



# BLAZING TRAILS

Business Coach for Contractors

Grow Profits. Build Teams. Work Lean.

## R.E.A.D. TO LEAD: TIME MANAGEMENT FOR TRADES LEADERS

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REPLICATE | ELIMINATE | AUTOMATE | DELEGATE



PRISCILLA HANSEN MAHONEY, CPC  
BUSINESS COACH FOR CONTRACTORS  
[WWW.BLAZINGTRAILSCOACHING.COM](http://WWW.BLAZINGTRAILSCOACHING.COM)



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# WELCOME

**HI - I'M PRISCILLA HANSEN MAHONEY,  
GLAD YOU ARE HERE!**

I'm excited you grabbed this workbook—it shows you're serious about working smarter, leading with intention, and building a stronger business. Together, we'll explore how to master your time, streamline your systems, and ultimately, free yourself to focus on growth and leadership.

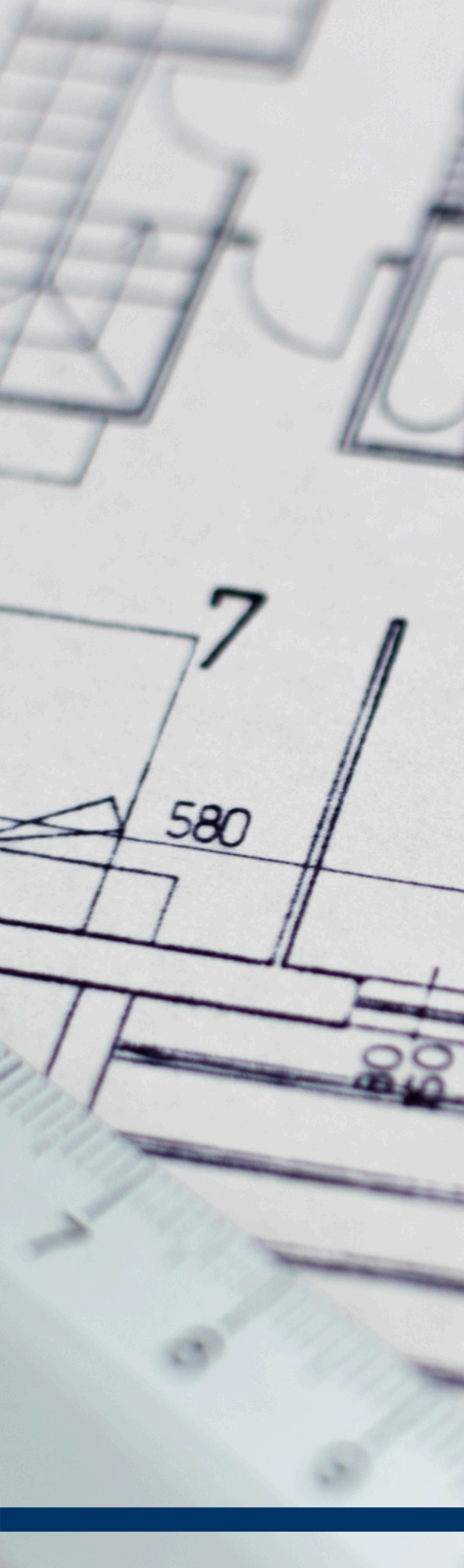
Time management is one of the biggest challenges in the trades. Too many contractors get stuck putting out fires, handling tasks others could do, or losing hours to inefficiency. The result? Long days, tight margins, and missed opportunities.

This workbook will help you break that cycle by applying the R.E.A.D. framework—Replicate, Eliminate, Automate, Delegate. Each section gives you practical strategies and exercises to help you identify where your time really goes, what's slowing you down, and how to create systems that save you hours every week. Done right, R.E.A.D. doesn't just make you more efficient—it makes your business more profitable, your team more empowered, and your leadership more impactful.

Ready to take back control of your time and lead with clarity? The framework is in your hands—let's get to work.

Your Partner In Success -  
Priscilla Hansen Mahoney  
Business Coach for Contractors  
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# 01

## WHERE DOES YOUR TIME GO?

*“NOT EVERY TASK IS EQUAL. IF IT DOESN'T MAKE OR SAVE YOU MONEY, PROTECT YOUR REPUTATION, OR GIVE YOU BACK TIME—IT'S NOT VALUE ADD.”*

The first step in mastering your time is understanding where it actually goes. Most contractors and trades leaders know they're busy—but busy doesn't always mean productive. Days get filled with putting out fires, answering texts, shuffling paperwork, and chasing down details. At the end of the week, it's easy to feel drained yet still wonder, “What did I really accomplish?”

That's where the idea of “value add” comes in. Every activity you do either makes your business stronger or pulls resources away from it.

A simple way to measure this is by asking three questions:

- **Money** → Does this make money, save money, or cost me money?
- **Reputation** → Does this strengthen my reputation, protect it, or damage it?
- **Time** → Does this save me time, protect my time, or waste my time?



# BE DISCERNING WITH YOUR TIME

When you filter your activities through these lenses, you'll start to see which ones are truly worth your energy. Some tasks clearly add value—like following up on a lead, preparing a crew with the right materials, or holding a focused safety talk. Others drain your business—like searching for a misplaced tool, sitting through an unfocused meeting, or chasing down information that should already be at your fingertips.

The key is awareness. Until you see where your time is going, you can't make the right decisions about what to Replicate, Eliminate, Automate, or Delegate.

For the next week, log your daily activities in the table below. Be specific—include even the small things, because those are often the biggest hidden time drains. At the end of each day, use the money/reputation/time questions to determine whether the task was truly value add.

| TASK/ACTIVITY             | TIME SPENT | VALUE ADD? (YES/NO)            |
|---------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| Reviewing invoices        | 1 hr       | Yes – saves money/time         |
| Answering scattered texts | 45 min     | No – wastes time               |
| Jobsite safety talk       | 20 min     | Yes – protects reputation/time |

## Reflection Questions:

Which tasks are making you money, saving time, or protecting your reputation?

Which ones are costing you in one of those three areas?

If you had 5 extra hours each week, what higher-value work would you spend them on?

What's one task you can move into a R.E.A.D. category this week?



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# VALUE-ADD TIME TRACKER

| TASK/ACTIVITY | TIME SPENT | VALUE ADD? (YES/NO) |
|---------------|------------|---------------------|
|               |            |                     |
|               |            |                     |
|               |            |                     |
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*"UNTIL WE CAN  
MANAGE TIME,  
WE CAN MANAGE  
NOTHING ELSE."*

PETER DRUCKER



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# 02

## LEARN TO R.E.A.D

REPLICATE | AUTOMATE | ELIMINATE | DELEGATE

Now that you've looked at where your time really goes, it's time to put a system in place to manage it more effectively. That's where the R.E.A.D. framework comes in.

Too often, contractors and trades leaders get caught in the trap of doing everything themselves—because it feels faster, because they want it done right, or because they don't trust others to handle it. But the truth is: if you don't start filtering how you spend your time, your business will always depend on you working longer hours just to keep up.

The R.E.A.D. framework changes that. It gives you a structured way to look at every task and decide what to do with it. Instead of letting your day control you, R.E.A.D. helps you take control.





# WHAT DOES R.E.A.D. MEAN?

## R

### REPLICATE

If a task is worth doing and you do it often, create a system so it can be done faster and more consistently. Replicating means building templates, checklists, or standard operating procedures (SOPs) so you're not reinventing the wheel every time.

- Example: Instead of drafting every proposal from scratch, build a template in your project management software or Google Docs.
- Example: Standardize your jobsite setup with a laminated checklist in every truck.
- Example: Write out a short client communication script so everyone on your team delivers the same message.

## E

### ELIMINATE

Not every task deserves to stay on your plate. Eliminate means cutting the activities that don't make you money, protect your reputation, or save time. Lean thinking calls this "removing waste."

- Example: Cut down long, unfocused meetings—replace them with 10-minute stand-up huddles.
- Example: Stop re-entering the same data in multiple systems—pick one platform and stick to it.
- Example: Eliminate unnecessary supply runs by planning materials lists ahead of time.

## A

### AUTOMATE

Some tasks are important but repetitive—and that's where automation comes in. By using technology, you can streamline the process and reduce human error. Automation doesn't replace people; it gives them more time for skilled work.

- Example: Use Jobber or ServiceTitan to automatically send appointment reminders and job updates to clients.
- Example: Set up recurring invoices and payment reminders in QuickBooks.
- Example: Use Zapier to connect systems (e.g., when a lead fills out a form on your website, it automatically adds them to your CRM).

## D

### DELEGATE

If a task is valuable but not the best use of your time, hand it off. Delegation is about trust, training, and leadership. When you delegate effectively, you multiply your capacity and grow your team's confidence.

- Example: Let a trusted crew lead handle daily scheduling and materials checklists.
- Example: Hire an office assistant or VA to process permits and invoices.
- Example: Outsource payroll or bookkeeping to a professional who can do it faster and with fewer mistakes.



# 03

## REPLICATE – STANDARDIZE WHAT WORKS

One of the fastest ways to save time is by avoiding reinvention. Every time you repeat a task from scratch, you burn energy, invite mistakes, and slow down your process. **Replication means standardizing recurring tasks so they can be done quickly, consistently, and with less effort.**

In the trades, so much of your work follows a rhythm: writing proposals, setting up a jobsite, conducting safety checks, or communicating with clients. When these processes are left to chance, they're inconsistent—and inconsistency costs money, time, and reputation. Replication solves this by creating repeatable systems.

### Examples of Replication in the Trades

#### Proposals & Estimates

- Develop templates for proposals, estimates, and contracts that can be quickly adapted.
- Build a pricing library so common materials and tasks are always consistent.

#### Jobsite Setup & Safety

- Create a standardized jobsite setup checklist kept in every truck.
- Use a consistent outline for daily safety talks so every crew leader covers the essentials.

#### Client Communication

- Draft scripts for appointment confirmations, change orders, and final walkthroughs.
- Save standard text or email templates for common client updates.

#### Internal Processes

- Document workflows step by step so employees can follow them without guesswork.
  - Store SOPs in a shared location that's easy for your team to access.
- 

### Why Replicate?

When you replicate, you:

- Save time by not starting from scratch.
- Reduce mistakes with clear, consistent systems.
- Free up mental bandwidth for problem-solving and leadership.
- Make it easier to onboard and train new employees.

In Lean terms, replication is about **standard work**—the foundation for quality and efficiency.

## Activity: Create Your First Replication System

Choose one task you repeat at least once a week. Write it down below and outline how you could replicate it into a system.

| TASK YOU REPEAT        | CURRENT PROCESS                         | REPLICATE INTO (TEMPLATE, CHECKLIST, SCRIPT, SOP) | FIRST STEP TO BUILD IT            |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Example: Jobsite setup | Crew guesses what's needed each morning | Checklist laminated and kept in every truck       | Write down the 10 key setup steps |
|                        |                                         |                                                   |                                   |
|                        |                                         |                                                   |                                   |
|                        |                                         |                                                   |                                   |
|                        |                                         |                                                   |                                   |
|                        |                                         |                                                   |                                   |
|                        |                                         |                                                   |                                   |
|                        |                                         |                                                   |                                   |
|                        |                                         |                                                   |                                   |

### Reflection:

What's one process you'll commit to replicating this month?

How will it save you money, protect your reputation, or give you back time?





# ELIMINATE - CUT THE WASTE, NOT THE CONNECTION

Time management isn't just about doing more—it's about deciding what not to do. In the trades, it's easy to get stuck in routines, habits, or processes that feel necessary but don't actually add value. **Elimination means cutting the activities that waste time, money, or reputation so you can focus on what truly matters.**

Lean thinking calls this **"removing waste."** Waste shows up when you're stuck in meetings without purpose, re-doing work because instructions weren't clear, or handling tasks that don't move jobs forward.

## Examples of Elimination in the Trades

### Meetings

- Replace long, unfocused meetings with short, stand-up huddles.
- Always have an agenda, even if it's only three bullet points.

### Paperwork & Redundancy

- Stop entering the same information multiple times in different places.
- Eliminate duplicated forms or checklists that cause confusion.

### Owner Bottlenecks

- If every approval runs through you, projects slow down.
- Eliminate unnecessary sign-offs by setting guardrails and empowering leads.

### Distractions

- Cut down on interruptions by designating one main channel for communication.
  - Eliminate non-essential notifications that pull focus from productive work.
- 

## Why Eliminate?

When you eliminate wasted effort, you:

- Free up hours each week that were being drained by low-value tasks.
- Reduce stress and frustration across your team.
- Protect your reputation by keeping projects on schedule.
- Make more room for high-value activities that directly support your business.

In Lean terms, elimination is about trimming away what doesn't add value, so every action moves the needle.

## Activity: Identify What to Eliminate

Look back at your time log from Chapter 1. Circle three activities that wasted time, money, or reputation. Then write down how you could eliminate them.

| TASK YOU LOGGED                | WHY IT'S A WASTE                    | ELIMINATION STRATEGY                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Example: Long staff meeting    | Took 90 minutes, little was decided | Replace with 15-minute stand-up and clear agenda   |
| Example: Re-entering data      | Entered same info twice             | Consolidate into one system                        |
| Example: Waiting for approvals | Crew sat idle                       | Give crew leads authority to approve small changes |
|                                |                                     |                                                    |
|                                |                                     |                                                    |
|                                |                                     |                                                    |
|                                |                                     |                                                    |

*"Every minute spent on a low-value task steals a minute from the work that grows your business."*

### Reflection:

- Which tasks would have the biggest impact if eliminated?
- What's holding you back from cutting them?



# 05

## AUTOMATE - PUT SYSTEMS TO WORK

Some tasks in your business are essential, but they're repetitive and time-consuming. If you or your team are spending hours each week doing the same manual work, you're tying up valuable time that could be spent on higher-value activities. **Automation means using systems and processes to handle repeatable tasks, so people can focus on skilled work.**

Automation doesn't replace the human touch—it removes the friction from routine tasks. Done right, it improves accuracy, saves hours, and keeps important details from slipping through the cracks.

### Examples of Automation in the Trades

#### Scheduling & Reminders

- Set up automatic appointment confirmations and reminders.
- Use recurring schedules for preventive maintenance or routine service calls.

#### Invoicing & Payments

- Automate sending invoices, reminders, and payment receipts.
- Set up recurring billing for clients on service agreements.

#### Jobsite Documentation

- Capture photos, safety reports, or daily logs in a system that organizes them automatically.
- Reduce time spent filing or searching for records.

#### Communication

- Send standardized follow-up messages to new leads.
  - Use pre-set workflows so clients get updates at key stages without someone having to manually type them out.
- 

### Why Automate?

When you automate, you:

- Save hours of manual labor every week.
- Reduce mistakes caused by human error or forgetfulness.
- Ensure clients and crews always have the information they need.
- Protect your reputation by delivering consistent communication.

In Lean terms, automation creates **flow**—work moves forward without unnecessary starts, stops, or handoffs.

## Activity: Identify Your Automation Opportunities

Review your time log from Chapter 1 and your reflections so far. Which tasks are important but repetitive? Which ones could be handled by a system instead of a person?

| TASK YOU DO NOW                  | WHO COULD DO IT INSTEAD | WHAT SUPPORT THEY'D NEED                   | NEXT STEP                              |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Example: Picking up materials    | Apprentice              | List of standard suppliers and order sheet | Explain system and send once with them |
| Example: Data entry for invoices | Office admin            | Clear instructions and deadlines           | Document process and hand it off       |
|                                  |                         |                                            |                                        |
|                                  |                         |                                            |                                        |
|                                  |                         |                                            |                                        |
|                                  |                         |                                            |                                        |

*"A \$60-an-hour tradesperson should never be stuck doing \$15-an-hour tasks."*

### Reflection:

- Which of these automation opportunities would save you the most time each week?
- What task frustrates you the most because it's manual and repetitive?





# DELEGATE - SHARE THE LOAD, MULTIPLY THE IMPACT

Delegation is one of the hardest skills for trades leaders to master. Many contractors build their businesses with their own two hands, so letting go of control feels risky. **But here's the truth: if every task has to pass through you, your business will always hit a ceiling.**

Delegation doesn't mean dumping work on someone else. It means assigning tasks to the right people, with the right level of responsibility and support, so the whole team can be more effective. When done well, delegation not only saves you time—it grows the skills and confidence of your crew.

## Examples of Delegation in the Trades

### Crew Leadership

- Empower foremen or crew leads to handle daily site setup, material lists, and jobsite coordination.
- Give them authority to make routine decisions within set boundaries.

### Administrative Work

- Hand off permit applications, scheduling, and basic bookkeeping to office staff or a virtual assistant.

### Specialized Roles

- Outsource payroll, marketing, or IT support to professionals who can do it faster and more accurately.

### Field Support

- Have apprentices or helpers handle prep, cleanup, or supply runs so your skilled tradespeople stay productive.

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## Why Delegate?

When you delegate effectively, you:

- Free yourself to focus on high-value work like strategy, leadership, and growth.
- Prevent burnout by spreading the workload.
- Develop your team's skills and confidence.
- Ensure no single person (especially you) is a bottleneck.

In Lean terms, delegation helps **place the right people in the right roles**, improving flow and efficiency across the organization.

## Activity: Delegate One Task This Week

Think back to your time log from Chapter 1. Identify one task you are currently doing that should be handled by someone else. Write it down below, along with who could take it over and what support they'd need.

| TASK YOU REPEAT                        | CURRENT PROCESS                | HOW IT COULD BE AUTOMATED                |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Example: Sending appointment reminders | Manually call each client      | Automatic text/email reminder            |
| Example: Collecting invoices           | Send paper copies by mail      | Automatic email with online payment link |
| Example: Filing jobsite photos         | Upload one by one into folders | Automatic photo tagging and sorting      |
|                                        |                                |                                          |
|                                        |                                |                                          |
|                                        |                                |                                          |
|                                        |                                |                                          |
|                                        |                                |                                          |
|                                        |                                |                                          |

*"If a task is repetitive and predictable, it's a candidate for automation."*

### Reflection:

- Which of these automation opportunities would save you the most time each week?
- What task frustrates you the most because it's manual and repetitive?



## CHAPTER 7: PUTTING R.E.A.D. INTO ACTION

You've explored each part of the R.E.A.D. framework—Replicate, Eliminate, Automate, and Delegate—and learned how to filter your work through each lens. The power of this system comes when you apply it consistently. Every task you face is an opportunity to ask:

- Can I **Replicate** this so it's faster and more consistent?
- Should I **Eliminate** this because it doesn't add value?
- Could I **Automate** this to save time and reduce errors?
- Is it better to **Delegate** this so I can focus on higher-value work?

Time management isn't a one-time fix—it's a practice. The more often you apply the R.E.A.D. filter, the more your business will run smoothly, your team will step up, and your stress will go down.

### Activity: My R.E.A.D. Action Plan

Look back through your notes and activities from each chapter. Choose at least one action for each category that you will commit to over the next 30 days.

| R.E.A.D. CATEGORY | ACTION I'LL TAKE | DEADLINE | OWNER |
|-------------------|------------------|----------|-------|
| Replicate         | _____            | _____    | _____ |
| Eliminate         | _____            | _____    | _____ |
| Automate          | _____            | _____    | _____ |
| Delegate          | _____            | _____    | _____ |

### Reflection:

If I put these four changes into practice, how will my week look different 30 days from now?

What ripple effect will it have on my team, my reputation, and my profitability?

# IN CLOSING

You've just worked through the R.E.A.D. framework—Replicate, Eliminate, Automate, and Delegate—and I want to remind you of something important: this isn't about perfection, it's about progress.

The truth is, no one in the trades has “extra” time lying around. You earn back time by being intentional with how you spend it. That's the gift of R.E.A.D.—it gives you a simple way to evaluate every task and decide whether it deserves your focus, or whether it belongs in a system, a checklist, a tool, or on someone else's plate.

If you only take one thing away from this workbook, let it be this: **your time is too valuable to spend on tasks that don't make or save you money, protect your reputation, or give you back more time.**

Start small. Pick one thing to replicate, one thing to eliminate, one thing to automate, and one thing to delegate. Then build on those wins. Over time, you'll see the hours add up, your stress go down, and your business grow stronger.

Thank you for investing the time to go through this workbook. I know how hard you work, and I respect the commitment it takes to step back and work on your business instead of just in it. My hope is that you'll use R.E.A.D. not just once, but as a habit you return to whenever the chaos starts to creep back in.

Here's to working smarter, building stronger teams, and leading with clarity.

Priscilla Hansen Mahoney  
Business Coach for Contractors



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*A SMALL NOTE*

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[priscilla@blazingtrailscoaching.com](mailto:priscilla@blazingtrailscoaching.com)

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**PRISCILLA  
HANSEN MAHONEY**  
BLAZING TRAILS COACHING, LLC





# ABOUT PRISCILLA HANSEN MAHONEY

## About the Author

Priscilla Hansen Mahoney is the founder of Blazing Trails Coaching, where she partners with contractors and trades business owners to create streamlined systems, stronger teams, and lasting legacies. With more than 25 years of experience in business management and operations, she understands the challenges of running a hands-on, fast-paced construction business and brings a grounded, practical approach to leadership and efficiency.

As a **Lean Six Sigma Green Belt** and an **iPEC Certified Professional Coach**, Priscilla combines proven process improvement tools with coaching strategies that help leaders grow their people and their businesses at the same time. She has worked with contractors throughout New England to simplify operations, improve profitability, and strengthen company culture.

Her mission is clear: **to elevate the trades by making business strategy simple and practical, helping contractors lead with confidence, build with pride, and achieve results that last.**



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