

Busy Or Productive.

Which are you?



Busy or Productive.

Are you **broadly productive**, or are you simply **very busy**? For each of the statements above, tick those that broadly describe you and the way you generally approach work.

Statement	True?
1. I am always rushing about.	
2. I have long to do lists.	
3. I am very focused.	
4. I hit deadlines, but usually by the skin of my teeth.	
5. I concentrate on one task at a time.	
6. I frequently leap from one task to another during the day.	
7. I have clearly prioritised tasks according to their overall importance.	
8. I am often 'short' with other people.	
9. I hold/attend only essential meetings and give them my full attention.	
10. I know why I am doing each task.	
11. I never seem to take a proper lunch break.	
12. I regularly help others out.	
13. I am not well planned and organised.	
14. I attend lots of meetings and are often late or unprepared for them.	
15. I spread effort throughout the month, rather than having a spurt at the end.	
16. I will communicate I am busy ☹ but struggle to explain what with.	
17. I negotiate acceptance of new tasks to fit around existing priorities.	
18. I seem to be working on the same things for a long time.	
19. I am assertive with time thieves/time stealers.	
20. I hit deadlines comfortably.	
21. I have limited errors or rework.	
22. I accept new tasks or requests without questioning or negotiating.	
23. I work late occasionally, when it is necessary to do so.	
24. I often work late or take work home.	
25. I sometimes let others down.	
26. I manage others' expectations about what they can achieve.	
27. I am busy and can say exactly why.	
28. I may show signs of stress.	

Busy or Productive.

Circle each statement you ticked, then add up the total of circles for each column.

A	B
1	3
2	5
4	7
6	9
8	10
11	12
13	15
14	17
16	19
18	20
22	21
24	23
25	26
28	27
Total:	Total:

A study by Heike Bruch and Sumantra Ghoshal in the 90's looks at the activity of managers in a number of large organisations (summary findings published in HBV: Beware the busy manager) They found that whilst all were busy **90% of managers squandered a proportion of their time in all sorts of ineffective activities.**

Managers are not really employed to keep the business doing "business as usual" (the authors argue this would happen anyway). Instead, managers should be taking the business forward. Managers who are able to do this demonstrate 2 key attributes: **focus and energy.**

Having **focus** means being able to concentrate on one issue at a time and to have the resilience to see it through to the end. Managers who are focused are not reactionary, they have very clear objectives, are committed to achieving them, and are not easily side-tracked.

Managers with **energy** have the personal drive and motivation that allows them to find that little bit extra required when the going gets tough.

People with energy will relish a challenge, commit 100% to an idea or project work to overcome obstacles and positively challenge people who block progress.

In summary they are self-empowered and highly engaged. Watch out though, **focus** or **energy** alone will not deliver results. Focus without energy can result in paralysis by analysis or personal stress/ burnout. Energy without focus turns into distracting business or a series of half-completed projects.



Busy or Productive.

The Procrastinating - (c.30% in the study)

- Appear quite passive.
- 'Go through the motions' by performing routine tasks, attending meetings and keep out of trouble.
- Sometime lack clarity of what is expected of them so fill their time with lots of admin.
- Some may have been excited by and took risks in the past – perhaps.



The Disengaged - (c.20% of the study)

- Have focus but no energy to kick starts themselves into action.
- Have clear ideas about what may be done, but for whatever reason generally unwilling or unable to do it.
- Tend to be quite tense and anxious and may feel alienated or frustrated.
- Protect themselves by withdrawing themselves.
- May have felt engaged in the past but have faced many knock-backs and compromises.

The Distracted - (c.40% of the study)

- Well intentioned, high energy, but unfocused who confuse doing with achieving.
- Whenever a new initiative or problem these people will leap into action. However often they rarely think things through thoroughly and often have to backtrack, re-do or un-do their actions.
- Rarely plan or reflect and so are in a constant state of firefighting or running to stand still.

The Purposeful - (10% of the study)

- Very self-aware, never lose sight of what they should be doing.
- Make decisions based on long term objectives.
- Strong will power to see things through.
- Constantly stretch themselves and open to new ideas.
- Use time wisely, take time to plan and reflect.
- Take on pressure, good at managing stress, tend to have a life outside of work.