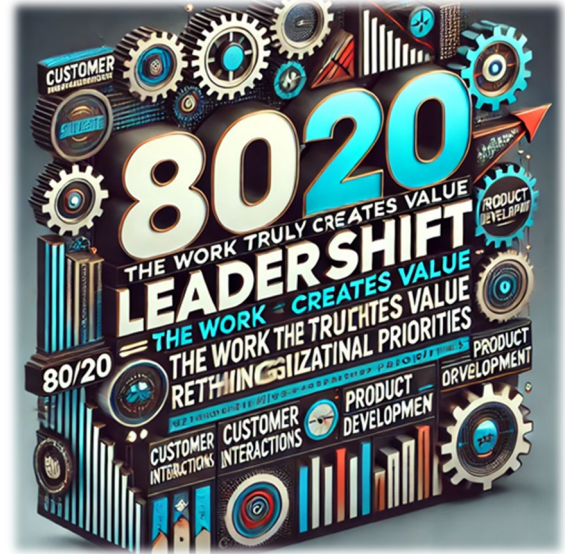


# 80/20 LeaderShift: The Work that Truly Creates Value: Rethinking Organization Priorities

by Joe Hunt

The 80/20 principle, also known as the Pareto Principle, states that 80% of results come from 20% of the efforts. Applied to the world of work, this means that a small number of tasks, roles, or individuals are responsible for delivering the majority of value in an organization. But what exactly are these jobs, and how do you prioritize them?

Contrary to popular belief, the highest-value jobs in a company are not always those in the C-suite. In fact, much of the organization's core value creation happens away from the boardroom. Identifying which roles contribute disproportionately to a company's success—and ensuring those roles are staffed by "A" players—is the key to maximizing efficiency and impact.



## *The Unexpected Jobs That Create the Most Value*

Organizations often prioritize executive roles because of their strategic importance, yet much of the heavy lifting that drives business outcomes happens at different levels. Consider these examples:

### **1. Customer-Facing Roles:**

Employees who directly interact with customers—whether in sales, customer service, or technical support—are often the unsung heroes of any business. They influence customer loyalty, retention, and overall satisfaction. If these roles are staffed by "A" players, the customer experience improves exponentially, directly affecting revenue and brand reputation.

### **2. Product and Service Developers:**

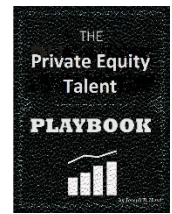
Engineers, designers, and product developers bring innovations to life. While executives may outline strategy, it's these individuals who create the tangible products and services that fulfill customer needs. Ensuring the best talent is in these roles can lead to cutting-edge developments, reducing costs, and boosting market competitiveness.

### **3. Operations and Process Optimizers:**

Behind-the-scenes teams responsible for supply chain management, logistics, and process optimization often go unnoticed, yet they are pivotal in maintaining efficiency. Their work ensures products are delivered on time, services are executed smoothly, and cost-efficiencies are achieved. With "A" players here, organizations can find efficiencies that translate directly to higher margins.

### **4. Marketing and Brand Builders:**

The marketing team, responsible for a company's outward image and messaging, plays a crucial role in brand positioning and customer acquisition. These individuals drive the demand side of the business by crafting narratives that resonate with customers, often being the differentiator in crowded markets.



## ***Prioritizing Talent Across the Organization***

While the C-suite certainly has a role in setting the strategic direction of the company, they can only do so much without exceptional talent across all levels. Having “A” players in every role at every level is every manager's and organization's most important responsibility. Here's how to approach it:

### **1. Identify Critical Roles:**

Not every position in the organization will have the same impact on the business. Managers need to identify the roles that create the most leverage. These positions are often found where the company directly interacts with customers, develops its product, or improves operational efficiencies. Once these key roles are identified, focus on filling them with top talent.

### **2. Create a Value Map:**

Conduct a value analysis of your company's structure to see which departments or teams consistently drive the highest outputs relative to their size and resources. By mapping this out, you'll discover where to place your hiring emphasis. It's often these overlooked teams that deserve the investment in recruitment, training, and retention.

### **3. Prioritize Skill Development:**

Ensure that the top performers in these critical roles are not only hired but are continuously developing. Skills development programs, coaching, and career advancement opportunities are essential in retaining these "A" players and keeping them motivated.

### **4. Match People to Tasks, Not Titles:**

It's easy to fall into the trap of associating certain roles with certain tasks based on hierarchy, but the real challenge is ensuring the right people are working on the right things. Sometimes, it's not about who holds the highest title but who has the skills and focus to drive results. A flexible, dynamic approach to role allocation can unlock more productivity than simply adhering to a rigid organizational chart.

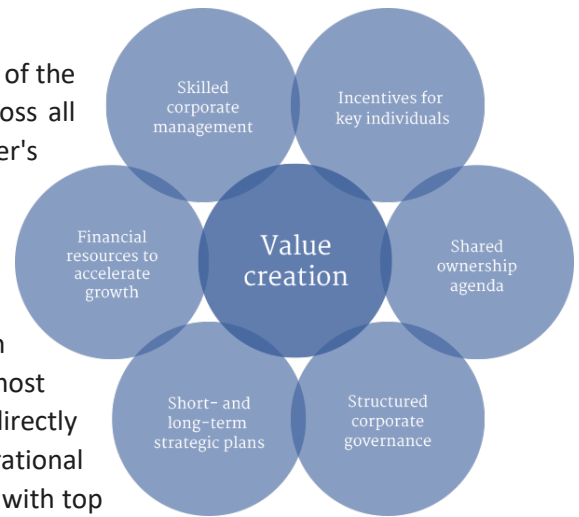
## ***Aligning Tasks with the 80/20 Rule***

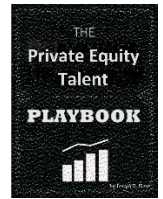
To truly embrace the 80/20 rule, managers and leaders must also prioritize the tasks (work to be done) within each role. Not all tasks are equal in value. By focusing on high-leverage activities, even individuals in non-critical roles can become exponentially more productive.

### ***Here's how to do it:***

#### **1. Audit Tasks Regularly:**

Regularly assess the workload of key roles to ensure employees are focusing on the activities that drive the most impact. This often involves cutting out low-value tasks and allowing employees to focus on high-priority objectives.





## 2. Delegate or Automate Low-Value Tasks:

Many tasks that consume time are necessary but don't contribute significantly to business goals. Delegating these tasks or automating them can free up "A" players to focus on what they do best.

## 3. Set Clear Performance Benchmarks:

Tie performance reviews and KPIs to the specific, high-impact activities within roles, rather than more generalized assessments. This ensures that employees are rewarded and developed for excelling in the tasks that matter most.

## Conclusion

The 80/20 principle shows us that value doesn't always come from where we expect it. While strategic leadership is critical, the jobs that often create the most impact are spread across various levels and functions of an organization. By identifying high-value roles, ensuring they are filled with top talent, and enabling those individuals to focus on their most important tasks, businesses can maximize their output and achieve sustained success.

Prioritize what needs to be done, and most importantly, who is going to do it. Having "A" players in every position is no longer just a lofty goal but a necessity for thriving in today's competitive landscape.

## About the Hunt Group

The Hunt Group is the leading private equity executive search firm and advisory specializing in consumer goods & services, diversified industrial and related professional services markets. We partner with investors throughout the deal cycle to help them Invest in, Grow and Exit their portfolio companies by appointing senior operating executives (CEOs and Direct Reports), Chairs and Outside Directors with Private Equity DNA. Our industry and functional vertical connections and engagement guarantee we're in the know, have broad insight and full access to the best talent in the marketplace. Our mission is to create and exponentially grow accretive value for all client stakeholders.