How Billing Managers Build High Performing Teams

This playbook is here to help you make that shift without losing your edge, burning out, or becoming the team's highest paid firefighter.



Most billing managers get promoted because they were brilliant recruiters, then they're handed an impossible brief.

Keep doing £250k or £300k yourself, but now make another five people successful as well.
That is not "more responsibility". It is a different job.

This playbook is here to help you make that shift without losing your edge, burning out, or becoming the team's highest paid firefighter.

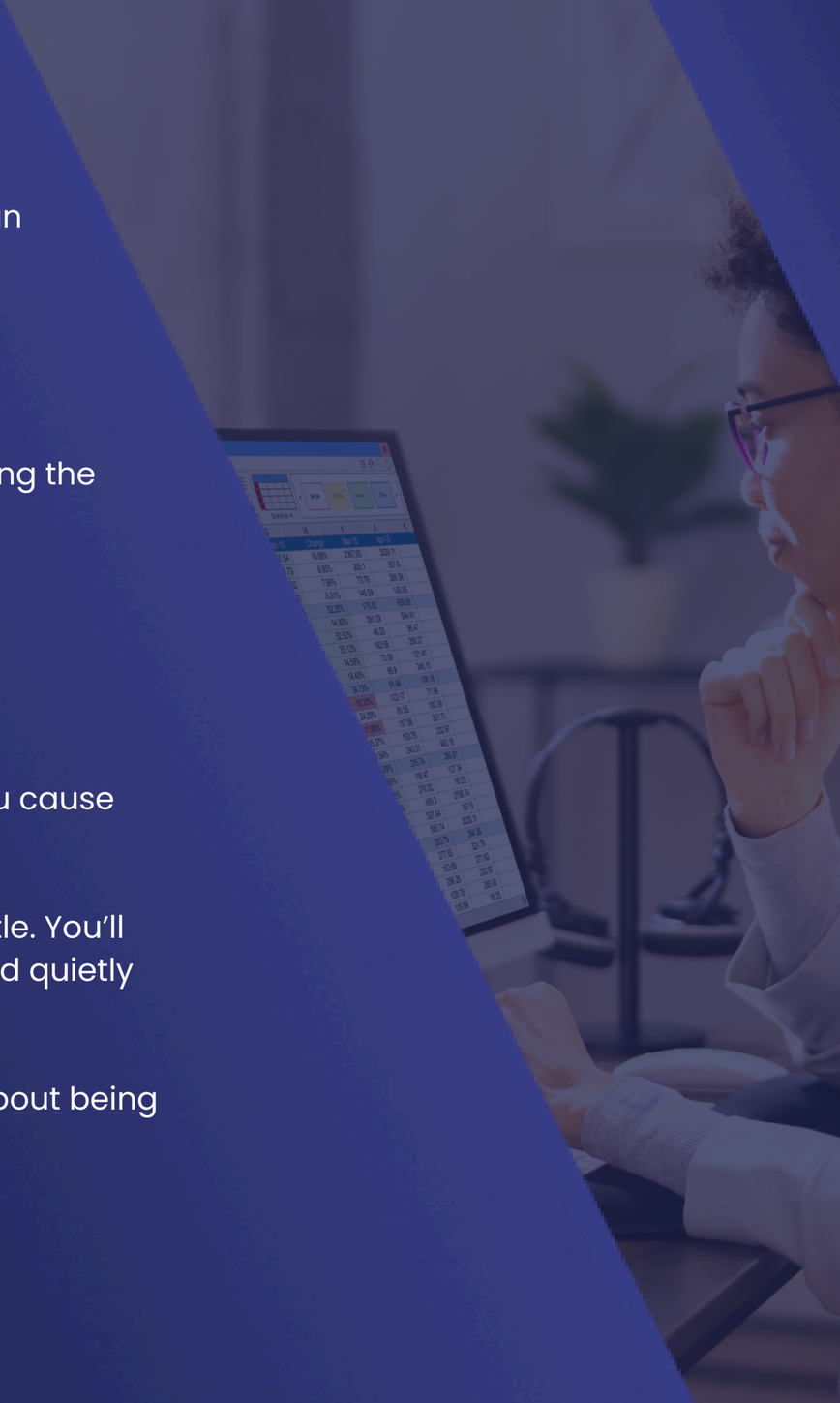
The hard truth: billing is no longer the point

You can still produce personally. In a lot of businesses you need to, at least for a while.

But your value is no longer your personal gross profit (GP). Your value is the total performance you cause through yourself and other people.

If you only measure yourself on your own billing, you will behave like a recruiter with a manager title. You'll rescue. You'll take over deals. You'll "just do it quickly". You'll keep the business alive this month and quietly cap it for next year.

The good news? This is fixable. And it's not about becoming "less commercial" or "more HR". It's about being commercial at a different level.



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Chapter 1: The Billing Manager Shift – The Multiplier Concept

This guide uses a simple progression you can recognise in yourself and other managers:

1



Producer

You win and deliver, you are the output.

2



Player-Coach

You still bill while coaching and managing a small team.

3



Multiplier

You stay commercial, but the team delivers more than you could alone. Performance becomes predictable.

4



Leader

The team performs without you in the room because systems, standards and capability are embedded.

The trap most billing managers fall into is staying stuck in Player-Coach mode for too long, and drifting into “rescuer” behaviour as pressure rises.

There is a reason this shows up so often. The player-coach model works best in small teams, where your expertise is directly useful. But it starts to break once you are pulled into heavy individual production while coaching seven or more people. At that point, something has to give, and it is usually the coaching.

A Billing Manager’s Role: PRODUCE + PERFORM + PEOPLE

A billing manager’s job has three parts that should reinforce each other - not compete.

- **PRODUCE**
Your own commercial output. Done properly, this is protected, high value activity, not constant busywork.

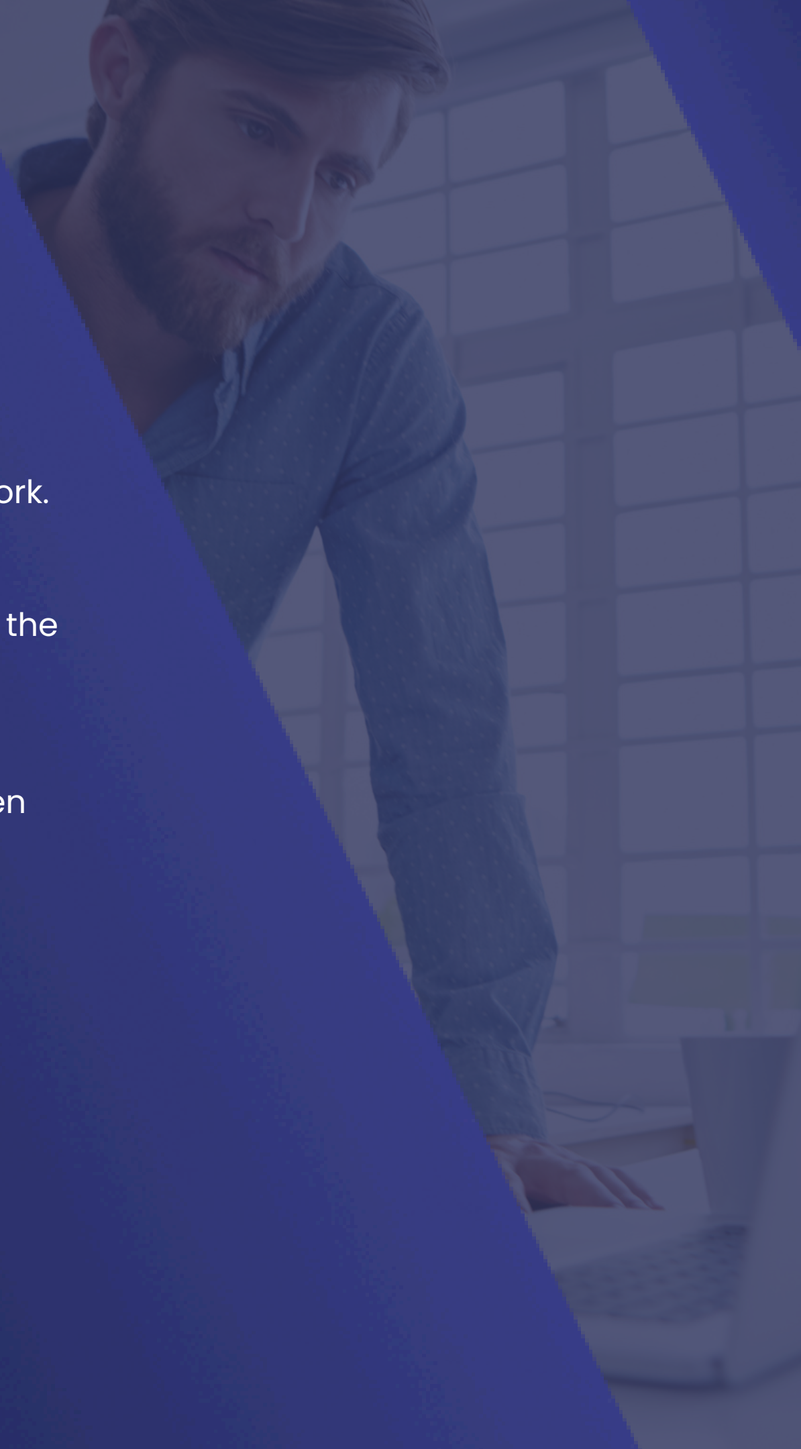
- **PERFORM**
Predictable team commercial performance. You can explain the pipeline, forecasting, the conversion, the risks, and what you are doing to move it.

- **PEOPLE**
Recruiters who get better every month and become less dependent on you. A team that performs even when you are not in the room.

If you only do **PRODUCE**, you are a recruiter.
If you only do **PEOPLE**, you are a well liked supervisor with no commercial weight.
If you do **PERFORM** without **PEOPLE**, you will get short-term numbers and long-term churn.

The best billing managers build all three, on purpose.

Your value as a billing manager is not simply what you personally bill.
It is the total performance you cause.



Stop measuring the wrong thing: use Leverage, not ego

Here is the cleanest identity shift you can make.

Instead of asking: “Am I still a top biller?”
Ask: “How much performance am I creating?”

Throughout this guide we touch on different concepts and tools. Here are two diagnostics worth adopting immediately, we cover them in full further along in this guide:

1) The Player-Coach Matrix

Plot yourself quarterly using two axes: personal billing and team performance.

- High personal billing + low team performance = Super Biller, quietly rescuing the team
- High personal billing + high team performance = Multiplier, the target state
- Low personal billing + low team performance = A struggling manager
- Low personal billing + high team performance = A Team Leader (may be ready for pure management)

It forces honesty. Are you building a team, or covering for one?





2) The Manager Leverage Ratio (the number that matters)

Team GP ÷ Manager GP

A simple number that reframes the conversation from "am I still a top biller?" to "how much commercial performance am I creating?"

Scenario	Manager GP	Team GP	Leverage Ratio
Year 1	£300,000	£500,000	1.7x
Year 2 (manager bills less, team grows)	£225,000	£900,000	4.0x

Read that again. Personal billing dropped. Leverage more than doubled. That is the manager doing the job properly.

This is also how you handle the board level tension. If you are rewarded only for personal billings, you will stay a recruiter. If you are rewarded for leverage, you will build a high performing team.



What you will build in the rest of this guide (and what it will feel like in the business)

This playbook is not theory. It is an applied operating manual.
Across the next sections, you and your team will build:

1. A clear weekly cadence that prevents drift
Short touchpoints (Monday kickoff, Wednesday realignment, Friday review) that create momentum without micromanagement.

2. Predictable performance management using leading indicators
You stop discovering missed months at the end of the month. You manage upstream.

3. Ratio led one to ones that recruiters would actually pay for
One main conversion leak. Real examples. One behaviour change for seven days. Review. Repeat.

4. Coaching that improves skill, not just motivation
Observe, diagnose, intervene, practise, observe again. Stop giving vague advice.

5. Standards and accountability without chasing people
Clarity, commitments, consequences. Calm, factual performance management.

6. AI used to create capacity for coaching, judgement and empathy
Not AI as a toy, AI as time back. Admin down, conversations up.



The market reality and why ‘more pressure’ stops working

You can feel it on the desk before you see it on the P&L. The market has not fallen off a cliff, but it has changed shape.

This period, Office for National Statistics (ONS) data puts UK vacancies at 707,000 (May to July 2026), down 6,000 on the quarter and 19,000 on the year. Unemployment sits at 4.9% (April to June 2026). Regular pay growth is running at 3.4% (March to May 2026). That is a very different backdrop to the “everything moves fast” conditions a lot of billing managers learned under.

The result is simple. Conversion is harder and slower. Job quality is patchier. Candidate behaviour is less predictable. And the old response, “push harder, do more”, starts to create the wrong outcomes.

What changes when demand softens

When vacancies trend down and urgency cools, your team sees four shifts at the same time.

1) “Pipeline” gets noisier

In a strong market, plenty of roles are fillable even if they are poorly qualified. In a softer market, weak briefs and slow processes are exposed quickly.

You see more of this:
- Roles released before budget is signed off
- Briefs sent out “to see what comes back”
- Direct channels left open while agencies do the heavy lifting
- Stakeholders joining late and changing the goalposts
- Multiple agencies working the same vacancy, with no real control

> **The key point is this. More jobs on the system does not mean more revenue coming. In fact, it often means more time spent on work that cannot convert.**

2) Time-to-stage stretches, even when activity is high

When clients feel they have more choice (because unemployment is higher and vacancies are lower), they move slower. Feedback windows lengthen. Interviews take longer to schedule. Decisions drift.

That creates a nasty compounding effect:
- Candidate uncertainty increases in the gaps
- Drop-off rises, even for good consultants
- Consultants spend more time chasing updates and doing rework
- The same “effort” produces fewer invoices

This is where pressure becomes dangerous. If you only respond by demanding higher activity, you often just increase the volume of **unproductive** activity.

3) Candidate behaviour becomes more cautious, not easier

A looser labour market does not mean candidate risk disappears. Good candidates still have options and they can still wobble, especially when processes drag.

In this market, candidates are more likely to:
- Enter more processes “just in case”
- Hesitate at offer stage
- Be more vulnerable to counter offers
- Reconsider after accepting (uncertainty does that)

That is why process speed becomes commercial. Not “nice to have”, commercial.

4) Pay pressure eases, and negotiations get tougher

ONS regular pay growth at 3.4% tells you salary inflation has cooled versus recent peaks. That often changes the tone on the client side.

You see more challenge on:
- Salary bands
- Fees
- Replacement terms
- “Can you just sharpen the pencil?”

And candidates do not magically reset their expectations at the same speed. So both sides can become harder to align.



Why “more pressure” stops working

When the market tightens, pushing more activity can work because the environment does a lot of the conversion for you. When demand softens, that flips.
Pressure without precision usually creates **three problems.**

Problem 1: It increases bad job intake

If the message is “get more jobs”, consultants will say yes to anything that looks like pipeline. You can *feel* busy and still go backwards.

That is how you end up with a desk full of “active” roles that are actually:

- unclear on must-haves and deal breakers
- missing a real decision maker
- unrealistic on salary
- vague on interview slots and feedback timing
- being worked by too many suppliers

Problem 2: It hides the real constraint

When billings drop, the team is tempted to explain it with “the market”.
Sometimes that is true. But often the real issue is a specific bottleneck.

For example:

- Plenty of conversations, but weak conversion to meetings (pitch and qualification)
- Plenty of jobs, but poor fill rate (brief quality and control)
- Offers made, but weak starts (candidate control and pre-closing)

If you apply generic pressure (“make more calls”), you do not fix the constraint. You just create fatigue.

Problem 3: It turns managers into rescuers

In tougher months, managers step in to save fees. They take the client call. They negotiate the offer. They source the shortlist.
It might land an invoice. It also teaches the team that the manager will rescue them, and guarantees you will be doing the same next month.

The tension is real, managers are often promoted for being top billers and then expected to keep producing personally while making others successful. In this market, that tension gets worse, because the temptation to rescue is higher.



The real knock-on effect: volatility goes up

A softer market increases volatility because there are more ways for deals to die between stages. The ONS vacancy level being 707,000 is not just a headline number, it is a signal that there are fewer “easy” opportunities and more competition for credible, fillable work.

So what happens inside the team?
- More roles that *look* like pipeline but do not progress
- Higher drop-off between interviews, offers and starts
- Longer time-to-fill, which ties up consultant time
- More end-of-month surprises (because the truth was upstream, weeks ago)

That is why a tighter management system becomes necessary. Not because your team is lazy, but because the market now punishes loose execution.

A quick reality check table (what you will notice)

Market shift (this period)	What it looks like on the desk	What it does to performance
Vacancies flatter and lower (ONS: 707,000)	More competition for decent work, more “speculative” briefs	Lower job quality, lower fill rate if you accept everything
Higher unemployment (ONS: 4.9%)	Clients feel less urgency, slower decisions	More delay, more drop-off, more chasing
Pay growth easing (ONS regular pay: 3.4%)	Tougher salary and fee conversations	More negotiation friction, more offer risk

The good news? You can win in this market, but you do not win by whipping people harder.

You win by tightening what counts as real pipeline, spotting where conversion is leaking, and running the desk on evidence rather than hope. That is the shift from being a high-output biller to being a performance multiplier, and it starts with understanding the reality your team is operating in.

Chapter 2: From Biller to Multiplier – the role redefinition (Produce + Perform + People)



You've probably been promoted because you were brilliant at recruitment.

And then someone basically said: keep doing £250k or £300k yourself, but now make another five people successful as well.

That is not a small tweak. It's a different job.

If you try to "just work harder" you end up as the team's highest paid firefighter, still carrying a desk, still rescuing deals, and still wondering why the team hasn't levelled up. You might hit the month. You won't build a unit.

The shift you need is simple to say and hard to live. Your output is now three things that reinforce each other:

The three outputs: Produce + Perform + People

1) PRODUCE (personal commercial output)

You still need protected personal production, especially if you're a player-manager. But "produce" now means high-value billing activity, not being busy.

Good looks like:
- You keep key clients warm.
- You stay close enough to the market to coach credibly.
- You pick the right moments to step in (high risk, high value, high learning), not because "it'll be quicker if I do it".

Bad looks like:
- Your diary is full, but most of it is delivery admin and chasing.
- You're doing "rescue recruitment" instead of teaching judgement.

2) PERFORM (predictable team commercial performance)

This is where the job starts to change.

Your team's performance should not be a mystery that gets revealed at month end. You should be able to explain it, influence it, and spot risk early, using leading indicators and conversion, not hope.

Good looks like:
- You can tell the story of the number.
- Forecasting is evidence-led (committed, probable, possible).
- You are making decisions on role quality, pipeline health, and where time goes.

3) PEOPLE (increasingly independent recruiters)

This is the compounding part.

A multiplier builds recruiters who can:
- make good commercial decisions without you,
- run tight processes without you,
- handle candidate and client control without you,
- keep standards when you are not watching.

Good looks like: the team performs even if you are not in the room.



The hard truth: “rescues” feel productive, but they cap your team

The fastest way to feel useful as a manager is to jump in. Call the client. Rewrite the CV. Handle the offer. Pull a shortlist late at night. Save the fee … It can work, once.

The cost is that you teach your consultants that:

- the standard is optional,
- urgency is the manager’s problem,
- and accountability is negotiable if you look stressed enough.

Rescuing solves today’s problem and guarantees tomorrow’s.

Coaching is slower in the moment, but it is the only route to a team that can perform without you.

The Player-Coach Matrix

This is the first place to get honest. It's a simple 2x2 that tells you whether you are building a unit, or just carrying one.

How to use it properly:

- Plot yourself based on the last 8 to 12 weeks, not your best month.
- Then ask a blunt question: *"What's driving my personal number, skill and structure, or me stepping in everywhere?"*
- Revisit quarterly. The point is to spot drift back into rescuing.

Span of control matters

The player-coach model has limits. When you are coaching seven or more people while carrying a heavy desk, it breaks down. You either stop coaching properly or stop billing properly. Usually both.

If you're managing a bigger team, you need to behave less like the best consultant and more like the person building the system and capability.



The Manager Leverage Ratio

Most managers stay emotionally tied to one question: “Am I still a top biller?”
The better question is: “How much commercial performance am I creating?”

The leverage ratio makes that measurable.

Manager Leverage Ratio = Team gross profit ÷ Manager gross profit

Example:

Scenario	Manager GP	Team GP	Leverage Ratio
Year 1	£300,000	£500,000	1.7x
Year 2 (manager bills less, team grows)	£225,000	£900,000	4.0x

Read that again. In Year 2, the manager bills £75,000 less, but leverage more than doubles.

That’s not failure. That’s the job.





What “good” looks like when your personal billings dip

If your personal billings fall because you have:

- protected coaching time,
- tightened role quality,
- increased standards,
- improved conversion,
- built candidate flow that isn’t dependent on you,
- and the team number rises,

You are moving towards Multiplier.

If your personal billings fall and team performance falls, you are not multiplying, you’re just overloaded or unfocused.

That’s the difference.

Your scorecard needs to change (or you'll never behave differently)

One of the biggest blockers isn't skill. It's reward tension. If your board still only respects personal billings, you will drift back to the Super Biller quadrant. It's rational.

So you need a scorecard that reflects the three outputs. Not 25 KPIs, just a small set that forces the right behaviour.

A practical starting point:

Produce
- Personal gross profit (with an agreed range, not "as high as possible")
- Protected billing blocks kept (yes/no weekly)

Perform
- Forecast accuracy (evidence-led)
- Two or three conversion ratios per desk (green/amber/red)

People
- Coaching rhythm delivered (1:1s and observation, not just reporting)
- Dependency reduction (what the team can now do without you)

If you want one number that summarises whether you're doing the management job, track leverage ratio over time.



A quick self-diagnosis: are you producing, performing and developing people, or just surviving?

Ask yourself these three questions and answer them honestly:

1) Produce: 'What did I do last week that only I could do?'
2) Perform: 'Can I explain why we will or won't hit the number, without referencing "the market" as the main reason?'
3) People: 'What can my team do now, reliably, that they couldn't do 90 days ago?'

If you can't answer (3), you are probably managing activity and rescuing outcomes, not building capability. The good news is this is fixable, but only if you accept the role redefinition.

Practical shift: "intervene" without "rescuing"

A player-manager still needs to get involved sometimes. The key is how you do it.

Here's a clean rule:

- **Intervention** is when your involvement materially improves the outcome, protects a key relationship, or deliberately teaches the skill.

- **Rescue** is when you do the work because it's faster, and the consultant learns nothing.



Examples that keep you in Multiplier territory:
▸ Join a strategic client call, agree roles beforehand, debrief afterwards (intervention).
▸ Observe a qualification call, add two questions live, then coach the consultant to run the next one (intervention).
▸ Help structure an offer close, but keep the consultant as relationship owner (intervention).

Examples that drag you back to Super Biller:
▸ Taking client calls alone to “fix it”.
▸ Running every qualification because it’s quicker.
▸ Owning candidate negotiations by default.

The aim is not to withdraw. It’s to create learning and ownership, then step back quickly.

What to do this week

Keep it simple. Don’t redesign the world.

▸ **Plot yourself** on the Player-Coach Matrix using the last 8 to 12 weeks.
▸ **Calculate your Manager Leverage Ratio** for last month (team GP ÷ your GP).
▸ Identify:
- One thing you did last week that only you could have done.
- One thing you did last week that you should not be doing next month.

▸ Have the conversation with your line manager: *“What does good look like now, if we judge me on Produce + Perform + People, not just my personal billings?”*

This section is the identity shift. The next sections will give you the operating system to make it real.



Chapter 3: The Billing Manager Operating System - where your time actually goes

If you do not decide where your week goes, your week will decide for you.

That is how you end up as a senior biller with extra admin, plus a team that still needs rescuing. The good news is you do not need a perfect org chart or a new CRM to get control. You need a repeatable operating system.

This section gives you a minimum rhythm and a way to protect the time that actually creates performance.

Step 1: Audit your week using the five buckets

Most billing managers think they are “busy”. They are. The problem is they are busy in the wrong places. We recommend using the five buckets to audit your week:



BILL
your own high-value billing activity (clients, candidates, roles, negotiations, BD)



MULTIPLY
work that makes other people better or makes the desk more repeatable (coaching, deal coaching, call reviews, joint visits, pipeline coaching)



LEAD/PEOPLE
direction, standards, culture, clarity (setting the rules of the game, priorities, decisions that remove drift)



MANAGE
forecasting, reporting, internal meetings, admin that exists because you manage a team



ADMIN/WASTE
avoidable firefighting, duplication, meetings with no outcome, chasing things that should not need chasing

Why this matters: McKinsey makes the point that if you do not manage it, close to half of a manager’s week gets consumed by non-managerial and administrative work. That is the trap. You start the week intending to coach, you end the week updating spreadsheets and fixing problems you created by rescuing.

Do a one week log (not a vibe check)

For one full week, track your time in 30 minute blocks and label each block with one of the five buckets. Do not “estimate”. Use what actually happened.

Then calculate two numbers:

1) **Your Multiplication %**
Time spent improving other people's performance, divided by total working time. This single number is often the most confronting figure a manager sees.

2) **Your Waste %**
Time spent in WASTE ÷ total working time.



Here’s a typical starting point we see in real managers’ diaries:

Bucket	What it includes	Typical reality	Target direction
BILL	Your own desk, client and candidate work	35–45%	Protected, not accidental
MULTIPLY	Coaching, pipeline coaching, call reviews, joint work	5–10%	20%+
PEOPLE	1:1s, development, wellbeing, career conversations	5–10%	15%+
MANAGE	KPIs, forecasts, meetings, reporting	15–20%	Held flat
ADMIN / WASTE	Avoidable admin and firefighting	20–30%	Reduced

(You can blend PEOPLE into MULTIPLY for your own audit if you want one number, but do not pretend it is happening if it is not.)

Reality check: if your Multiplication % is 5–10%, you are not a multiplier yet. You are still a player with people around you.

Step 2: Decide what gets protected (and book it like a client meeting)

Your diary is a profit and performance tool. Treat it like one.

Coaching, pipeline reviews and one to ones must be blocked like client meetings. If they move every week, your team learns they are optional.

You only need a few protected blocks to change the game:

- **Protected BILLING block** (so you still produce without it swallowing the week)
- **Protected COACHING block** (one block you do not move, even when you feel behind)
- **Protected PIPELINE COACHING / FORECAST** block (short, sharp, repeatable)
- **Protected "THINKING" block** (to look at the system, not just the noise)

This is not about writing "focus time" in your calendar and hoping. It is about hard boundaries.

A useful rule: if you will not move a client meeting for it, it is not protected.



Step 3: Introduce the cadence for control (two and a half day sprints)

The two and a half day sprint described by TRN trainer Mike Whatman, provides enough contact to maintain control without removing ownership. Established consultants run in two and a half day sprints, supported by three fixed touchpoints. This is the minimum rhythm that stops drift. It gives you enough contact to keep standards up and prevent Friday surprises, without turning you into the approval gate for everything.



KICKOFF
10-20 mins

REALIGNMENT
10-15 mins

REVIEW
15-25 mins

Monday kickoff: set outcome, plan, and evidence

The point is not “what are you doing this week?” The point is “what will you produce, and why is that the right plan?”

Use the Guide’s question set:
- What is the most important commercial outcome this week?
- How will you create it (which accounts, roles, candidates, conversations)?
- Why is this the best approach given your pipeline and risks?
- What could stop you, and what will you do before that happens?
- What will be visible by Wednesday that shows the plan is working?

A weak plan is “do more BD”. A strong plan is specific. The Guide gives an example like: booking meetings with decision makers in a defined target list, because pipeline is too dependent on one account.

Your job on Monday is to force clarity, not to motivate.

Wednesday realignment: course-correct early

Wednesday is not a second Monday. It is a short drift check. This is where you prevent wasted effort. If a role has become “future wasted time”, Wednesday is when you catch it, not at month end.

- What changed since Monday?
- Where are you vs the committed outcome?
- Biggest commercial risk in the next 48 hours?
- What must be stopped, started, escalated, requalified, or dropped?
- What are the 1–3 actions that matter most now?

Friday review: close the loop

Friday is where accountability becomes real, and learning becomes repeatable. Keep it factual. No drama, no excuses, no vague encouragement.

- What did you commit to, and what happened?
- What decisions or behaviours contributed most?
- What did not happen and why?
- What changes next week?
- What is the single most important outcome for Monday?

Test every recurring meeting with two questions: Why are we meeting? What must be different by the end?

If the answer is “updates”, it should probably be a dashboard or a written note.

Step 4: Create a stop-doing list (and enforce it)

New commitments require removing something else.

Most managers fail here because stopping feels uncomfortable. You feel you are “not supporting”. But carrying everything is exactly why you end up rescuing.

Common stop-doing candidates from inside recruitment teams (you will have your own list):

- Writing reports that no one uses to make decisions
- Attending meetings where you are not required to decide or unblock
- Being the default for every client escalation
- Fixing CRM quality yourself instead of enforcing the standard
- Taking over negotiations because it is faster

You do not need to stop everything. You need to stop enough to protect multiplication time.

Step 5: Delegate properly

Delegation is not “getting stuff off your plate”. It is building a team that does not need you for everything.

Delegation is scalability, not relief. When you do not delegate, it is usually one of three blockers:

- **Skill gap** (they cannot do it yet)
- **Trust gap** (you do not believe they will do it well)
- **Habit** (you always have, so you keep doing it)

Pick one recurring item in MANAGE or WASTE and hand it over within a week. Not with “can you take this?”, but with a proper handover:

- Define the outcome and the standard
- Show an example of “good”
- Agree a check-in point
- Make the first two cycles supervised, then step back

If you delegate and then micromanage, you will hate delegation and go back to rescuing. If you delegate with no clarity, you will get poor work and go back to rescuing. The answer is a short learning loop.

What to watch for in the first month

You will know the operating system is working when:

- You stop having “surprise” weeks where nothing moved
- Consultants can state their weekly outcome and why it matters
- You are coaching one conversion leak, not reading dashboards at people
- You are making decisions earlier (push, reset, requalify, walk away) rather than carrying dead work
- Your MULTIPLY time increases and your WASTE time drops

If none of that happens, do not blame motivation. Re-run the time audit and look for the truth. Where did your week actually go?



Chapter 4: Managing the number – make revenue predictable with leading indicators

If you manage your team by staring at gross profit and shouting “we need a big week”, you are managing a lagging indicator. You will always feel late, because you are.

Gross profit is the scoreboard. It tells you what already happened. The job of a Billing Manager (the Multiplier role) is to manage what happens **before** gross profit, with enough control that the number becomes predictable.

The good news? Recruitment is full of patterns. Your team’s results might feel random month to month, but the inputs and conversion rates that create those results are measurable, coachable and, crucially, manageable.



Stop chasing GP, manage upstream

When the market is more selective, it gets easier to confuse busyness with progress. This period, Office for National Statistics figures put UK vacancies at **707,000** (May to July 2026) and unemployment at **4.9%** (April to June 2026). That means fewer easy roles, more choice for clients, and slower decisions. None of that is fixed by "more pressure".

So your question becomes:

- What do we need to **do next** that increases the probability of an invoice?
- And what do we need to **stop doing** because it is burning consultant time with low probability?

This is where you step out of biller-brain and into Multiplier-brain. You are not there to create the heroic month. You are there to build a machine that produces good decisions and consistent execution every week.

Leading vs lagging indicators: A simple rule (and what you actually manage)



LAGGING INDICATORS
Results. Useful for accountability, useless for early control.



LEADING INDICATORS
The behaviours and conversions that cause results.

Here is what that looks like in a recruitment desk funnel from market to gross profit:

Market → Outreach → Conversations → Meetings → Jobs → CVs → Interviews → Offers → Placements → GP

If you only talk about GP, you miss the bit that matters. Your job is to understand where each consultant's funnel is breaking and fix that.

Pipeline maths: take the emotion out of targets

Most forecasting conversations collapse because nobody agrees on the maths. Targets feel like a demand, not a plan.

You do not need perfect data to do this, you need consistent definitions and a weekly rhythm.

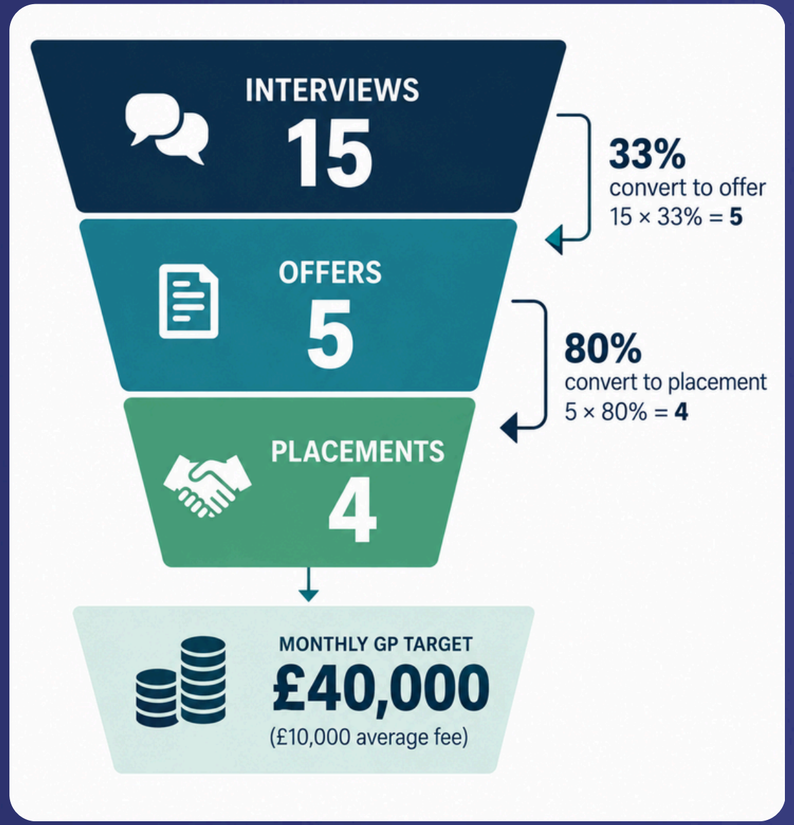
Start with three desk-level questions:

1. What is the monthly GP target?
2. What is the average fee / placement value on that desk?
3. What are the conversion rates from stage to stage?

Then work backwards. If a consultant needs £40k GP this month and their average fee is £10k, you need 4 placements. If their offers to starts is 80%, they need 5 offers. If their interviews to offers is 33%, they need 15 interviews.

That is not “more activity”. That is a specific upstream plan, with numbers you can coach.

If you want this to be real, make it a desk standard: every established consultant can explain their own pipeline maths in two minutes, without scrolling.



Manage the forecast like a grownup: committed, probable, possible

Forecasting is not optimism. It is evidence. Below we outline 3 different forecast categories. Use them consistently across your team:

- **Committed:** strong evidence the fee should land. Both sides aligned. Clear next steps. Low remaining risk.
- **Probable:** progressing well, but meaningful risks or decisions still exist.
- **Possible:** it could happen, but there is not enough evidence to rely on it.

The discipline is the questioning. For every fee on the sheet, ask:

- What is the **genuine stage** right now (not what we hope)?
- What has the **client committed** to?
- What has the **candidate committed** to?
- What is the **next dated event**?
- What could still stop the placement?
- What changed since last week?

If a role has no dated next step, it is not forecastable. It is wishful thinking. “Waiting for feedback” cannot be open-ended. Every live process has an owner and a deadline.

The Recruiter Performance MRI: diagnose the constraint before you prescribe

Most managers default to the same coaching advice because they are coaching symptoms.

- “Do more BD.”
- “Send more CVs.”
- “Get more candidates.”

Sometimes that’s right. Most of the time it’s lazy.

Here is a framework to fix this: The Recruiter Performance MRI. It is a funnel diagnostic that helps you spot each consultant’s constraint stage and then coach the right lever.

It also pushes a key management principle: each recruiter usually has one bottleneck stage. Find it. Do not spray activity at everything.

What you’re looking for: five common MRI patterns

Recruiter MRI pattern	What the data usually shows	What it really means	Your coaching lever (this week)
A: Low conversations, rest looks fine	Low outreach and low live conversations	Not enough business development activity, or avoidance	Activity coaching, outreach commitments, tighten Monday plan
B: High conversations, poor meeting conversion	Lots of calls, few booked meetings	Weak pitch, weak qualification, weak next-step booking	Call coaching and roleplay, improve questioning and close for next step
C: Good meetings, few jobs won	Meetings happen, jobs do not land	Losing to competitors, weak control, weak commercial conversation	Deal coaching, client strategy, challenge process and terms
D: Plenty of jobs, poor fill rate	Lots of live roles, few placements	Working dead roles, weak intake, poor control, weak delivery focus	Role quality review, requalify or walk away, improve client control
E: Good placements, weak margin	Billing happens but GP is light	Discounting, weak fee defence, weak negotiation	Margin coaching, pricing discipline, fee conversations

This is why “manage the number” is a Multiplier skill. You are building capability through diagnosis, not compliance through pressure.

Ratios beat raw activity (because ratios tell you where money leaks)

Raw activity metrics have a place. They are useful when someone is avoiding the work.
But they are a blunt instrument.

Ratios show *quality* and *conversion*. The Billing Manager's Guide gives you a clear set of money moving ratios and what they reveal. It also uses a traffic light system (green, amber, red) so you intervene early.

A few examples you should keep on your weekly scorecard:

- **BD conversations to jobs won:** targeting, proposition, qualification, follow-through
- **CVs to interviews:** matching quality, brief quality, candidate prep, client trust
- **Interviews to offers:** shortlist quality, calibration, interview prep, debriefing
- **Offers to starts:** candidate control, pre-closing, counter-offer risk management
- **Jobs worked to jobs filled:** job quality, process control, capacity discipline

Mike Whatman's example thresholds in the Guide for **CVs per interview** are a good illustration of how practical this can be:

- **~1.4 to 1.5 CVs per interview = green**
- **~2:1 = amber**
- **>2.4:1 = red**

You do not copy someone else's thresholds blindly. You calibrate them to your market and your historical performance. But the point stands: once a ratio goes red, you do not wait for the month-end GP miss to "prove" there is a problem.



Evidence based coaching: one lever, seven days, observable change

Your one to ones should not be a tour of dashboards. The six step ratio led one to one is a good discipline:

1. Outcomes briefly: what moved, what is at risk?
2. Pick **one ratio** most likely to affect billings in the next **2 to 6 weeks**.
3. Classify it green/amber/red using agreed ranges.
4. Diagnose using real evidence (calls, submissions, role notes).
5. Agree **one observable behaviour change** for the next **7 days**.
6. Define how you will measure improvement and when you will review.

This is the difference between being a manager who monitors, and a manager who multiplies performance.

Team forecast you can defend: roll up by stage and risk

Once each consultant has an evidence based forecast (committed/probable/possible) and you know the constraint stage on each desk (MRI), you can run a team forecast that is more than a gut feel.

Your weekly team view should include:

- Total forecast GP split by **committed / probable / possible**
- The top risks (stalled next steps, missing decision maker, unrealistic salary, slow process)
- The two or three interventions that will most increase invoice probability this week

Keep it short. Make it commercial. Make it about decisions.

If your forecast pack takes longer to build than it takes to coach the team, you have built the wrong system.



Chapter 5: Coach what moves money - one to ones that recruiters would pay for



Most one to ones in recruitment fall into one of two traps:

- **Reporting:** the consultant reads you a dashboard you could have looked at yourself.
- **Everything at once:** you cover 12 metrics, three live jobs, two wobbly candidates and a bit of “more BD”, then nothing changes.

If you want to be a Multiplier, your one-to-ones need to do one job. **Find the single conversion leak that will move revenue in the next 2 to 6 weeks, then coach against it.**

Mike Whatman’s test is the right standard: **would the consultant pay £50 to attend this one-to-one?** If it is just numbers and updates, the answer is no. If they leave with sharper judgement, a better skill and a clear plan that increases the chance of an invoice, the answer becomes yes.



Ratios beat raw activity (and they tell you what's actually broken)

Activity metrics are useful when someone is avoiding work. But activity doesn't tell you whether the work is any good.

- 50 BD calls can be the wrong list, the wrong pitch and the wrong follow-up.
- 10 CVs can be desperate, low quality submissions that kill credibility with a client.
- "Busy" can still mean "nothing moving".

Ratios show conversion.
Conversion shows capability.
Capability shows what to coach.



Challenge what is getting in the way

Here are some of the core ratios, with what they usually reveal.

Ratio to coach	What it reveals	Where to coach (typical)
CVs to interviews	Matching quality and role qualification	Submission quality, brief clarity, candidate prep, credibility and positioning
Interviews to offers	Shortlist quality and process control	Interview prep, debriefing, objection handling, client expectation setting
Offers to starts	Candidate control and closing discipline	Pre-closing, counter offer risk, competing processes, notice period management
BD conversations to jobs won	Targeting and sales effectiveness	List quality, questioning, proposition, next step booking, follow-up
Jobs worked to jobs filled	Job quality and desk focus	Re-qualify or exit weak roles, improve client control, stop dead work consuming capacity
Exclusive or retained mix vs contingent	Client commitment and control	Re-contracting, challenging terms, saying no to low commitment work

The good news? Once you make one to ones ratio led, you stop coaching “general performance” and start coaching **specific money making behaviours**.

Pick one ratio per person, for 2 to 6 weeks

The rule is simple: **One person, one ratio, one coaching theme, for long enough to shift behaviour.**

How to choose the right ratio

Use these filters:

- **Which stage is nearest to money, and leaking now?**
If the consultant has interviews but no offers, that is nearer-term than “more BD”.

- **Which stage is causing the biggest waste of time?**
Working lots of roles with low fill probability is a silent killer.

- **Which stage is within their control this week?**
They cannot control a client budget freeze, but they can control speed, follow-up and quality of next steps.

- **Which stage would shift confidence if it improved?**
A quick conversion win often resets momentum.



Set traffic lights (green, amber, red) so your coaching is objective

Ratios only work if you agree what “good” looks like. Do not copy thresholds blindly. Calibrate to your market, role type and your own historic performance. But you do need ranges, otherwise you get endless debate and no action.

For example, for **CVs to interviews** (Mike Whatman’s thresholds):

- **Green:** around **1.4 to 1.5 CVs per interview**
- **Amber:** around **2:1**
- **Red:** greater than **2.4:1**

Your response by traffic light:

- **Green:** protect it. Ask what to repeat and share across the team.
- **Amber:** diagnose the pattern, agree one behaviour change, review within 7 days.
- **Red:** intervene quickly, observe real work, practise, tighten standards, set a clear follow-up.

A practical way to run this is a simple traffic light table you keep for each consultant.
You are not trying to create a perfect KPI system. You are creating focus.

Ratio	Green	Amber	Red	Current	Status
CVs to interviews	1.4–1.5	~2.0	>2.4	2.6	Red
Interviews to offers	(set by desk)	(set by desk)	(set by desk)		
Offers to starts	(set by desk)	(set by desk)	(set by desk)		
BD conversations to jobs	(set by desk)	(set by desk)	(set by desk)		
Jobs worked to jobs filled	(set by desk)	(set by desk)	(set by desk)		



Question banks for the most common ratio leaks (use these to run better conversations)

You do not need more charisma as a manager. You need better questions, asked consistently.
Below are question sets pulled from examples. Use them as your “go-to” depending on the ratio you have picked.

CVs to interviews (submission credibility and matching)

- *“Talk me through the last three CVs you sent. Why those three, in that order?”*
- *“What did the client say was missing, specifically?”*
- *“How clear is the brief on must haves vs preferences vs deal breakers?”*
- *“How did you position the candidate, what was the story?”*
- *“What will you change on the next submission to improve interview probability?”*

Interviews to offers (prep, debrief and expectation setting)

- *“How did you prep the candidate for the format, the people and the likely objections?”*
- *“What did you learn from the debrief, and how quickly did you run it?”*
- *“What did the client say immediately after the interview, and what did you do with that?”*
- *“Are we presenting the ‘good’ candidate, or the ‘right’ candidate?”*
- *“Where do we need to reset expectations with the client?”*

BD conversations to jobs won (quality of sales execution)

- *“How many of those conversations were with a decision maker?”*
- *“What hiring problem did you uncover before you pitched?”*
- *“Did you ask directly for the meeting, the vacancy or the next step?”*
- *“What follow up did you send, and what was the dated next step?”*
- *“Is the issue targeting, proposition, questioning or follow through?”*

Jobs worked to jobs filled (job quality and client control)

- *“Would you accept this role again knowing what you know now?”*
- *“Who owns the next decision on the client side, and when will it happen?”*
- *“What is the next candidate side step, and when will it happen?”*
- *“What is the friction, missing info, slow feedback, unrealistic spec or candidate risk?”*
- *“Decision today, push, reset, requalify or walk away?”*

Offers to starts (closing and risk management)

- *“When did you discuss competing processes, notice period and counter offer risk?”*
- *“What do we know about motivation, and what could change their mind?”*
- *“What is the contact plan during notice (who, when, why)?”*
- *“What are we doing to keep certainty high and gaps low?”*
- *“If this start falls over, what would we say we missed?”*

Chapter 6: Performance coaching - diagnose before you prescribe

Most billing managers don’t have a coaching problem. They have a diagnosis problem.

A consultant is missing target, you jump in with advice, pressure or a “come on, you’ve got this”. It feels supportive. It feels like leadership. But it rarely changes the behaviour that caused the shortfall in the first place.

The good news? When you make coaching a loop, not a pep talk, improvement becomes predictable.



The coaching loop: observe, diagnose, intervene, practise, observe again



This is the spine. Use it every week.

1) **Observe** what actually happened
2) **Diagnose** what's really limiting performance (skill, will, or system)
3) **Intervene** with the right type of help
4) **Practise** the behaviour until it becomes normal
5) **Observe** again within 7 days, and repeat

The big shift is this: **feedback without practice is just commentary**. You want behaviour change. That needs rehearsal.

Here's what this looks like in a real desk moment.

- Consultant says: "Clients are slow, nobody is hiring."
- You **observe**: Their last 10 BD conversations had no clear next step booked.
- You **diagnose**: Not a market problem, it is a **conversion problem** (weak questioning, weak ask, weak control).
- You **intervene**: Call coaching on how they open, qualify and close for a meeting.
- You **practise**: 10 minutes of roleplay, plus 5 deliberate reps of the "ask".
- You **observe again**: Listen to two calls this week, check whether the new behaviour happened.

That is coaching. Not "do more BD".



Don’t default to one style, choose the right intervention

You have five interventions available, and most managers overuse one of them.

Use this table as your quick picker.

Intervention	When to use it	What it sounds like	Your risk if you overuse it
Tell	The person is about to make an expensive mistake, or the standard is non-negotiable	“Stop. We’re not accepting roles without a decision maker and a dated process.”	You create dependency, they stop thinking
Train	They don’t know how to do it yet	“Here’s the structure for a proper qualification call, I’ll show you.”	You teach, but don’t check it sticks
Coach	They can do it, but performance is inconsistent	“What did you notice? What would you do differently next time?”	You stay ‘nice’ and avoid clear standards
Mentor	They need judgement, context and pattern recognition	“When I’ve seen this before, the hidden issue is usually stakeholder alignment.”	You turn it into story-time and nothing changes
Delegate	They’re ready, and you need to build independence	“You own this. Here’s the outcome, the standard, and when we’ll review it.”	You delegate too early and they wobble

A clean rule: if you are still doing the work, you’re not coaching. You are rescuing.

Diagnose properly: skill, will, or system?

Start with the system before blaming the person, and separate skill gaps (coaching) from will gaps (challenge).

Use this mini diagnostic before you open your mouth.

- **Skill:** they want to do it, but can't execute reliably
- Evidence: effort is there, outcomes are messy, conversion stays red despite activity
- Your response: train, coach, practise, observe again

- **Will:** they can do it, but repeatedly choose not to
- Evidence: agrees commitments, then does something else, standards slip when you are not watching
- Your response: reset expectations, tighter commitments, consequence

- **System:** you have accidentally made good performance harder
- Evidence: too many KPIs, unclear priorities, admin heavy process, conflicting messages, you keep cancelling coaching time
- Your response: simplify, protect time, remove friction, clarify standards

If you guess wrong, you get the worst outcomes:
- you **punish** someone who needs teaching, or
- you **coach** someone who is avoiding accountability.



The 15-minute call coaching structure (use it live)



Before the call (2 minutes)

- “What is the objective of this call?”
- “What will a good outcome be, in one sentence?”
- “What are the 1 or 2 things you want me listening for?”

During the call

- You listen for the specific behaviour you agreed (bandwidth).
- Do not interrupt unless the call is heading for a crash.

After the call (10 minutes)

- Start with self-assessment:
- “What went well?”
- “Where did it wobble?”
- Then get specific:
- “Where exactly did we lose control of the next step?”
- “What did you ask that got them talking, and what shut them down?”
- Pick one improvement for next time:
- “Next call, the only change is you will book the next step before you pitch.”

Practise (3 minutes)

- Run the same opening line and the same closing ask three times.
- Make it feel unnatural now, so it feels normal on a real call.

This is fast, repeatable and commercial.

Roleplay and deliberate practice: the missing link

Observe, diagnose, intervene, practise, observe again.
Most managers skip the practise because it feels awkward.
But awkward is the point. The practice room is where you earn the results.

What to roleplay (focus on money moments)

If you are short on time, prioritise the moments that change conversion and margin:

- **Booking the next step** on a BD call
- **Qualifying a fillable role** (decision maker, process, salary realism, feedback commitment)
- **Resetting a stalled process** ("If we cannot secure a dated next step today, we requalify or stop treating it as live pipeline.")
- **Candidate pre-close** (competing processes, notice, counter offer risk)
- **Fee and margin conversation** (value, confidence, pushback handling)

How to run a 10-minute deliberate practice block

- Pick **one scriptable moment** (eg the close on a BD call)
- Write the first line and the last line
- Do **5 reps**, back to back
- After each rep, give one piece of feedback:
- "You softened the ask."
- "You didn't name the date."
- "You talked too much after the question."

That is it. No lecture. No therapy. Reps.



The coaching question bank (make your feedback specific)

Here's a question bank that turns vague coaching into repeatable thinking. You can lift these straight into 1:1s, pipeline coaching and debriefs.

After a lost job

- "What would you do differently if you ran that pitch again tomorrow?"
- "At what moment did we lose control, and what was the better move?"
- "What did we not qualify early enough?"

For a stalled vacancy

- "Where is this actually stuck, client-side or candidate-side?"
- "What would move the probability in the next 48 hours?"
- "What are we waiting for, and is it acceptable?"

After a weak BD call

- "What problem had the client told you about before you started pitching?"
- "What did you ask that created insight, and what was just noise?"
- "What was the next step, and was it dated?"

In an underperformance conversation

- "What's making this harder than it should be right now?"
- "Is this skill, will, or a system issue?"
- "What one behaviour change would make the biggest difference in the next seven days?"

If your 1:1 ends without a behaviour change, a deadline and a review point, you did not coach. You chatted.



What good looks like for you as a Multiplier

Your job is to create performance that does not rely on your mood, your heroics or your personal billing.

Task-specific leadership is how you do that:

- Standards stay steady.
- Coaching becomes precise.
- Accountability becomes factual.
- Strong people feel trusted.
- Weak performance is addressed early, not tolerated into normality.

Next section, we will build on this and show how to create **accountability without micromanagement**, using commitments, scorecards and consequences that feel fair and consistent, not like daily chasing.



Chapter 7: Accountability without micromanagement: standards, commitments and consequences

You do not need to chase good people. You need to **make "good" visible**, and then hold the line.

Most billing managers get accused of micromanagement when what they are actually doing is trying to **create clarity after the fact**. They only start zooming in when the week has drifted, the CRM is a mess, or a deal is wobbling.

The fix is simple (not easy). **Clarity upfront. Short review loops. Predictable consequences.** That is not micromanagement, it is leadership.

The other truth? If you still rescue, you cannot build accountability. The moment you step in to "save" it, you've taught the team that commitments are optional and the manager will carry the risk.

Clarity is not micromanagement (and your team knows the difference)

Micromanagement feels like:
- Constant interference.
- Changing priorities mid-flight.
- Checking everything because you do not trust the person.
- Taking decisions away.

Clarity feels like:
- "Here's the outcome, here's the standard, here's the deadline."
- "Here's how we will know if it's on track."
- "Go and do your job, I'll support you if you hit a real blocker."

Clarity is the required result, why it matters, how progress is judged, then space to act. Accountability is only fair when expected outcome, process, deadline and review point are clear.

So your job is to build a system where those four things are always present.

Chapter 8: The AI-powered Billing Manager – create capacity for coaching, judgement and empathy

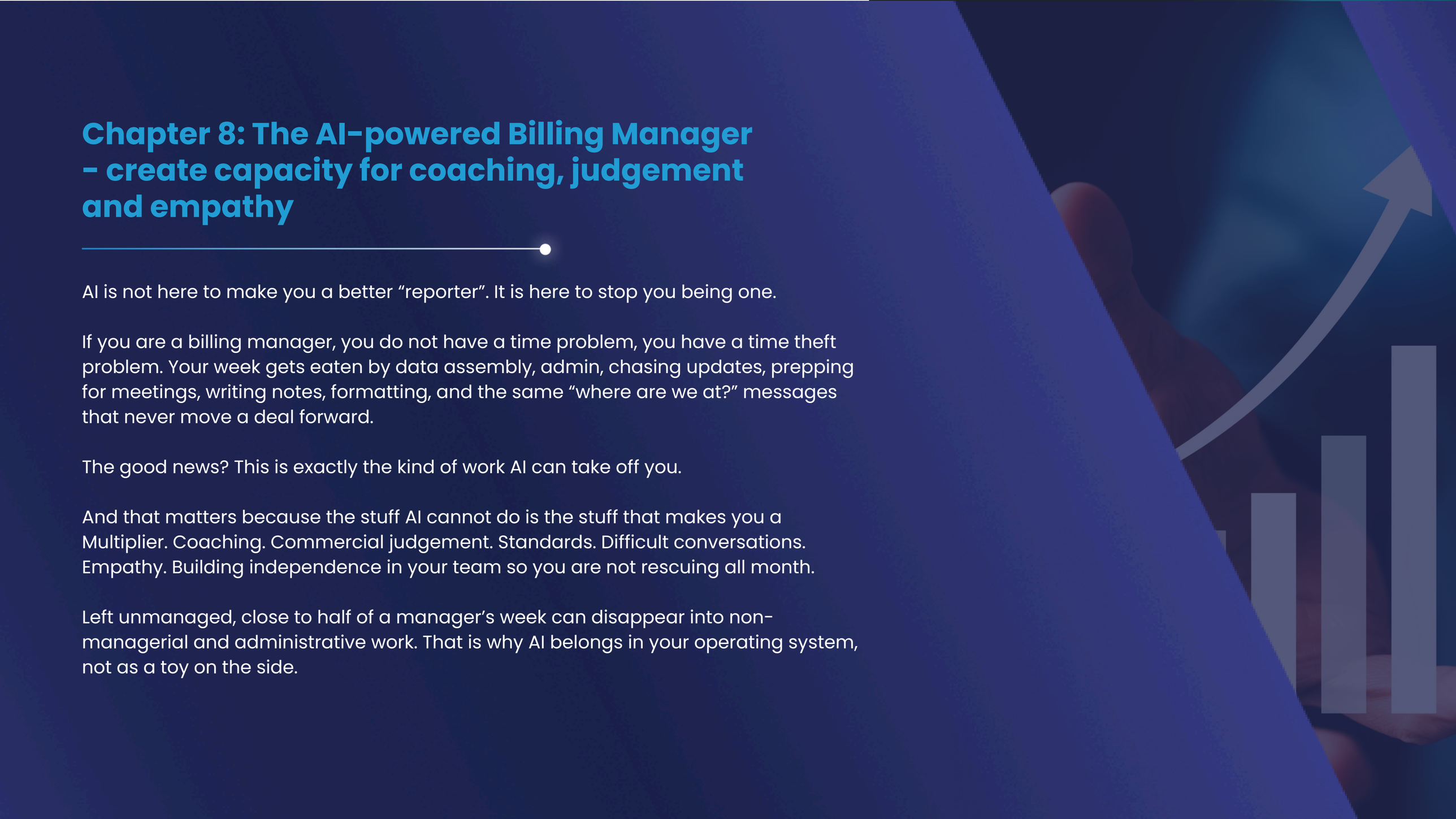
AI is not here to make you a better “reporter”. It is here to stop you being one.

If you are a billing manager, you do not have a time problem, you have a time theft problem. Your week gets eaten by data assembly, admin, chasing updates, prepping for meetings, writing notes, formatting, and the same “where are we at?” messages that never move a deal forward.

The good news? This is exactly the kind of work AI can take off you.

And that matters because the stuff AI cannot do is the stuff that makes you a Multiplier. Coaching. Commercial judgement. Standards. Difficult conversations. Empathy. Building independence in your team so you are not rescuing all month.

Left unmanaged, close to half of a manager’s week can disappear into non-managerial and administrative work. That is why AI belongs in your operating system, not as a toy on the side.



The rule: AI should remove *data-heavy admin*, not replace *human moments*

This playbook and the Superagency characteristics that we speak about at TRN have already been built around upstream control, ratio led coaching, fill rate discipline and reusable candidate flow. AI should reinforce those behaviours, not bypass them.

Use this simple filter before you roll anything out:

Question	If the answer is “yes”	Then…
Does this task require judgement, trust or persuasion?	It is a human job	Keep it human, use AI for prep only
Is this task repetitive, structured and high-volume?	It is a machine job	Automate it or get AI to draft it
Is this task “blank page” work (summaries, first draft, pack building)?	It is a hybrid job	AI produces version 1, you review and decide

Use it to return your time to coaching, judgement and empathy, rather than data assembly.



The Billing Manager AI use cases that actually matter

You do not need ten tools.
You need a handful of repeatable workflows that remove friction from your week.

Below are manager grade use cases, with practical examples of how to run them.

1) Dashboards without the dashboard building

Most managers are not short of metrics. They are short of *clarity*.

This guide makes this point clearly, most teams have too many KPIs and the solution is not another dashboard. AI helps when it turns your noise into a short list of what needs attention.

What you want AI to do:
- Pull key leading and lagging indicators (funnel stages, ratios, pipeline ageing).
- Flag outliers between consultants (averages hide who needs help).
- Highlight the “one constraint” per person (the Performance MRI logic), not every number that moved.

Practical output format (what you ask for):
- 5 bullet “This week’s risks”
- 5 bullet “This week’s opportunities”
- “Outliers list” (top 2 positive, top 2 negative)
- “Manager actions” (the 3 interventions most likely to increase probability of invoices)

If your AI output does not end with decisions, you have built a report, not a management tool.



2) 1:1 prep that makes your one to ones worth money

Would a consultant pay £50 to attend your one-to-one?
If your 1:1 is just you reading dashboards at them, the answer is no.

AI can do the prep so you can do the coaching.

What you want AI to do before each 1:1:
- Summarise what changed since last week (activity, conversion, pipeline movement).
- Identify the most important conversion leak (one ratio or one stage).
- Pull evidence from notes and call transcripts (patterns, repeated objections, slippage on standards).
- Suggest 5 coaching questions aligned to the leak (observe, diagnose, intervene, practise).

Your job stays human:
- Choose the *one* thing you are going to coach.
- Decide whether it is skill, will or system.
- Agree the one observable behaviour for the next 7 days.

This is how you protect one-to-ones from becoming reporting meetings.



3) Call analysis for coaching, not surveillance

The Call Coaching Scorecard pushes observation as a starting point. AI makes observation scalable.

Used badly, call analysis becomes micromanagement. Used well, it becomes pattern detection.

Use it for:
- "What do our top performers do differently in BD calls?"
- "Where do we lose control in qualification?"
- "What objections are coming up repeatedly at offer stage?"
- "Which consultants are missing the same must-have questions in intake?"

What you do with the insight:
- Pick one team theme for the week.
- Build a 15-minute coaching moment around it (listen to a 2-minute clip, practise, re-run).
- Tie it back to the ratio it affects (BD conversations to jobs won, CVs to interviews, offers to starts).

If you are not turning insights into practice, it is just interesting data.



4) Coaching insights across the team, without you reading 50 pages of notes

Managers often “feel” what is going on, but cannot prove it.
Or they can prove it, but it takes them hours.

AI can read:
- 1:1 notes
- weekly commitments (Monday, Wednesday, Friday cadence)
- call summaries
- candidate and client feedback notes
- CRM activity notes

And then surface:
- repeated standards breaches (eg CRM not updated same day, poor role qualification notes, slow follow up)
- recurring skill gaps (eg qualification, negotiation, objection handling)
- early drift (eg commitments missed twice in a row)

This fits perfectly with the guide’s principle: start with the system before blaming the person. AI helps you see whether it is a person issue, a process issue, or your expectations not being clear enough.



5) Forecasting support, separating “possible” from “probable”

The forecast categories (Committed, Probable, Possible) and the evidence questions you should ask.

AI can support forecasting by:
- summarising the evidence for each fee (client commitment, candidate commitment, next dated event, risks)
- flagging where a deal is labelled “committed” but has no dated next step
- spotting concentration risk (too much of the month sitting in one account or one role type)
- highlighting stalled processes that are consuming time with low probability of fill

The key point: you still own the call. Forecasting is judgement. AI is a co-pilot, not the person signing off the month.

6) Admin automation that gives consultants time back (and protects your standards)

AI is not a bolt on. It is there to reduce low-value work that crowds out coaching and people development.

The biggest admin offenders are obvious:
- duplicate data entry
- CV formatting
- chasing confirmations and feedback
- internal updates with no decision
- messy CRM visibility

AI is at its best when it removes “small time-consuming tasks” that sit between productive activities. TRN’s member success story with Simon Topps makes this point clearly: the gains come from systematically removing the small tasks that eat time, not from one magic tool.

So automate things like:
- drafting internal weekly summaries
- producing ‘ten live roles’ sampling pack (roles, stage, next step, risk flags)
- chasing interview confirmations
- drafting client updates that include a dated next step (the guide’s definition of a stronger update)
- turning call notes into structured CRM notes (with a human review step)

The standard remains non-negotiable. AI just makes it easier to hit it.



Chapter 9: Your 90-Day Billing Manager Sprint

You do not need to change everything at once.

The aim of the next 90 days is to build a management rhythm that gives you more control of performance, more time to coach, and a team that becomes less dependent on you.

The sprint is split into three stages:

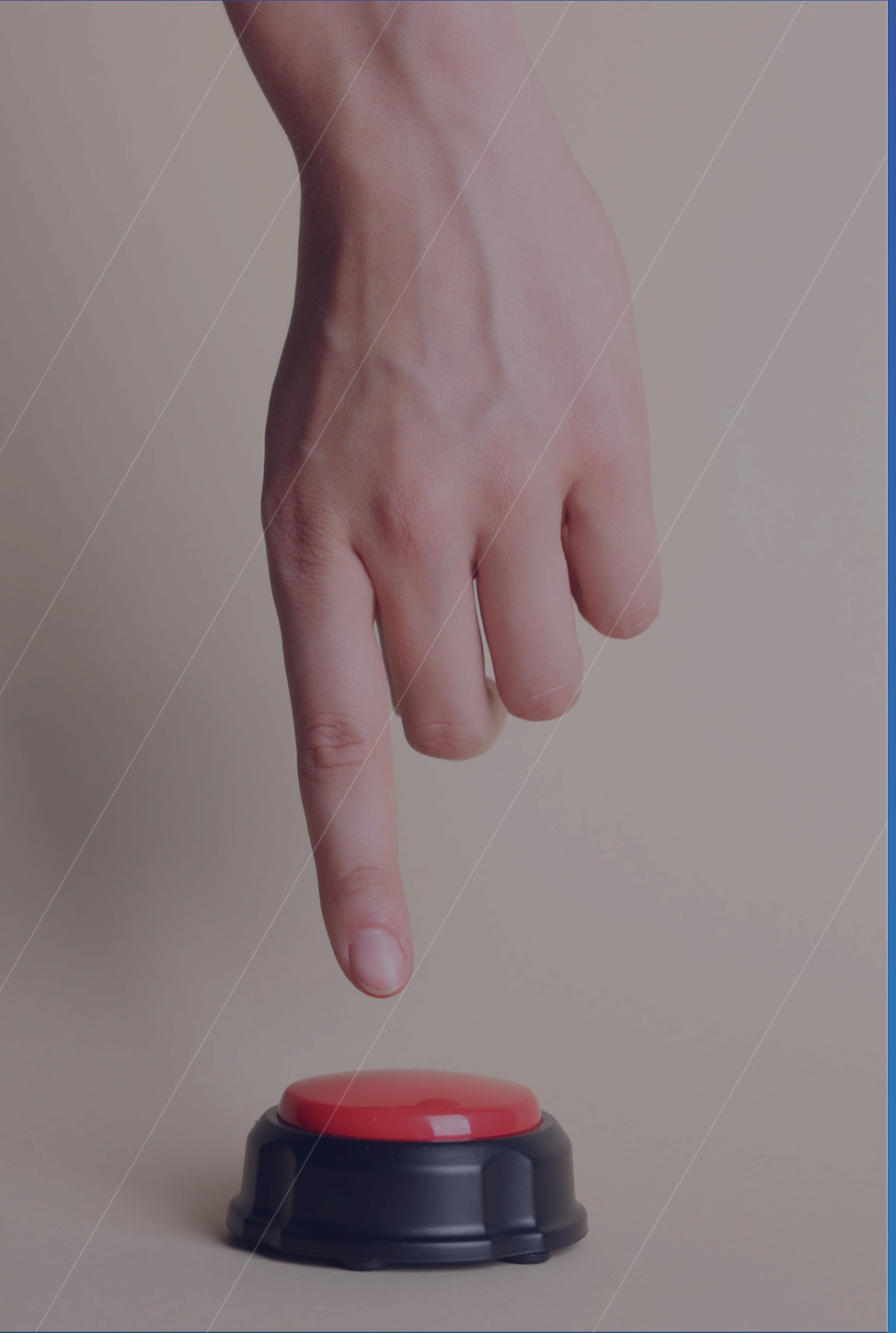
Days 1-30: RESET
Get control of your role, your time and the team's weekly rhythm.

Days 31-60: MULTIPLY
Find the conversion leaks, coach the right behaviours and make performance more predictable.

Days 61-90: EMBED
Turn better management into team habits, stronger accountability and greater independence.

The test at the end is simple: what can your team do reliably in 90 days that they cannot do reliably today?





STEP 1: RESET
Days 1–30: Build the operating system

The first month is about getting out of reactive management.
If your week is still controlled by urgent vacancies, client escalations, internal admin and whatever problem lands first, you will struggle to build a high performing team. Your first job is to create structure.

Week 1: Establish your baseline

Before changing anything, work out where you are now.

Do four things:

1. Plot your current position

Look at the previous 8-12 weeks and ask:
- How strong has my personal billing been?
- How strong has team performance been?
- Am I creating performance through the team, or covering gaps myself?
- How often am I stepping in because it feels quicker to do the work myself?

Be honest. You need a starting point, not a flattering one.



2. Calculate your leverage

Use: Team GP ÷ Manager GP = Manager Leverage Ratio
Record the number. You will come back to it on Day 90.
The purpose is not to reduce your personal billing for the sake of it.
The purpose is to increase the amount of total commercial performance you create.

3. Audit one full working week

For one week, track your time in 30-minute blocks and categorise it as:
- **BILL** - your own high-value commercial activity
- **MULTIPLY** - coaching, call reviews, deal coaching and activity that improves other people's performance
- **PEOPLE** - 1:1s, development, career and performance conversations
- **MANAGE** - forecasting, reporting, meetings and management administration
- **ADMIN/WASTE** - firefighting, duplication, unnecessary meetings and avoidable admin

At the end of the week, calculate:
Multiplication % = time spent improving other people's performance ÷ total working time
Waste % = time spent on avoidable admin and firefighting ÷ total working time

You are looking for where your diary tells a different story from your intentions.

4. Create your rescue list

Write down three things you regularly do because:
- it is quicker if you do it,
- the consultant is struggling,
- the fee feels too important to risk,
- or you do not trust it will happen without you.

Then ask: Which of these should I still be doing in 90 days?

Week 2: Redesign your week

Now protect the activities that create performance.

Put these into your diary as recurring blocks:
- Protected **personal billing time**
- Protected **coaching time**
- Protected **1:1 time**
- Protected **pipeline and forecast time**
- Protected **thinking time**

Treat these like client meetings.
If your coaching block moves every time the desk gets busy, the team quickly learns that coaching is optional.
Then **build** your **Stop Doing List**.

Choose at least three things you will **stop, reduce, automate** or **delegate** over the next 30 days.

Examples:
- Producing reports nobody uses to make decisions
- Attending meetings where you are not required to decide or unblock
- Fixing CRM quality yourself
- Being the automatic escalation point for every client problem
- Taking over negotiations because it feels quicker
- Chasing updates that should already be visible

New management habits need space. If you add coaching, thinking time and better performance management without removing anything, you have simply created a longer working week.



Weeks 3-4: Introduce the weekly sprint rhythm

Run established consultants through three fixed touchpoints.

Monday: Kick-off
Keep it to 10-20 minutes.

Ask:
- What is the most important commercial outcome this week?
- How will you create it?
- Why is that the right plan based on your pipeline?
- What could stop it?
- What will be visible by Wednesday if the plan is working?

Do not accept vague commitments such as "do more BD".
You want a specific commercial outcome with a clear plan behind it.

Wednesday: Realignment
Keep it to 10-15 minutes.

Ask:
- What has changed since Monday?
- Where are you against the outcome?
- What is the biggest commercial risk in the next 48 hours?
- What should we stop, start, escalate, requalify or drop?
- What are the one to three actions that matter most now?

The purpose is to catch drift while there is still time to do something about it.



Friday: Review

Keep it to 15-25 minutes.

Ask:

- What did you commit to?
- What actually happened?
- Which decisions or behaviours helped?
- What did not happen, and why?
- What changes next week?
- What is already emerging as Monday's priority?

Keep the conversation factual.
Commitment. Evidence. Learning. Adjustment.
That is enough contact to maintain control without becoming the approval gate for every decision.

Your Day 30 checkpoint

By the end of the first month:

- Your protected management blocks are in the diary and staying there.
- Every consultant can explain their most important weekly commercial outcome.
- Monday, Wednesday and Friday touchpoints are running consistently.
- You have removed or delegated at least one recurring activity.
- Your Multiplication % has increased.
- Your Waste % has started to fall.
- You are seeing fewer end-of-week surprises.

If not, repeat the time audit.
Do not assume you have a motivation problem until you know you do not have a management system problem.





STEP 2: MULTIPLY
Days 31-60: Manage the conversion that creates the number

Month two is where the management conversation changes.

You stop asking: "How can we do more?"
And start asking: "Where is performance actually breaking?"

Gross profit is the result. You need to manage what happens before it.

Week 5: Build the pipeline maths

For each established consultant, identify:
- Monthly GP target
- Average fee
- Placements required
- Typical offers-to-starts conversion
- Typical interviews-to-offers conversion
- Typical CVs-to-interviews conversion
- Any relevant BD-to-job conversion

Then work backwards.

For example, if someone needs £40k and their average fee is £10k, they need four placements. If 80% of offers start, they need five offers. If one in three interviews becomes an offer, they need approximately 15 interviews.

Targets now become a commercial plan rather than a demand.
Every established consultant should be able to explain their own pipeline maths without relying on you to do it for them.

Week 6: Find each person's constraint

Run a simple performance diagnosis across each desk.

Look at ratios such as:
- BD conversations to jobs won
- CVs to interviews
- Interviews to offers
- Offers to starts
- Jobs worked to jobs filled

Then ask: Where is the biggest leak?

Some common patterns:
Lots of conversations, few meetings
- Likely coaching area: targeting, questioning, proposition or closing for the next step.

Good meetings, few jobs won
- Likely coaching area: client control, qualification, commercial confidence or competitive positioning.

Lots of jobs, poor fill rate
- Likely coaching area: role quality, intake, prioritisation and client commitment.

Interviews happening, few offers
- Likely coaching area: shortlist quality, preparation, calibration and debriefing.

Offers happening, poor starts
- Likely coaching area: candidate control, pre-closing, counter-offer risk and notice period management.

The rule for this stage is:
One person. One ratio. One coaching theme.
Do not try to improve everything simultaneously.
Pick the constraint most likely to affect revenue and focus there.



Week 7: Rebuild your 1:1s

Your 1:1 should not be a tour of the dashboard.
Run it around one commercial problem.

Use this structure:

1. Outcomes
What moved? What is at risk?

2. Ratio
Which conversion ratio matters most right now?

3. Status
Is it green, amber or red against an agreed benchmark?

4. Evidence
What do the calls, CVs, submissions, job notes or live processes actually show?

5. Behaviour
What one observable behaviour needs to change over the next seven days?

6. Review
How will you know whether it changed, and when will you look again?

The consultant should leave knowing exactly what they are going to do differently.
If they leave with "work harder", "do more BD" or "keep pushing", you have not finished the diagnosis



Week 8: Coach for behaviour change

Use the same loop every time:
Observe → Diagnose → Intervene → Practise → Observe again

Start with something that actually happened.
Listen to the call.
Review the submission.
Read the qualification notes.
Look at the offer process.
Then diagnose the real issue.

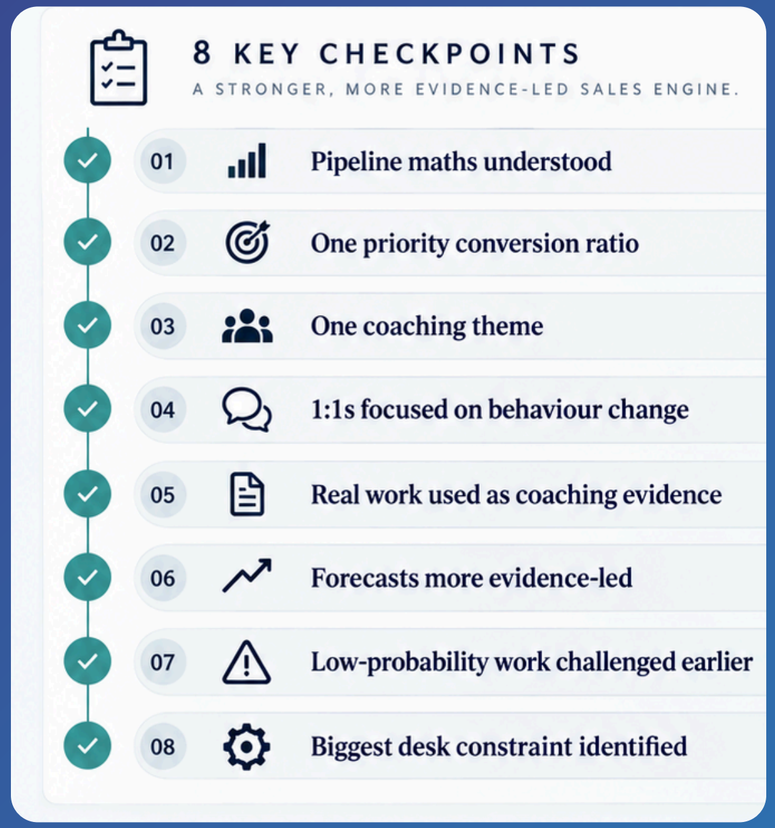
Ask whether it is:

1. **Skill**
They want to perform, but cannot yet execute the behaviour consistently.
Response: train, coach, practise and observe again.

2. **Will**
They know what to do but repeatedly choose not to do it.
Response: reset expectations, tighten commitments and introduce consequences.

3. System
Your process, priorities or management habits are making good performance harder.
Response: simplify, remove friction and clarify standards.
Then practise.
Do not finish the coaching conversation after explaining what better looks like.
Run the opening line again.
Practise the qualification question.
Repeat the close.
Rehearse the fee objection.
Run five repetitions if necessary.
Feedback without practice is commentary. Behaviour changes when people rehearse something differently and then use it in the real world.





Your Day 60 checkpoint

By the end of Month 2:

- Every established consultant knows their pipeline maths.
- Every consultant has one priority conversion ratio.
- Every consultant has one current coaching theme.
- 1:1s are focused on behaviour change rather than reporting.
- You are regularly using real work as coaching evidence.
- Forecast conversations are becoming more evidence-led.
- Low-probability work is being challenged earlier.
- You can name the biggest current constraint on every desk.

Most importantly, your answer to underperformance is becoming more precise.

Less:
"We need more activity."

More:
"This is the stage that is leaking, this is why, and this is what we are going to change this week."



STEP 3: EMBED
Days 61–90: Build accountability and independence

The final month is where you stop making better management dependent on you having a good week.

The goal is to turn what you have introduced into the normal way the team operates.

Weeks 9–10: Make accountability predictable

For every meaningful commitment, make four things clear:

Outcome - What needs to happen?
Standard - What does good look like?
Deadline - By when?
Review point - When will you come back to it?

Then give the consultant space to act.
Do not confuse accountability with constant checking.
Clear expectations followed by a predictable review is management.
Interfering every few hours because you are worried is micromanagement.
The stronger your clarity at the beginning, the less chasing you should need later.
Use the Monday-Wednesday-Friday cadence to review commitments rather than inventing extra meetings or messages every time you feel nervous.

Week 11: Reduce dependency deliberately

For every member of your team, answer:

What do they currently rely on me for that they should be able to own themselves?

Choose one responsibility or capability to transfer.

Examples might include:

- Running a client meeting
- Qualifying a role
- Challenging an unrealistic brief
- Handling an offer negotiation
- Managing a candidate through notice
- Defending fee
- Deciding whether to continue working a vacancy
- Forecasting their desk
- Prioritising their own pipeline

Delegate using a clear learning loop:

1. Define the outcome.
2. Define the standard.
3. Show them what good looks like.
4. Agree when you will check in.
5. Supervise the first couple of attempts.
6. Step back.

Delegation is not simply about freeing up your time.
It is about building someone else's capability.

If the task immediately comes back to you the first time they struggle, you have not delegated it. You have temporarily lent it out.



Week 12: Give yourself capacity back

Now look at the repetitive work still consuming management time.
Ask of each task:

Does this require judgement, trust or persuasion?
Keep it human.

Is it repetitive, structured and high volume?
Automate it or use AI to reduce the work.

Is it blank-page preparation?
Use AI for the first draft, then apply your judgement.

Good opportunities include:
- Preparing weekly performance summaries
- Pulling together 1:1 preparation
- Highlighting pipeline risks
- Summarising calls
- Identifying conversion outliers
- Preparing forecast evidence
- Drafting CRM notes
- Drafting internal updates

The purpose is not simply to save time.

The purpose is to reinvest that time into coaching, commercial judgement and conversations that improve people's capability.



Week 13: Run your 90-day review

Go back to the baseline you recorded in Week 1.
Compare:

Measure	Day 1	Day 90
Personal GP		
Team GP		
Manager Leverage Ratio		
Multiplication %		
Waste %		
Forecast accuracy		
Main team conversion ratios		
Regular activities delegated		
Rescue interventions		
Capabilities the team can now own independently		

Do not judge the sprint on one number.
Look at the full picture.
Then answer three final questions.

PRODUCE
What am I personally doing that genuinely requires my commercial skill and involvement?

PERFORM
Can I explain why the team is going to hit or miss its number using evidence rather than hope?

PEOPLE
What can my team now do reliably that they could not do 90 days ago?

That final question matters most.

Because the point of becoming a better billing manager is not to become better at carrying the team.

It is to build a team that needs less carrying.



Your 90-Day Sprint at a Glance

1. RESET - Days 1-30

Focus: Get control of the operating system.
Do: Audit your time → protect the diary → stop low-value work → introduce the Monday/Wednesday/Friday rhythm.

Your question:
Am I spending my week like a recruiter with management responsibilities, or like a manager who creates more performance through other people?

2. MULTIPLY - Days 31-60

Focus: Coach what actually moves revenue.
Do: Build pipeline maths → diagnose the constraint → choose one ratio → coach one behaviour → practise it → observe again.

Your question:
What is the one thing limiting this person's performance right now?

3. EMBED - Days 61-90

Focus: Make performance less dependent on you.
Do: Clarify standards → hold commitments → delegate capability → reduce admin → review progress.

Your question:
What can this team now do successfully without me?

The 90-day test

At the end of the sprint, you should be able to see three things.

More control.
Fewer surprises, cleaner forecasts and earlier commercial decisions.

More capability.
Consultants who know their numbers, understand their constraints and can execute more effectively without being rescued.

More leverage.
Your impact is increasingly measured by the performance you create across the whole team, not just the fees you personally generate.

That is the shift.
Not from commercial to people focused.
From **individual performer to performance multiplier.**



Closing perspective

The strongest billing managers do not create performance by pushing harder every time the number slips. They create a system that makes good performance more likely - a clear weekly rhythm, better use of leading indicators, stronger pipeline discipline and coaching that focuses on the specific behaviour or conversion point that needs to change. The aim is to replace reactive management with greater control, better judgement and earlier intervention.

That means managing more than activity. It means knowing where performance is breaking, using real evidence to diagnose whether the issue is skill, will or system, and then coaching the right behaviour until it becomes repeatable. It also means protecting time for the work only a manager can do, setting clear standards and using technology to remove low-value admin without replacing the human judgement, accountability and coaching that actually build capability.

Ultimately, the measure of a strong billing manager is not how many problems they personally solve, but how much performance they create through the team. After 90 days, the goal is more control, more capability and more leverage - fewer surprises, consultants who understand their own numbers and constraints, and a team that can deliver more successfully without being rescued. That is the shift this guide is designed to create: from individual performer to performance multiplier.

