

# ARE YOU ON A LEADERSHIP MERRY-GO-ROUND?



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Guest Writers

The dedication of the new ATA building was a celebration of the talented ATA members and staff. This shows what can happen when leaders focus a group of people on a vision and stay focused in spite of obstacles and disappointments.

As the leader of your company, you have this opportunity and challenge every day. You have to keep employees productive, provide good customer service, and address the latest regulations—all while staying profitable.

One of the biggest challenges is keeping everyone focused on the right things long enough to get the desired results. Many times we are so busy getting things done we feel we can't stop and decide what's really important. Can you relate to the Leadership Merry-Go-Round?

## Leadership Merry-Go-Round

Because I don't take time to determine what's important, everything is important.  
 Because everything is important, I have to do everything.  
 Other people see me doing everything, so they expect me to do everything.  
 Doing everything keeps me so busy I don't have time to think about what's important.  
 So, I often don't know what's important until after I haven't done it and the problems created cost me time.  
 Remember...it takes time now to save lots more time later.

## Get Off the Merry-Go-Round

The good news is you can get off the merry-go-round with the following steps. Remember, you will never find the time to take these steps, you must make the time. Even just one hour a day or a week working on your business, rather than in it, if done consistently, will have a positive impact.

Decide what's important and

productive—start with yourself.

Make a list of every task you do currently.

How many of these tasks relate to your personal productivity and how many to improving your people's productivity? Focus on their productivity; you are productive only when they are.

Identify the three to six highest payoff activities to spend 80 percent of time.

Below is a prioritized list one of our CEO clients established as his "High Payoff Activities."

## Find time for what's important

Questions to identify the time wasters in your life: Are you putting out the same fires over and over? Are you working around employees who aren't performing instead of addressing the lack of performance? Are you doing tasks that others could or should do? Are you answering the same questions on processes because you don't have written procedures? Do employees get discouraged

or not perform because expectations haven't been clearly communicated and held accountable?

Develop a plan to eliminate, delegate or streamline time wasters. Work with one new habit a week or month.

Schedule an appointment with yourself weekly to work on your High Payoff Activities.

Get off the merry-go-round one step at a time. Develop your people—help them be more productive and you will be more productive. When done correctly, people development is not a cost but an investment.

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High Payoff Activity	Description
Develop and supervise the performance of a strong management team	Standard process for job descriptions, individual performance goals & measurement, employee assessments and feedback
Ensure high-quality service and compliance with company standards	Standard workflows & procedures; continuous process improvement
Provide employee training and employee development programs	Individual training plans based on the position and employees' strengths and weaknesses. Employee motivation plans.
Ensure adequate staffing levels	Standard process for recruiting, interviewing, hiring, orientation and succession.
Build, develop and gain buy-in on the strategic business & profit plan.	Involve your management team in the planning and execution.
Ensure the company's culture matches the overall cultural vision	Reinforce the company's values, vision and mission to employees — include values assessment in pre-hire testing.