

## Are we really so busy?

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### ABSTRACT

The idea behind this paper is driven out of an experience during the first hour, one day in the office. The first five acquaintances were asked 'How are you?' Each and every one responded with the word 'busy'. Given the large number of potential responses this felt more than a coincidence. This paper explores a number of queries based on the initial realization described above. Are people really busy or has it become a habit to say it? Along with this, is there a tipping point or psychological phenomenon whereby, when said by enough people, it becomes highly 'contagious' and we all become inadvertently pre-programmed to say it? Does this then create a culture of busyness? Does it actually matter? If so, can we try and change this habit or culture by not giving what appears to be in many circumstances a default response?

### INTRODUCTION

The layout for the remainder of this paper is detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Table of Contents**

| Section                                                               | Purpose                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Concept of 'Busy' and 'Busyness'                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Set the context and parameters for definition of busy and busyness</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| External evidence to support further exploration                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reference data and literature to support further analysis</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Selected drivers that contribute to embedding a culture of 'Busyness' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>List drivers</li><li>Highlight drivers of primary focus and define</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Method of approach                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Detail three stages of research and/or analysis</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Interpretation of Findings                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Summarize results with a primary focus on:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-During quieter periods, why would individuals allude to being busy?</li><li>- When individuals are busy and apart from alluding to this, do people talk about how this makes them feel?</li></ul></li><li>Link findings to selected drivers</li></ul> |
| How can we make a difference                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Based on findings what action can individuals and organisations take to create a more optimal state</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Limitations                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Conclusion                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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This paper will reference 'the team' throughout. The team comprises of the author (James Gallagher) and two work colleagues; Nelson Kinnersley and Barry Clinch.

The views expressed within this paper are entirely that of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Roche Products Ltd.

### CONCEPT OF BUSY AND BUSYNESS

The words busy and busyness are incredibly subjective. At the outset of this research the author equated busyness to the length of his 'to do' list. Others may relate it to the magnitude of the task(s) or the combination of this with the number of activities requiring attention. This perception of busyness is also influenced by factors like time, work ethic, complexity, support, resources, time management and importance, to name but a few. For the purpose of this research 'busy' is not defined as it is being investigated from the perspective of a group setting whereby due to its subjective nature, variations of the definition will exist.

However, 'busyness' is defined within context of this paper. As a background, it is interesting to look at busyness as a concept and when it first entered the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). Busyness is a modern concept. The word entered the English language around 1850, first in a light-hearted sense, more appropriate to a description of squirrels, which always seemed to be doing something, even when, from our viewpoint, nothing needed to be done (as in "bright brisk busy-ness of the squirrel"—one of the earliest instances cited by the OED). Now that we apply the word to ourselves, it refers less to the state of being cheerfully occupied than that of being restless and preoccupied, which we naturally treat as a much more serious business. This is often heard in statements like 'If only we had more time' or 'I do not have enough time'. In the context of the above a *culture of busyness* is defined by:

*An organisation or culture where individuals, either consciously or subconsciously, feel the need to project an image of busyness, whether this be the case or not, on a frequent basis*

### EXTERNAL EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT FURTHER EXPLORATION

Research shows that the perception of being busy over time is on the rise at the same time as a decrease in number of working hours [1], [2]. This contradiction is more compelling when considering the emergence of time-saving technology & practices into the market place (e.g. ability to work from home, internet, faster computers, continually improving software package, social media, more accessible training like time management etc.).

The marketing analyst Berry (1990) conducted a study to test the trend of Americans perceiving to be more rushed [1]. Berry recommended "marketing to the perception" rather than the reality: "Time diaries may be the most accurate way to measure how people actually spend their time, but it is the perception that shapes behaviour. People who believe they are pressed for time will respond accordingly." In the context of feeling busy, two questions were asked:

1. Would you say you always feel rushed, even to do the things you have to do, only sometimes feel rushed, or almost never feel rushed?
2. IF SOMETIMES/NEVER RUSHED: How often would you say that you have time on your hands that you don't know what to do with – quite often, only now and then, almost never?

Figures 1 and 2 summarise the response to questions 1 and 2 respectively. Figure 1 shows a gradual increase in people feeling rushed in Berry's survey (Cumulative N=27,551). Figure 2 focuses on those responders from question one who said they 'almost never' or 'sometimes' feel rushed (Cumulative N=7804). Interestingly, given

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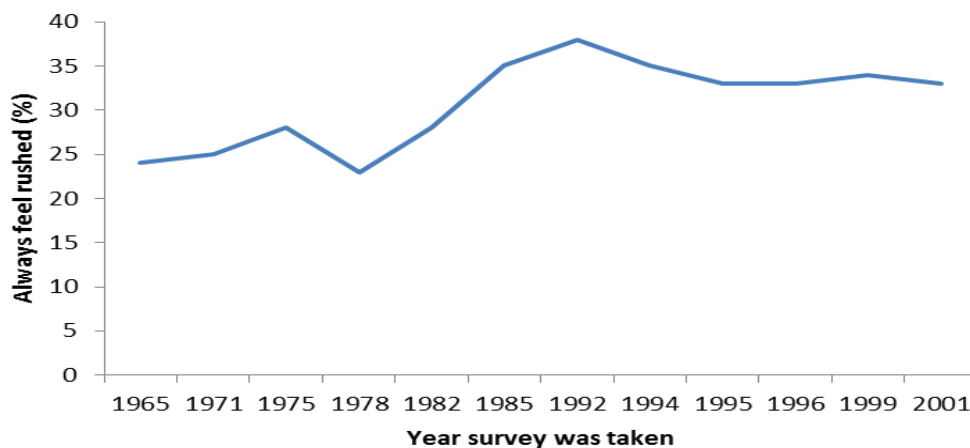
the response to question one a significant proportion of those who did not feel rushed felt they never had time on their hands that they don't know what to do with. This survey looked at busyness from two angles, namely, feeling rushed, and the feeling of having time on ones hands. It can be concluded that the perception of being busy has increased over time (1965-1991). A separate piece of analysis detailed in Figure three, indicates a decrease in workload over time for Americans [2]. Although it is a separate assessment, it does raise an interesting point that people are feeling more and more rushed during a time when workload is decreasing.

The surveys above relate to the US and only provide free data accessible until 2003. However, given curiosity generated from the initial observation (as described in abstract) this research provided enough credibility to continue with research on a significantly smaller local scale as the evidence suggested an inverse relationship between workload and feeling busy over time. In the context, of conducting this research in the UK it is interesting to see more recent data in terms of working hours.

Figure 4 shows the average number of working hours in 2011 for all countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It highlights that on average a UK worker works for 1647 hours per year. In the context of a work-life balance and looking at the amount of non-work time available it is apparent that the UK working hours compare favourably to most other countries.

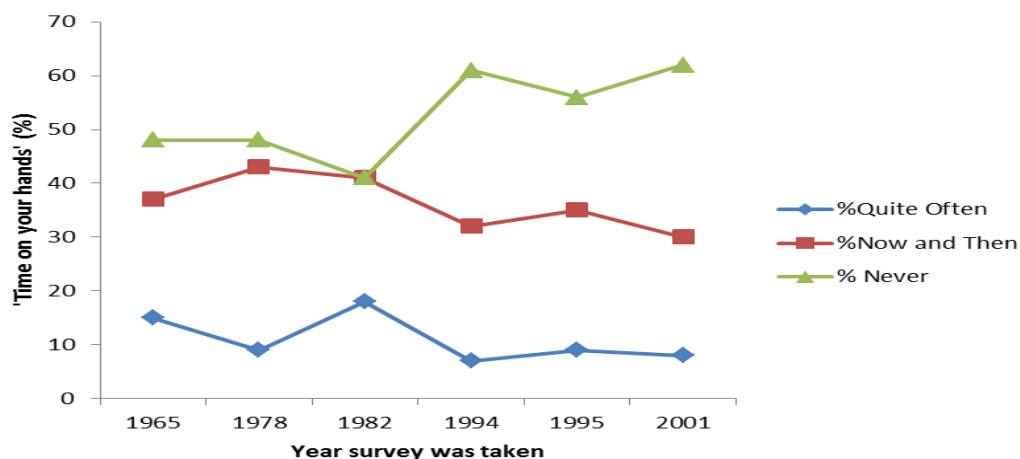
**Figure 1: Perceptions of Feeling Rushed - Americans' use of Time Project**

*Would you say you always feel rushed, even to do the things you have to do, only sometimes feel rushed, or almost never feel rushed?*



**Figure 2: How Much Time on your Hands - Americans' use of Time Project**

*How often would you say that you have time on your hands that you don't know what to do with – quite often, only now and then, almost never?*



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Figure 3: Annual Report of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas (2003)

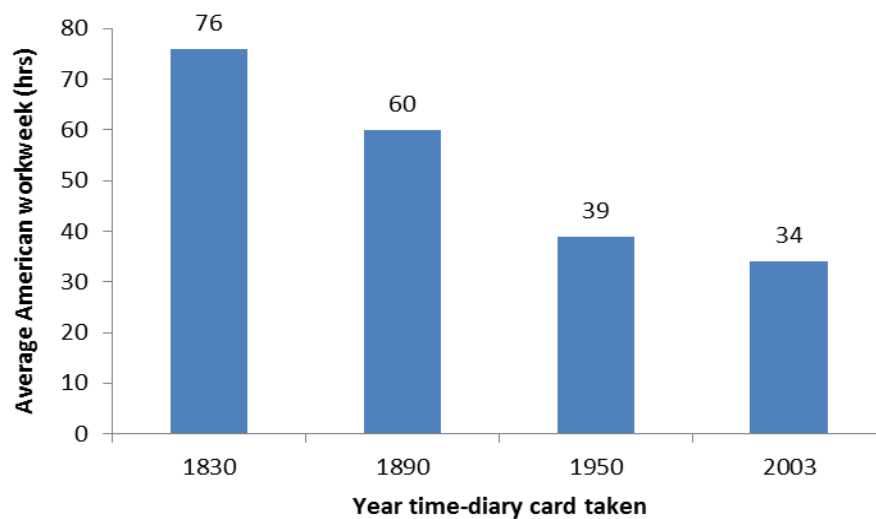
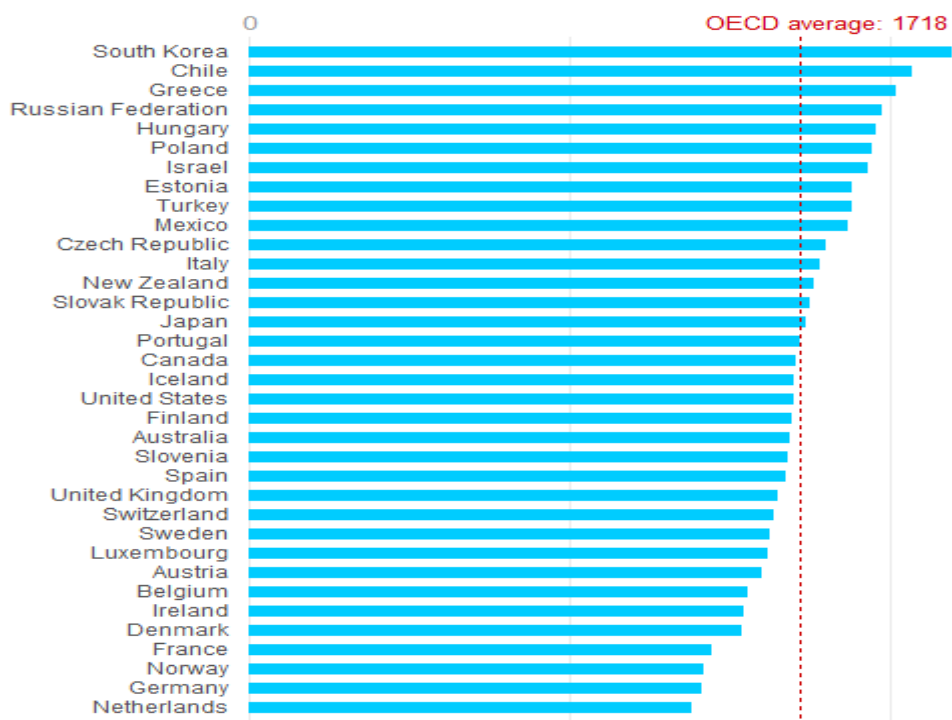


Figure 4: Average Hours Worked per Country (2011)



Source: OECD

### SELECTED DRIVERS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO EMBEDDING A CULTURE OF BUSYNESS

As this paper defined a culture of busyess it also lists and defines some selected drivers for creating this culture. It is safe to assume more exist and some variations to those listed also probably exist. However, this paper focuses on 4 areas:

1. Social proof
2. Social/Professional status

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3. Avoiding work
4. Other

Data are collected for all four areas with a primary focus on points one and two.

### **SOCIAL PROOF**

Social proof, also known as informational social influence, is a psychological phenomenon where people assume the actions of others reflect correct behaviour for a given situation. This can have an impact in determining the appropriate mode of behaviour, and is driven by the assumption that surrounding people possess more knowledge about the situation. In essence, it is a type of conformity. There have been many well documented experiments to substantiate social proof exists such as Sherif's experiment (1936), Asch's experiment (1951) and Zimbardo's Stanford prison experiment (1971). The experiments demonstrated individuals as being very likely to conform to the opinion or behaviour of the group. The workplace is not exempt from this phenomenon. In a link to this research could it be that individuals either consciously or subconsciously give the impression of being busy because it feels like an expectation?

### **SOCIAL/PROFESSIONAL STATUS**

Being busy makes a professional or social statement. In an era where time is money this is especially true. As a result of this, quite often, time is seen in economic terms like any other commodity. In other words, the busier a person is the more valuable their time. Therefore, being busy can project an image of importance with a perceived direct correlation between the two. Common examples of this occurring, based on the experience of the author, in the workplace are:

- It is not uncommon for individuals to commence dialogue with senior leader by acknowledging the opportunity to spend time with them given their busy schedules.
- More patience is typically practiced in waiting for an appointment/response with a senior versus a peer or subordinate.

### **METHOD OF APPROACH**

The team planned to conduct research and analysis over 3 separate stages consisting of the following:

STAGE ONE: Initial observation that generated an interest

STAGE TWO: Go/No Go decision to conduct more comprehensive analysis (stage three)

STAGE THREE: Research and analysis to investigate areas of interest

#### **STAGE ONE – INITIAL OBSERVATION**

As described in the abstract, the initial interest was generated by an unexpected pattern of work colleagues saying they were busy. Furthermore, some research as detailed in 'External evidence to support further exploration' suggested that it might be worthwhile looking into the phenomenon a little further.

#### **STAGE TWO – GO/NO GO**

In order to further support the findings in stage one and create a credible case to senior management for further exploration, it was decided the team would ask as many people as possible 'How are you?' The following guidelines were to be followed:

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- Only ask the question when in a face-to-face setting.
- Only ask colleagues typically on-site (i.e. exclude visitors to site).
- Ask during a defined time window (two week period).
- Record answers in in a centrally located spreadsheet.
- Inform individual of reasoning for question as discussion could prompt some ideas for stage three of research (optional).

The last piece of guidance above was considered optional. The reason being that data collected was to be anonymized. Also, the team agreed that the opening question was typical of how they would commence dialogue and there was no untoward contriving by consciously inserting this question. The code of ethics and conduct published by the British Psychological Society was consulted to ensure an ethical approach was being followed. Incidentally, the majority of responders were informed.

The responses were coded into a binary code representing 'busy' and 'other'. As 'How are you?' is an engagement type question, it was considered that a response rate coded to 'busy' is expected to be 16.66% or lower. The rationale being, this type of question would at least elicit six different responses. For example, one might say any of the following:

- Good
- Bad/Not good
- Tired
- Happy
- Busy
- Annoyed

Of course, there are many more possible responses but the team decided for a conservative approach by restricting to six different types of responses. To be sure this warranted further analysis by moving to stage three, the team pre-set a condition whereby a response rate categorized as 'busy' needed to be greater than 25%. The team chose 25% as it is one and a half times greater than the anticipated 16.66%. Exceeding this pre-set condition would provide the team with enough confidence to continue.

### STAGE THREE – RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS TO INVESTIGATE AREAS OF INTEREST

Prior to designing the questionnaire the team decided to focus on some key areas as outlined in the 'Selected Drivers that contribute to embedding a culture of busyness' (hereafter, called selected drivers section) section. It is important to note that two different audiences were considered for the questionnaire. The primary audience is the PhUSE community. The data will also be available for interpretation by managers in the author's workplace.

The questionnaire and corresponding results are detailed in Appendix I. However, the 'interpretation of findings' section for this paper focuses on two key areas namely:

1. During quieter periods, why would individuals allude to being busy?
2. When individuals are busy, do people talk about how this makes them feel?

The team decided on conducting a paper based survey over four days. Other approaches were considered but this was the most viable option for the following reasons:

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- Under the time constraints, this was considered best option to get a desirable number of responders (target=100) within a short timeframe. By restricting the survey to four working days the team believed it would minimize the potential for survey participants to share their thoughts with each other prior to completing the survey.
- Feedback from senior leaders and others suggested that the site was experiencing some 'electronic survey fatigue'

The questionnaire consisted of twelve questions. Each responder answered between eight and twelve questions depending on which options they selected. The questions were:

1. *In the workplace, during busy periods, have you felt able to discuss your workload with your line manager?*
2. *Aside from telling your line manager that you were busy, did you discuss with your line manager how being busy made you feel?*
3. *During quieter periods, have you ever answered an enquiry about your workload from your line manager with the response that you were busy?*
4. *What were your reasons for saying you were busy?*
5. *During busy periods have you given the impression to a work colleague(s) on site (excluding your line manager) that you were busy?*
6. *During quieter periods have you given the impression to a work colleague(s) on site (excluding your line manager) that you were busy?*
7. *Can you please think back to why you gave this impression of being busy during quieter periods?*
8. *Do you think that there is an expectation to look busy in the workplace?*
9. *Do you think that you will benefit in any way by looking busy in the workplace?*
10. *When you ask a colleague "How are you?" or similar and you receive the reply "Busy", which one of the phrases below most closely matches your reaction?*
11. *What are the reasons for not acting upon this?*
12. *Are you a Line Manager at Roche?*

The full questionnaire with response options, results and completion criteria can be found in Appendix I. Also, it is worth noting at this stage that the responses to questions four and seven were mapped to the drivers detailed in selected drivers section. Appendix II details the mapping that took place.

## INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

### STAGE TWO RESULTS

It will come as no surprise, given the existence of this paper that the response rate categorized as 'busy' was greater than the boundary set at 25%. A sample of thirty nine work colleagues responded to the question 'How are you' of which 44% corresponded to the 'busy' category.

Interestingly, in the coding effort (which underwent independent quality control); only 5% of responses required some consideration during coding with the other 95% being easily categorized.

### STAGE THREE RESULTS

The results from all questionnaires can be found in Appendix I. There were 94 responses falling slightly below the target of 100. As detailed in the 'Method of approach' section this paper will focus on two areas:

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## 1. During quieter periods, why would individuals allude to being busy?

Questions three and six from the questionnaire are similar in that they establish if the responders have alluded to being busy during quieter periods with their line manager and work colleagues respectively.

As detailed in Table 2, a similarity and consistency is seen across the results of questions three and six. For both questions, 40% responded to the questions by answering 'On every occasion' and 'Sometimes' with the vast majority from this subtotal categorized under 'Sometimes'.

*Q3) During quieter periods, have you ever answered an enquiry about your workload from your line manager with the response that you were busy? Tick only one.*

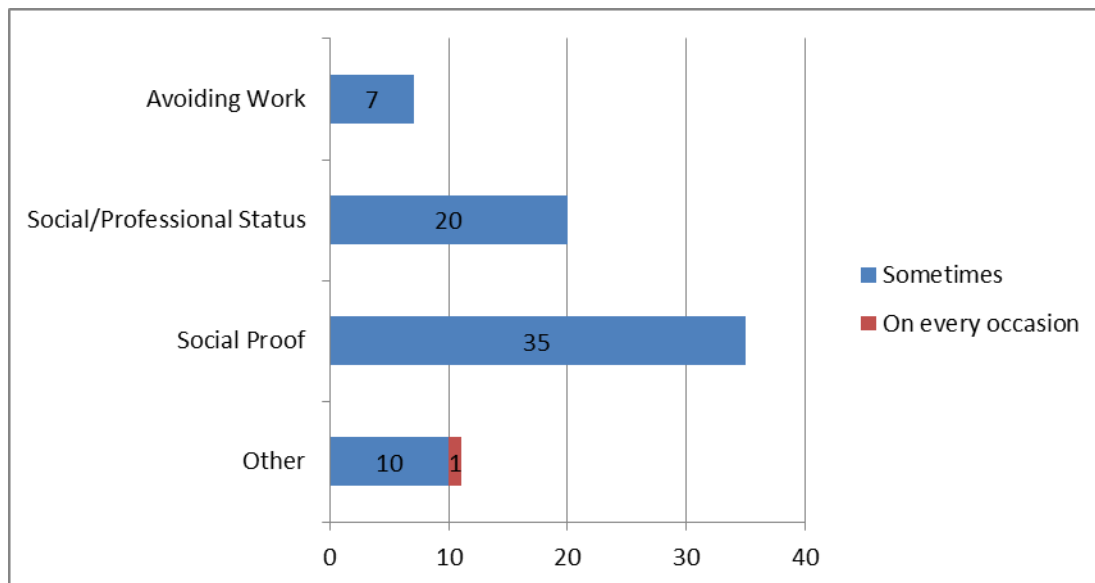
*Q6) During quieter periods have you given the impression to a work colleague(s) on site (excluding your line manager) that you were busy? Tick only one.*

**Table 2: Responses to Questions Three and Six**

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|--|--|--|
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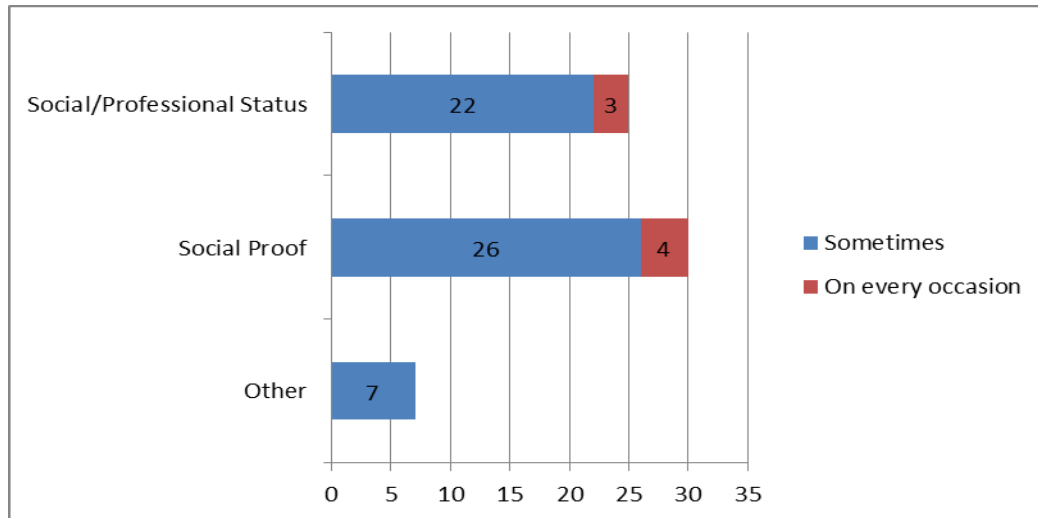
This incidence rate merits looking at the underlying reasons. These results are detailed in Figures 5 and 6.

**Figure 5: Question four results - what were your reasons for saying you were busy (in dialogue with line manager)**



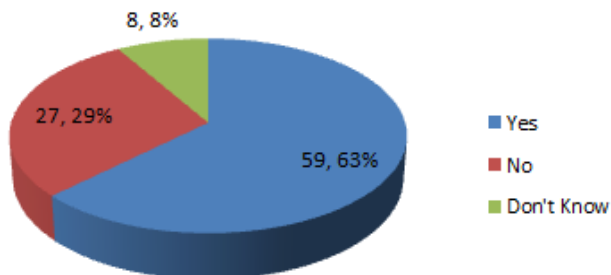
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**Figure 6: Question seven results - can you please think back to why you gave this impression of being busy during quieter periods (in dialogue with work colleagues)**



In both instances of questions four and seven it is clear that both social proof and social/professional status are a domineering factor in explaining the underlying reasons why responders alluded to being busy when not. This is further supported by the answer to question eight:

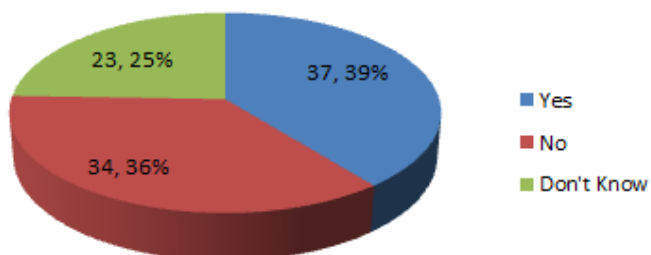
**Figure 7: Q8) Do you think that there is an expectation to look busy in the workplace? Tick only one.**



A high incidence rate of 63% responded 'Yes'. Given that 63% of the responders feel this way it is not surprising to see many mapped to social proof in questions four and seven.

Interestingly, question nine asks:

**Figure 8: Q9) Do you think that you will benefit in any way by looking busy in the workplace?**



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A similar number with slightly more responding 'Yes' than 'No' (39% v 36%) and 25% saying they "Don't know". In the same way, question eight supports social proof, question nine supports social/professional status.

### 2. When individuals are busy do people talk about how this makes them feel?

Question two asks if individuals talk about how being busy makes them feel. Only 11% responded to 'On every occasion' with 59% 'Sometimes' and 30% 'Never'. This is interesting when one considers responses to questions ten and eleven.

Question ten and the corresponding results are highlighted below.

*Q10) When you ask a colleague "How are you?" or similar and you receive the reply "Busy", which one of the phrases below most closely matches your reaction?*

|                                                   |     |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|
| I usually take the time to understand the reasons | 39% |
| I acknowledge but do not act upon this            | 61% |

Question 11 follows up to understand the underlying reasons why 61% (n=57) decide to acknowledge but not act upon this. A very high 87% explained their reasons for not doing so were:

|                                                         |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| We are all busy so it is not a statement that shocks me | 75% |
| The person may or may not be busy so I do not act       | 12% |

The responses to questions 10 and 11 highlight the importance to not just say you are busy but also discuss how this makes you feel. We have already seen from question eight how many people feel there is an expectation to look busy. The responses to questions 10 and 11 further compound this and support the claim that social proof has a significant impact.

## HOW CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

How does one change a culture of busyness? As alluded to in the 'Selected Drivers' section of this paper, the underlying reasons are categorized into 4 areas namely; social proof, social/professional status, avoiding work and other with a focus for preventative/corrective action on social proof and social/professional status. It is worth emphasizing again at this stage that both social proof and social/professional status are the domineering factors based on results from questionnaire. The recommendations below are the opinions of the author and have not been sufficiently tested as effective preventative or corrective action.

### SOCIAL PROOF

Recommendations for managers and non-managers:

- If someone asks you an engagement type question like 'How are you', pause and think how you are before answering the question as the evidence shows quite often we can fall into a default response of just saying 'busy'. Even when an individual is genuinely busy this is not necessarily a positive for the culture as will be explained in next bullet.
- If you are busy and informing your line manager in particular about being busy, it is important to say how this makes you feel. We see from questions 8, 10 and 11 that when engaged in dialogue the receiver hears that someone is busy but it does not, in the majority of cases, resonate enough to cause them to act. As a result of being busy feeling like an expectation, the significance or action provoking consequences for the listener are diluted. Next time you say you are busy try extending to something like 'busy and I feel overwhelmed'. This is more powerful and likely to engage the listener into reacting. Also, if as the listener, someone tells you or alludes to being busy, demonstrate concern and ask how this makes them feel. This encourages a more transparent discussion around workload.

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Recommendations for managers:

- 'Shadow of the leader' is a phrase used to describe a common phenomenon in business organisations where those in positions of leadership and power, through their behaviour and actions, tend to influence the behaviour and actions of those below them, thus "casting a shadow" across the organisation [4]. In the author's experience and opinion this happens quite frequently through actions such as:
  - Sending emails over weekend or late in evenings. If you have a flexible working arrangement make this clear to those you send regular emails to upfront. If you are sending to someone you do not regularly contact via email then consider stating reasons for peculiar time in email.
  - Talking or joking about how busy their calendar is
  - Referencing 'jet-lag' on an on-going basis!
  - Continually rushing between meetings
  - Generally projecting an image of busyness through body language or actions

Of course, there are many more examples but hopefully this list will stimulate some further thinking amongst managers. If managers make a conscious effort not to exude being rushed or busy, it will have a positive impact in changing the culture of busyness.

### SOCIAL/PROFESSIONAL STATUS

Recommendations for managers and non-managers:

- Politely challenge those who infer correlation between seniority and busyness. Everyone is confined by the same time boundaries with tasks to complete.

Recommendations for managers:

- Highlight those individuals who are performing to a desirable level and strike a good work/life balance.
- Encourage those who like to promote their busyness into a different way of thinking. For example, it is not necessarily a good thing and over a sustained period it could highlight poor negotiation skills or time management. In the response to the questionnaire, 39% of people feel they will benefit by looking busy (Q9). Interestingly, if we subset on those responders who alluded to being busy during quieter periods with their line manager (Q3) and with their work colleagues (Q6) the response for Q9 changes to 61% and 53% respectively.
- Managers will often assign high profile opportunities to high performers. Often high performers are seen to balance multiple tasks and exceed in all, giving the impression of being busy amongst other things. Managers will typically assign high performers these tasks as they trust the individuals and know they will deliver. Others in the organisation will look at those revered (i.e. the high performers) and this may potentially adapt their behaviour accordingly. The recommendation is for managers to think about the workload of high performers before assigning. Also, there may be more suitable candidates elsewhere with the capacity, who are not necessarily classified as high performers at that time.
- Management and leaders being more visible and accessible with capacity to make time. Some examples could be allocating some free time in their calendar on a daily basis for impromptu meetings. Another example could be to arrange regular 'walkarounds'.

One other interesting thing for managers to think about is that projecting an image of busyness can be split into three categories.

1. Those who are genuinely busy

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2. Those who are not busy but genuinely believe they are
3. Those who are not busy but either consciously or subconsciously project that image

It is clear that the last category is impacted in some way by the drivers already discussed in this paper. However, what about those that are busy or who genuinely believe they are busy? This is an interesting population in the context of this paper.

Of course, those who are busy and give this impression is not necessarily a bad thing as it gives the individual an opportunity to discuss this and 'get it off their chest'. However, there is a delicate balance as those who are busy continually giving this impression will culminate in contributing towards a culture of busyness. Again, it is important to discuss how this makes the individuals feel as it is likely to stimulate a response to facilitate a solution. In terms of finding solutions to sustained busy periods, it is important the manager discusses with the individual and takes appropriate action. It is worth noting that the manager delegating or setting unclear/unreasonable expectations is often the cause. Also, there are those individuals who are always busy and quite often it is down to choices they make or take on and this can act as a useful reminder when discussing with the individual.

The final subset of this population is those who are not busy but think they are. One approach is for the manager to ask the individual to describe an optimal work week and break this down into tasks. As a first step, it is important to check if this matches the manager's expectations. If not, then a discussion needs to occur to agree on expectations. If it does match the managers' expectation then the next step is to compare the optimal week to what is currently happening. This type of transparency often helps create a focus on what is important.

## LIMITATIONS

Upon completing the research the team has identified the following limitations:

- The survey was conducted at one workplace during a snapshot in time and does not factor in any potential short-term factors that could influence results
- The survey was conducted within a performance driven culture. This could have a key impact on creating a culture of busyness. As a follow-up to this paper, it would be interesting to see if there are any differences within organisations where the assessment of individuals is not performance driven. For example, an organisation that assesses individuals via the performance of the team.
- Questions three and six may return a lower percentage towards the 'On every occasion' scale. Although admittedly speculative, response bias in aspirational or desirable social type questions is well documented [3]. Incidentally, the team did receive some informal feedback asking how honest people might be with questions three and six.

## CONCLUSION

The abstract listed many questions and this paper will be concluded by proposing answers to those questions.

### **Are people really busy or has it become a habit to say it?**

Being busy is subjective and will vary from person to person. However, according to each individual understanding there are times when people are busy and when they are not. Based on this research it is clear that it has become a habit to say one is busy and this is primarily driven by social proof and social/professional status.

**Along with this, is there a tipping point or psychological phenomenon whereby when said by enough people it becomes highly 'contagious' and we all become inadvertently pre-programmed to say this?**

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It is clear from the data and the research that social proof exists and people assume the actions of others reflect correct behaviour for a given situation. With respect to the 'tipping point' and understanding when this occurs, this is something that during the course of the research fell outside the remit for purpose of scope control. The literature supporting the experiments described in the social proof section provide further detail on this.

### **Does this then create a culture of busyness?**

The evidence supports that it does. We see 63% from the survey feel there is an expectation to look busy and 39% of people feeling they will benefit from looking busy. A considerable group as described in the 'interpretation of findings' section alludes to being busy when not with the major underlying reasons relating to social proof and social /professional status

### **Does it actually matter?**

It is the author's view that it does. It is important that people can talk honestly and openly about their workload and not feel the need to conform to the norm. Also, the culture is fostering an environment whereby the significance or weight attached to someone saying they are busy is diluted as it feels so commonplace and subsequently does not typically register with the listener as something to act upon. In summary, saying 'busy' is often devalued.

### **If so, can we try and change this habit or culture by not giving what appears to be in many circumstances a default response?**

Again, it is the author's view that we can. Techniques and guidance is outlined in the 'How can we make a difference?' section. We expect most of them are easy to apply by managers and many could be applied by non-managers. Ironically, the difficulty arises when we subconsciously conform to what we perceive as expectations so it does require a concerted effort for an individual to have an impact. Influencing is also very important in this context to target others and have open and honest discussion in hope they will reciprocate. Based on the research cited for the 'shadow of leaders', managers have the potential to play a key role in influencing change.

In summary, this research concludes that a culture of busyness does exist within the author's organisation. However, every individual can have an impact and ultimately assist companies in optimizing their environment/culture to help and facilitate their staff to manage and discuss workload in a more open and effective manner.

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## APPENDIX I – QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

### Questionnaire: 'Busyness' in the workplace

#### Criteria for responding:

- You are on-site at least 1 day a week
- Your line manager is on-site at least one day a week
- You have worked here for at least 6 months
- You are a permanent member of staff in a specified department (intentionally not published externally)

**INSTRUCTION for all questions:** Please be specific and only consider the last 6 months when responding.

**Q1) In the workplace, during busy periods, have you felt able to discuss your workload with your line manager? Tick only one.**

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| On every occasion | 50% |
| Sometimes         | 48% |
| Never             | 2%  |

**INSTRUCTION:** If you answered 'On every occasion' or 'Sometimes' please go to Q2, otherwise, please skip Q2 and go straight to Q3

**Q2) Aside from telling your line manager that you were busy, did you discuss with your line manager how being busy made you feel? Tick only one.**

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| On every occasion | 11% |
| Sometimes         | 59% |
| Never             | 30% |

**Q3) During quieter periods, have you ever answered an enquiry about your workload from your line manager with the response that you were busy? Tick only one.**

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| On every occasion | 1%  |
| Sometimes         | 39% |
| Never             | 60% |

**INSTRUCTION:** If you answered 'On every occasion' or 'Sometimes' please go to Q4 otherwise, please skip Q4 and go straight to Q5

**Q4) What were your reasons for saying you were busy? Tick all that apply.**

|                                          |    |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| Did not think about it, it just happened | 13 |
| Concerned I would get more work          | 7  |
| It projects the correct image            | 20 |
| Feels like an expectation                | 21 |
| Do not know                              | 1  |
| Other                                    | 11 |

If you chose 'Other' as an option then please specify:

---

**Q5) During busy periods have you given the impression to a work colleague(s) on site (excluding your line manager) that you were busy? Tick only one.**

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|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| On every occasion | 23% |
| Sometimes         | 72% |
| Never             | 5%  |

**Q6) During quieter periods have you given the impression to a work colleague(s) on site (excluding your line manager) that you were busy? Tick only one.**

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| On every occasion | 3%  |
| Sometimes         | 37% |
| Never             | 60% |

**INSTRUCTION:** If you answered 'On every occasion' or 'Sometimes' please go to Q7 otherwise, please skip Q7 and go straight to Q8

**Q7) Can you please think back to why you gave this impression of being busy during quieter periods? Tick all that apply:**

|                                          |    |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| Did not think about it, it just happened | 10 |
| It projects the correct image            | 25 |
| Feels like an expectation                | 19 |
| Do not know                              | 1  |
| Other                                    | 7  |

If you chose 'Other' as an option then please specify:

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**Q8) Do you think that there is an expectation to look busy in the workplace? Tick only one.**

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Yes        | 63% |
| No         | 29% |
| Don't know | 8%  |

**Q9) Do you think that you will benefit in any way by looking busy in the workplace? Tick only one.**

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Yes        | 39% |
| No         | 36% |
| Don't know | 25% |

**Q10) When you ask a colleague "How are you?" or similar and you receive the reply "Busy", which one of the phrases below most closely matches your reaction? Tick only one.**

|                                                   |     |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|
| I usually take the time to understand the reasons | 39% |
| I acknowledge but do not act upon this            | 61% |

**INSTRUCTION:** If you answered 'I acknowledge but do not act upon this' please go to Q11 otherwise, please skip Q11 and go straight to Q12.

**Q11) What are the reasons for not acting upon this? Tick only one.**

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|                                                         |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| We are all busy so it is not a statement that shocks me | 75% |
| The person may or may not be busy so I do not act       | 12% |
| Other                                                   | 13% |

If you chose 'Other' as an option then please specify:

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**Q12) Are you a Line Manager at Roche?** Tick only one.

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 16% |
| No  | 84% |

Thank you - you have completed the questionnaire. Your time and input is appreciated.

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### APPENDIX II – MAPPING TO SELECTED DRIVERS

| Response Category                        | Mapped Category            | Questions |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| Other                                    | Other                      | 4 and 7   |
| Do not know                              | Social Proof               | 4 and 7   |
| Did not think about it, it just happened | Social Proof               | 4 and 7   |
| It feel like an expectation              | Social Proof               | 4 and 7   |
| It projects the correct image**          | Social/Professional Status | 4 and 7   |
| Concerned I would get more work          | Avoiding work              | 4         |

\*\*The response 'It projects the correct image' could also be mapped to Social Proof but since the underlying reasons are being considered both separately and as a whole, it is mapped to Social/Professional status.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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