



Your Effectiveness – A Quiz

Gauge your on-the-job effectiveness by checking the answer that *best* describes your habits, circumstances, and interactions at work.

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The **Software Technology Support Center** was established at Ogden Air Logistics Center (AFMC) by Headquarters U.S. Air Force to help Air Force software organizations identify, evaluate, and adopt technologies that will improve the quality of their software products, their efficiency in producing them, and their ability to accurately predict the cost and schedule of their delivery. *CROSSTALK* is assembled, printed, and distributed by the Defense Printing Service, Hill AFB, UT 84056. *CROSSTALK* is distributed without charge to individuals actively involved in the defense software development process.

1. Nothing primes me for work each morning better than

- A. a brisk five-mile jog followed by a hearty, nutritious breakfast.
- B. ingesting so much caffeine I can jump-start dead car batteries with my hands.
- C. a 10:05 a.m., expletive-laden wake-up call from a superior.

2. The first thing I do when I arrive at the office is

- A. review my weekly master schedule and prioritize the day's activities.
- B. tell everyone the story about the guy who parked his car in a bad part of town with two Dallas Cowboys tickets on the seat. (When he came back his window was broken, his stereo was missing, and there were two more tickets on the seat.)
- C. read my E-mail, first deleting any message with a subject heading that contains the words "urgent," "deadline," "meeting," "project," "work," "complaint," "disciplinary hearing," or any message from my boss.

3. For me, a workday typically consists of

- A. three or four cycles of design, coding, and unit testing interspersed with brief, effective peer reviews.
- B. (in descending order of volume) coma-inducing meetings, gripe sessions about what was said during the meetings, general organizational/managerial criticism, distractions, lunch, bathroom breaks, trips to vending machine, actual work.
- C. The Dilbert Zone.

4. One week before an important deadline, you will usually find me

- A. at a party, receiving a bonus check for finishing ahead of schedule.
- B. working frantically to ensure that everything will be ready, i.e., a scapegoat has been chosen, excuses are coordinated, etc.
- C. at the shredder, destroying evidence.

5. When working on a team, I usually

- A. am looked to for advice and am persuaded by other team members to be the leader, after which I conduct brief, yet highly effective working sessions.
- B. gripe that no one will listen to my advice, and with the help of others, manage to turn at least one tiny issue per meeting into a drawn-out power struggle.
- C. N/A. I was barred from human interaction following the bean dip incident.

6. When a colleague criticizes my work, my first reaction is to

- A. take it at face value, then make a conscious effort to improve. No hard feelings.
- B. pretend to care, then call him "Weasel Lips" under my breath.
- C. listen in stone silence, then carve a rebuttal on his desk with a screwdriver.

7. When someone starts to make a request that I consider unreasonable, I

- A. listen quietly, then calmly present my concerns and an alternate approach.
- B. titter nervously while listening, obviously choking back a bitter retort, then break out into a guffaw when they finish speaking; I then feign surprise at their grim expression and exclaim, "You mean you weren't telling a joke?"
- C. N/A—hasn't happened for a long time (see question 6, answer C).

8. When championing an idea that I care deeply about, I

- A. calmly, openly try to persuade others as well as I can, then live with the result.
- B. occasionally try persuasion, but usually resort to massaged data and behind-the-scenes maneuvering that would make a campaign manager blush.
- C. usually calm down once the security guards start applying pain holds.

HOW TO SCORE: Count two points per A, one point per B, zero points per C.

13-16 points: Great! You are anybody's dream worker. But verify your answers with your co-workers—some people score high only because they are delusional goobers.

5-12 points: Congratulations: you're an engineer!

0-4 points: Pay no attention to some arbitrary scale that can't account for intangible assets, such as your ability to draw more pay per unit of completed work than any of your colleagues. Emphasize this point on your résumé, which I'm sure you will be updating soon. There's probably something about it in your E-mail.

—Lorin May

Got an idea for BACKTALK? Send an E-mail to mayl@software.hill.af.mil