



Doing Less With More Resources

Indiana University External Relations Retreat
October 25, 2007

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The Competency Quiz ▶

▼ Use the 1 to 4 scale to rate yourself on being a competent person.

1. Not me!
2. Not usually the way that I am.
3. It seems that I am that way.
4. Oh, yeah! That's me alright!

1. My organization can always count on me to be “on time, on target, and on budget.”

Score: _____

2. I can usually come up with a solution to a problem pretty fast.

Score: _____

3. I get so bored with simple tasks that I sometimes procrastinate to make the job a bit more challenging.

Score: _____

4. I have found that I will do a job that I could delegate because I can do it faster, better, or more efficiently.

Score: _____

5. I have had successes in my job, but I am not content with them. I want more!

Score: _____

6. I have standards for myself that are sometimes higher than those others may expect of me.

Score: _____

7. People come me to help with their problems and know that I will be there for them.

Score: _____

8. When people compliment me, I try to be gracious, but I really know the truth about how well I did and it doesn't usually merit praise.

Score: _____

9. I do more than is expected of me, taking on jobs, committees, and other assignments.

Score: _____

10. Even though I have very full days, I always seem to have the capacity to take on an important assignment.

Score: _____

11. Most people don't know me aside from the work that I do.

Score: _____

12. I get high performance reviews on a regular basis.

Score: _____

13. I get into trouble sometimes because I am over-committed.

Score: _____

14. I set goals for my free time so that I can get a lot of things done.

Score: _____

15. I sometimes say YES to a project and then regret having done so when it is time to get it done.

Score: _____

What Your Score Means ►

▼ At the high end of the scale: 46 to 60

You are a highly competent person used to getting things done quickly and effectively. You get a good deal of your self-esteem from your work and enjoy the admiration of others for just how much you get done. You don't often stop to smell the roses because you are on to the next project. Last year's success is this year's mediocre effort. When you find a new interest, you throw yourself into it until you master it.

You are also likely to be overcommitted and pulled between various competing demands. You measure your life in goals achieved, tasks crossed off, and jobs done. It is sometimes difficult to turn off your mind and just do something lazy, unplanned, and spontaneous. Though you are always connected via pager, cell phone, IM and e-mail, you can't seem to get anything done. Your conversations might be described as constant partial attention where you check your Blackberry, or steal a look at your cell phone, or type e-mail as you talk on the phone.

The way to get more done is to have more money, more people, and more time. You also know how to do more with less.

▼ **High mid-range: 30 to 45**

You are a committed and diligent person who strives to do a good job. You have the reputation for being dependable and consistent. You seek ways to make improvements and give thought to how to organize your work. You would like to achieve more and perhaps even to be given credit for the things you do.

There is a part of you that is creative that you would like to develop if you had the time. There are occasions when you think that a solution to a problem may be quick fix and not a long-term plan, but because of the demands of the job, you choose it.

You feel harried at times, but can manage to balance those times with a chance to unwind. Taking a break is sometimes hard to do, but once you have, you can relax before getting back to work.

▼ **15 to 29 points**

Work is important to you, but not as important as life outside of work. You have no problem taking time off when something comes up. You may have had a conversation with a co-worker about your time management skills either because you are late on projects or that you keep odd hours.

You are happy with the work you do, but it is not all that you are. You work to live, not the other way around. A career is something that consists of a series of jobs and you can easily move from one organization to another if the right opportunity came along.

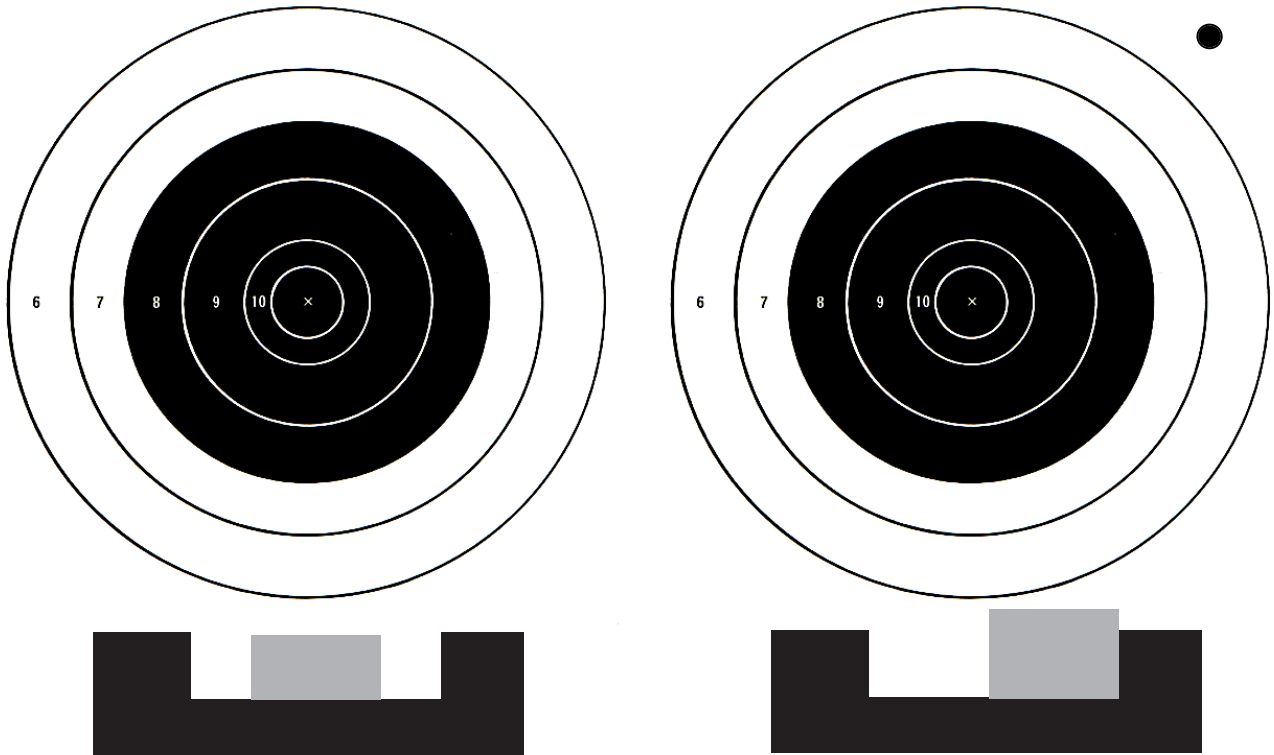
▼ **0 to 14 points**

You may be given tasks that you think are menial or beneath you. There are times when you feel like your boss is picking on you and that you are misunderstood. The job is not important other than a paycheck and you have other interests in your life that you would rather do than work. You may have had some coaching or discipline sessions in your career.

You may even feel that the people you work with are rigid and only interested in getting ahead in their careers. You have felt at times that no one respects your opinion or gives you a chance to do something important. If you found something that really interested you, you might think about committing to it, but so far, nothing has grabbed you.

Note: *This is a completely unscientific quiz whose only function is to get you to consider how hierarchical organizations shape our notion of competence.*

**Small, significant, sustained change
over time can make a great difference ▶**



- ▼ At 100 yards, a one-degree change causes a 1-inch error.
- ▼ At 500 yards, that same one degree change causes a 26-foot error.
- ▼ At one mile, a one-degree error will cause you to miss the target by 500 feet.

Metaphors are useful in helping us reframe a set of facts ▶

▼ Water as a metaphor for thinking about money:

A dollar's velocity is its rate of turnover.

A company measures its cash flow.

Unnecessary costs are a drain on resources.

A company that is broke is said to be underwater, unable to float a loan.

"A rising tide floats all ships" was Ronald Reagan's motto for the economy.

▼ Animals and plants as metaphors for humans:

They follow like sheep.

They have a herd mentality.

It's a dog-eat-dog world.

When you run with the big dogs, you run through the big dogs' tracks.

Only the lead dog has a good view.

Winston Churchill called Clement Atlee *"A sheep in sheep's clothing."*

He is an oak tree, you won't get him to budge.

Ever feel like a mushroom? Kept in the dark and fed a lot of crap all day.

She has this willowy frame: Very flexible and thin.

▼ The metaphor of a jail cell has been used to boost contributions to charity.

A guy gets "arrested" and placed in "jail" until someone goes his "bail" in the form of a donation.

▼ *Men are from Mars. Women are from Venus.*

It is still a best-selling book regardless of your planet.

▼ A metaphor is not a perfect explanation.

A metaphor is an approximation that highlights certain features to make a point.

Yard Sale Metaphor ▶

The problem with shedding jobs or activity is that it gets in the way of the competency gyroscope. If you conceive of your self worth based on how much work you do, it is threatening to your self-image as a competent person to give up any tasks. So, we do more with less. And, get secret competency points for doing so. Only a competent person could fit one more task into her life and still be successful.

Asking people to contemplate a reduction in budget or a change in their tasks scares them. “If I show my boss that I can get by with 10% less, he’ll give me 10% less. I have to hold onto everything I’ve got.” And if you really can do 10% less, what have you been wasting your time on all this while?

Asking people to shed jobs or activities ignores the principle that each of those tasks has value. Getting rid of them requires a person to say that it no longer has value. If it has no value, maybe you don’t have as much value. So, absent a crisis, asking people to reduce their workload, their expenses, or their staff is going to fail.

The yard sale metaphor works because it recognizes that things still have value. It suggests that they may have more value to someone else than to you. Because a yard sale is such a common event, it is easy for people to understand and to link aspect of the yard sale to aspects of their job. If they can solve the metaphor, they can solve the problem.

The Components of a Good Yard Sale ▶

▼ Why are you having it, in the first place?

The clearer you are about your goal, the more motivated you will be to sell stuff. More space in the attic? Money for a trip?

▼ Finding good stuff to sell

The items must no longer meet your needs: Sony Walkman

The items must have some potential value to someone else: LP records

There is a good chance of exchange or barter.

You may have some emotional attachments: Selling Mom's dishes

Forgiveness is easier to get than permission: His old golf clubs

▼ Setting out

Good advertising and promotion

Display for greatest value

Potential customers

Right price, clearly stated

Help with the sales

▼ Making the deal

Talking about benefits rather than features: Why you *need* this.

Agree on the price and delivery

Warranties and returns

All sales are final

▼ Cleaning up

Do the remains go to Goodwill or the Landfill?

Does your nature abhor a vacuum?

No buying back what you have sold

▼ Examples

University of Indianapolis phone directory and ID cards.

CASE members: Newsletter, invitation, and business card templates.

Franklin College *One Week*.

Healthcare revolution in having pharmacists diagnose and dispense drugs.