IN A CRUNCH: 86,400 SECONDS TO SPEND

OVERVIEW

Effective time management is an important skill in all aspects of life, and accounting careers are no exception. With all the responsibilities on accountants' plates, strong time management skills are a must to nail deadlines, land great clients and maintain a healthy work life.

This activity prompts students to imagine themselves in a scenario where they have 86,400 seconds (or 24 hours) to spend $86,400. What will they spend it on and why? Any money not spent in that time frame is lost.

After going through the exercise, they'll reflect on how well they manage their time in real life to better understand they ways in which the skill can open up opportunities for them at work, at home and in their own minds.

ACTIVITY SETUP:

Start by deciding how much time you'll give students to create their spreadsheet (We recommend at least 15 minutes, but no more than 30 minutes). This will allow them to exercise their time management skills in real-time in addition to their hypothetical scenario.

When that time is up, have students gather into groups of 2-3 to discuss their spreadsheets and rationale, encouraging them to ask for feedback and questions on what they came up with.

After the group discussions, have each student answer the following questions on their own to reflect on how well they currently manage their time and what they can do to improve:

- On a scale of 1-10, how well would you say you currently manage your time? Are you typically late, early, or right on time?
- How do you feel when you're running late? How do you feel when you're ahead of schedule? How do you feel when a deadline is fast-approaching?
- Think of a time in the last week when you did not accomplish something you set out to do or missed a deadline. What happened? What could you have done differently to ensure you followed through?
- Think of a time in the last week when you DID accomplish something you set out to do and made a deadline. What happened? What allowed you to follow through as intended?
- Come up with three strategies that you believe will help you successfully manage your time and achieve your goals on schedule in the future.

Finally, ask a few students to share their best time management tips with the class – and throw in a few of your own!