
PERSONAL PRODUCTIVITY / LEVERAGE ECONOMICS

Time Arbitrage: *Reinvest* or Waste

Delegation without authority is expensive theater; arbitrage wins when handoffs are engineered, not hoped.

SYSTEM ARCHETYPE 056

Time Arbitrage / *Leverage* /

Time arbitrage exchanges money for hours you can reinvest in higher-leverage work—when delegation, automation, and deletion are governed like a portfolio. Read with [stock vs. flow](#) on calendar design, [Pareto](#) on

where hours actually move outcomes, [deep work](#) protection, and [inversion](#) on rework traps.

"Buying time without a reinvestment plan is just a fancier way to stay busy."

1. Arbitrage *as Policy*

Delegation without decision rights is expensive theater; assistants need interfaces, templates, and veto rules. When load spikes, the policy should specify leverage blocks, shallow batches, and explicit no-meeting zones. If two people cannot follow the SOP, hiring will not fix it. Read [feedback delays](#) between hiring help and actually handing off authority.

Automation scales what is deterministic; humans should own exceptions and edge cases worth margin. Weekly retros should reconcile tax, employment law, and contractor classification when scaling help. Leverage is scheduled, not wished. Budget [entropy](#) for vendor turnover, training tax, and rework when handoffs fail.

Buying time for family is not anti-ambition; it is portfolio allocation across values and compounding skills. A serious time budget should publish partner expectations when household labor is also outsourced or not. Automation loves boring; humans own exceptions. Draw boundaries between tasks that need you and tasks that need anyone competent.

Time arbitrage buys low-friction hours from others—or from systems—so you can reinvest in high-leverage work your calendar was too crowded to attempt. Before hiring, verify whether hours bought versus hours reinvested in leverage—and the gap truthfully. Cheap hours that require rework are expensive hours. Use Stock vs. Flow so calendar stock (protected blocks) is not sold for flow scraps.

Vendor quality matters more than vendor price when rework destroys the saved hours. The adult version of arbitrage is to document assumptions about a key assistant quitting mid-project and how playbooks survive people. Bought time needs a destination, not a trophy. Use Stock vs. Flow so calendar stock (protected blocks) is not sold for flow scraps.

Your hourly floor should be explicit; below it, automation or deletion beats human delegation. If delegation stalls, interrogate the task is documented enough that someone else can finish without telepathy. Arbitrage without a floor is charity with a spreadsheet. Price time with Pareto so bought hours fund leverage, not vanity errands.

2. Delegation *Interfaces*

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Opportunity cost is the shadow price of every yes; arbitrage fails when you refuse to price it. Stress the month by assuming a key assistant quitting mid-project and how playbooks survive people. Opportunity cost is the bill you pretend not to receive. Run inversion on delegation: three ways assistants recreate your bottlenecks.

Batching shallow work protects arbitrage wins from dissolving into reactive pinball. Second-order thinkers ask how bought time interacts with the task is documented enough that someone else can finish without telepathy. When doubt appears, delete before you delegate. Pair deep work policies with bought time so shallow work cannot annex savings.

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Automation scales what is deterministic; humans should own exceptions and edge cases worth margin. Weekly retros should reconcile approval bottlenecks where you are still the hidden router. Leverage is scheduled, not wished.

Budget entropy for vendor turnover, training tax, and rework when handoffs fail.

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3. Hourly *Floors*

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Vendor quality matters more than vendor price when rework destroys the saved hours. The adult version of arbitrage is to document assumptions about

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4. Automation *versus Humans*

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Automation scales what is deterministic; humans should own exceptions and edge cases worth margin. Weekly retros should reconcile hours bought versus hours reinvested in leverage—and the gap truthfully. Leverage is scheduled, not wished. Draw [boundaries](#) between tasks that need you and tasks that need anyone competent.

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expensive hours. Run [inversion](#) on delegation: three ways assistants recreate your bottlenecks.

Vendor quality matters more than vendor price when rework destroys the saved hours. The adult version of arbitrage is to document assumptions about whether to hire, automate, delete, or defer—and who decides under pressure. Bought time needs a destination, not a trophy. Sketch [causal loop diagrams](#) for hourly rate, leverage projects, and burnout loops.

5. Batching *and Calendars*

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6. Vendors *and Rework*

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7. Opportunity *Cost*

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TIME ARBITRAGE CHARTER

01

Leverage blocks

Weekly hours reserved for non-negotiable depth.

02

Delegation queue

Tasks documented, owners named, SLAs clear.

03

Hourly floor

Number beneath which you automate or delete.

04

Reinvestment rule

Where bought hours must land each month.

8. Atlas *Integration*

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Build the *lattice*, not the legend.

Return to the Reading hub for essays, tools, and the rest of the 100-topic map.

