

JUST RELAX AND BE MORE PRODUCTIVE

It is the time of year when our ability to juggle tasks is put to the test. We juggle our work activities with: present buying, social commitments and family activities. Many of us become stressed with the holiday rush.

The ability to juggle tasks, or multi-task, is a much sought after competency in the new millennium. Companies need to remain responsive and adaptable in today's fast-paced marketplace and they hire people who are change-oriented and can handle many things being thrown at them at once.

Using McQuaig terminology, companies are seeking people who, they believe, would score on the Driving end of our Relaxed<>Driving Scale. In our seminars, when I ask for qualities of top performers, Driving traits are those most commonly mentioned. When visiting the career sections of many corporate websites, the company culture is often described using Driving terminology.

But is this really what we want? Is there no place for Relaxed people in the workplace? Is it possible that some jobs appear to require Driving People when they really need people who Relaxed?

A number of studies have been released over the last few years stating that multi-tasking is unproductive and leads to stress, as Suzanne Bianchi has noted in her book, *Changing Rhythms of American Family Life*.

A client of mine, a HR Manager for an automotive retailer, asked me to visit one of their stores, which he described as small but highly productive. I arrived at 6:50 a.m. to meet the store manager whose name was Vince. Vince was an amiable guy who had started out as a mechanic ten years earlier. He took the time to introduce me to his crew.

At 6:59 a.m., they opened the doors and within a matter of minutes it was complete chaos. Customers were barging in with emergencies every few minutes, the phone rang constantly and the mechanics seemed to need Vince's opinion constantly on a variety of technical matters. He was like a pork chop that had been thrown to the piranhas; everyone wanted a piece of him.

When discussing it with the HR Manager later, I mentioned that Vince must have had a very strong Driving Score to deal with the hectic pace. He logged onto his computer, brought up Vince's McQuaig profile and, to my surprise, it showed that he was Relaxed. Then the HR Manager explained, "The environment is very hectic and demanding, but it doesn't change much from day to day." Customers always come in with emergencies but the emergencies don't change much from day to day. The phone always rings off the hook, but, after awhile, all this activity becomes routine."

The routine nature of the chaos at his store made Vince's patient and steady demeanor perfect for the job. His Relaxed nature helps him deal with his environment and, as a bonus, he is probably far less likely than the rest of us to get stressed out at this time of year.

While we are not implying that you should be hiring Relaxed managers for all seemingly hectic jobs, we are recommending that, to capture the behavioural demands of any job, you complete The McQuaig Job Survey.

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