Apprentice

Free worksheet · about 15 minutes

The Repeat Work Audit

Find out how many hours a week your firm spends rebuilding the same documents, who it all waits for, and which piece of work to hand off first.

Step 1 List the work your team repeats

Step 2 Check how stuck the know-how is

Step 3 Add up the hours and pick the first one

Print it, or fill it in on screen. Best done with whoever does the work.

Step 1 · 5 minutes

What does your team rebuild every week?

List each piece of work that has the same shape every time: pitches and proposals, client reports and analysis, status updates, fee quotes, standard letters, reminders. Use weekly figures across the whole team.

Piece of work	How many a week	Hours each	Hours a week (×)	Who does it	Who checks it
Example: pitch decks	*2*	*6*	*12*	*Associate*	*Partner*
Example: client updates	*6*	*0.4*	*2.5*	*Account lead*	*Partner*

Total hours a week of repeat work

Not sure of the hours? Ask the person who does it: "How long did the last one take, start to finish, including finding the old version to copy?" People usually guess low.

Step 2 · 5 minutes

How stuck is the know-how?

For your biggest piece of work from step 1, score each statement: 0 = not true, 1 = partly true, 2 = true.

1	Only one or two people know how to do it properly.	0	1	2
2	How it's done isn't written down anywhere, or the write-up is out of date.	0	1	2
3	Each one starts by copying an old version and editing it.	0	1	2
4	A partner or senior person makes the same corrections again and again.	0	1	2
5	New joiners take months to do it the firm's way.	0	1	2
6	Work queues up waiting for one person to check it.	0	1	2
7	You've turned work away, or delayed it, because the team was busy with this.	0	1	2

Your score (out of 14)

0–4
The know-how is shared. A template or checklist may be enough.

5–9
It's stuck with a few people. Writing the rules down will free them up.

10–14
This is your bottleneck. It's costing you clients as well as hours.

Step 3 · 5 minutes

Pick the first piece of work to hand off.

The best first candidate has **the most hours a week** in step 1 and **the highest score** in step 2: lots of time, and know-how that's stuck. Start with one. Prove the hours, then add the next.

My first piece of work to hand off

Hours a week it takes today

The person whose know-how it depends on

Then ask the person who does it these four questions

1. Walk me through the last one you did, start to finish. Where did you start?
2. What do you always do that a new joiner would get wrong?
3. What does the partner usually change when they check it?
4. When is it different: which clients or situations break the usual pattern?

Their answers are the rules nobody has written down. They are what any handover, to a person or to software, needs first.

Want a second opinion on your numbers?

Apprentice learns how your firm does this work from short interviews with the people who do it, then drafts it for your team to review and send. Bring this sheet to a 15-minute call and we'll tell you honestly how many of those hours we could give back.

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