



ThinkEvans Coffee Time Survey December 2004

“What Worries You at Work?”

The aim of this survey was simple - let's not forget that what you can tell us over a cup of coffee has to be! We are not looking for a PhD here, just a quick test of the state of things amongst our audience.

The aim was to check what issues were causing people to worry at work. It's a topic on which we find almost everyone has an opinion, so it seemed a great ice-breaker for our coffee time survey series.

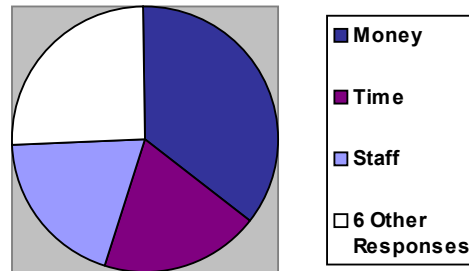
We asked respondents to nominate the one topic that worries them most in the workplace. Respondents were asked to choose from a list:

- Time to get everything done - always feeling swamped
- Staff - finding & keeping the right people
- Money, money, money - sales, cashflow, whatever
- New trends - what will be the next big thing in my market
- Competition - are the bad guys winning or how can I get the jump on them?
- Expecting the unexpected - tax bills, unfair dismissal claims, legal dramas, etc
- Restructures, redundancies, reorganisations ...
- Understanding what I am responsible for and how my performance is judged
- We have problems but we are not solving them
- No problems - things are just great where I am
- Other (please specify)

We forced this question by allowing only one answer. But then having done that, we did a cross check and actually allowed a second bite at the cherry (by asking in a following question what their second choice would be).

There was no significant correlation between the answers given in each of these questions.

Overall, there seems no doubt that the most common worry in the workplace is time, with this accounting for over half the responses. Tied for second were staff issues and money, with everything else just lurking in the distance.



There was no significant correlation between the answers given and either:

- the length of time the respondent had been in the workforce (noting that a majority having more than 15 years of work “match practice”), or
- their age (and it is worth noting that ages ranged from under 20 to over 70).

We found this not that surprising, as these are fundamental and enduring dimensions of our working lives. One way and another, the work world does revolve around resources - whether it is your time or money or staff. Apart from anything else, it is not easy to focus on the task at hand if the lack of these is a significant distraction.

Many respondents either made a comment about time - eg. it being an issue of work life balance or that over-bearing employers did not allow staff to have a life. Equally many requested a future survey on this topic, so that is the topic of our second coffee time survey.

The opinions expressed in this analysis are those of the author and may not reflect the interpretation of any other person or entity.

Summary by Carolyn Evans, February 2005

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