirely.

The Worksheet

Category Key

Suggested categories — adjust to fit your role: Strategic Work • Client/Customer Work • Team Management • Admin & Email • Meetings • Firefighting • Personal/Break

Daily Log

Day	Category	Approx. Hours
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

COMMON MISTAKE

Owners often log the version of the day they intended to have, not the one they actually had.
Log at the moment, not at day's end from memory.

Weekly Totals by Category

Score Summary

Estimate what percentage of your logged week fell into each category, and compare against what you'd consider an ideal split.

Category	Actual %	Ideal %
Strategic Work		
Client/Customer Work		
Team Management		
Admin & Email		
Firefighting		

Interpretation Guide

Score Range	Interpretation
Gap under 10%	Aligned. Your time roughly matches your intention — worth re-auditing in a quarter.
Gap 10–25%	Drifting. A meaningful gap exists — identify one category to actively shift next week.
Gap over 25%	Misaligned. Owner Capacity is likely absorbing work from another layer of the pyramid — see AA-FM-011.

APEX PERSPECTIVE

A large gap isn't a personal failing — it's simply the most useful information this audit produces. It tells you exactly where to look next.

Reflection Questions

What surprised you most about where your time actually went this week?

Which category has the biggest gap between how much time it deserves and how much time it's actually getting?

CEO Notes

Note any one-time factors that made this week unusual, so future audits stay comparable.

WATCH FOR THIS

If Firefighting consistently exceeds 20% of your week, that's rarely a time-management issue — it's usually a signal that AA-FM-013, the Business Bottleneck Finder, would reveal a root cause worth addressing directly.

Your Next 30-Minute Win

Pick the single category with the largest gap between Actual % and Ideal %, and identify one specific task within it that could move to someone else this week. Then take AA-FM-011, the Delegation Planner, and actually plan that handoff.

Key Takeaways

- Impressions of where time goes are usually shaped by stress, not by actual hours spent.
- A real audit, even for one week, tends to reveal at least one genuine surprise.
- The goal isn't a perfectly optimized week — it's noticing where reality and intention diverge.

Recommended Next Field Manual

Field Manual	AA-FM-013 — The Business Bottleneck Finder
Estimated Time	20–25 minutes
Why This Is Next	Because you've audited your own time, your next step closes the Operations track by identifying the single business-wide constraint that may be driving that time imbalance in the first place.

Additional Learning Resources

Expands Into (Paid Workbook)	The Leadership Capacity Workbook — connects time audit findings to a longer-term capacity and delegation plan.
Complementary Workshop	"Where Your Time Actually Goes" — a live session on time auditing and reclaiming strategic hours.
Supports Future Certification	Apex Certified Business Operator — Module 3: Leadership & Sustainable Ownership.

Social Media Companion Content

Theme for this manual: honest self-observation, not productivity shaming. The goal is awareness, not a perfectly optimized calendar.

LinkedIn

Long-Form Post

Ask most owners where their time goes, and you'll get a fairly confident answer. Ask them to actually track it for a week, and the answer is often very different. Time doesn't leave a paper trail the way money does — unless someone deliberately creates one. Impressions of where it goes tend to be shaped by whatever felt most stressful, not by what actually took the most hours. We built AA-FM-012, the Time Audit Worksheet: a simple daily log for one week, categorized honestly, with a short reflection at the end. Clarity beats complexity. Sometimes clarity is just an honest week of paying attention. Link in comments.

Carousel Outline (6 slides)

- Slide 1 — Hook: "You probably don't know where your time actually goes."
- Slide 2 — Why impressions of time are usually wrong.
- Slide 3 — The 7 suggested time categories.
- Slide 4 — How to log without it becoming a chore.
- Slide 5 — What most owners find surprising.
- Slide 6 — CTA: "Download AA-FM-012, free."

Poll

Question: "Have you ever actually tracked your time for a full week?" Options: Yes · No, but I'm curious what I'd find · No, and I'm scared to know

Facebook

Community Post

Quick challenge: could you say, with confidence, exactly how many hours you spent last week on strategic work versus admin versus firefighting? We built a free one-week time audit worksheet. Link below if it's useful.

Small Business Discussion Prompt

If you've ever tracked your time for a week, what surprised you most about where it actually went?

Story Version (text overlay sequence)

- Frame 1: "You probably don't know where your time goes."
- Frame 2: "Free Time Audit Worksheet."
- Frame 3: "Swipe up — one honest week."

Instagram

Carousel Outline (5 slides)

- Slide 1: "Where does your time actually go?"
- Slide 2: The 7 categories, one icon each.

- Slide 3: "Not a perfect week. An honest one."
- Slide 4: Pull quote — "Clarity beats complexity."
- Slide 5: CTA — link in bio.

Caption

Most impressions of where time goes are shaped by stress, not by actual hours spent. This free Time Audit Worksheet (AA-FM-012) usually reveals at least one real surprise. Link in bio. #productivity #smallbusiness #apexacademy

Reel Script (35 seconds)

0-3s: On camera — "You probably don't actually know where your time goes." 3-14s: "Your impression is shaped by what felt stressful, not by what took the most hours." 14-24s: "Track it for one honest week, in simple categories." 24-32s: "Free worksheet, link in bio." 32-35s: "Most people find at least one real surprise."

Story Sequence

- Story 1: Quiz sticker — "Guess what % of your week goes to admin"
- Story 2: Poll sticker — "Ever tracked your time for a week? Yes / No"
- Story 3: "Get the free worksheet" link sticker.

X (Twitter)

Five Short Posts

- You probably don't know where your time actually goes.
- Impressions of time are shaped by stress, not by actual hours spent.
- Time doesn't leave a paper trail like money does — unless you make one.
- One honest week of logging usually reveals at least one real surprise.
- Free Time Audit Worksheet (AA-FM-012) — link below.

Thread (5 tweets)

- 1/ Ask most owners where their time goes, you'll get a confident answer.
- 2/ Ask them to actually track it for a week, the answer is often very different.
- 3/ Time doesn't leave a paper trail unless you deliberately create one.
- 4/ The goal isn't a perfect week — it's noticing where reality and intention diverge.
- 5/ Free worksheet below.

Quote Graphic Caption

"Clarity beats complexity." — Apex Academy

YouTube

Video Title	Where Does Your Time Actually Go? (Probably Not Where You Think)
Thumbnail Text	TRACK ONE HONEST WEEK.

10-Minute Educational Outline

- 0:00–1:00 — Hook: why your impression of your own time is probably wrong.
- 1:00–3:00 — Why time doesn't leave a natural paper trail.

- 3:00–6:00 — How to log a week without it becoming a chore.
- 6:00–8:00 — What most owners find when they actually look.
- 8:00–9:30 — Introduce AA-FM-012.
- 9:30–10:00 — CTA and starting your own one-week audit.

Call-to-Action

"Grab AA-FM-012, free, in the description — start logging tomorrow morning."

TikTok

Hook (first 2 seconds)

"You don't actually know where your time goes."

45-Second Script

(0-4s) Hook line, on camera. (4-14s) "Your impression is shaped by what felt stressful, not by what took the most hours." (14-26s) "Track one honest week, simple categories, nothing fancy." (26-38s) "Free worksheet makes it easy — link in bio." (38-45s) "Most people find at least one real surprise."

B-Roll Suggestions

- Phone timer or simple log being filled in throughout a workday.
- Pie chart graphic revealing a surprising time breakdown.
- Calm end-of-week review scene, coffee, notebook.

Closing CTA

"Grab AA-FM-012, free — link in bio."

Email

Subject Line	You probably don't know where your time goes
Preview Text	A free one-week worksheet that usually reveals a surprise.

Educational Email

Hi [First Name], Ask most owners where their time goes, and you'll get a confident answer. Ask them to actually track it for a week, and the answer is often very different. AA-FM-012, the Time Audit Worksheet, is a simple one-week log, sorted into a handful of broad categories, with a short reflection at the end. [Download AA-FM-012, free] Calmly, Apex Academy

Printing Recommendations

- A small printed card that fits in a pocket or sits on a desk works well for the daily logging habit.
- Digital-first owners: a simple recurring note or basic time-tracking app category export works just as well.

Canva Layout Specifications

Typography & Layout

- Same navy/gold/off-white system as prior Operations manuals, for track continuity.
- Design the daily log as a simple, low-friction grid — this is filled out in short bursts throughout a busy week.
- A small color-coded legend per category makes the weekly totals easy to visually scan.

Score Interpretation Treatment

- Three-row gap-based table, distinct from the Operational Maturity Scale™ format used elsewhere in Operations, since this measures alignment rather than process maturity.

APEX ACADEMY

AA-FM-012 · The Time Audit Worksheet

| *Clarity beats complexity.*

Continue the journey: AA-FM-013, The Business Bottleneck Finder.