

STRESS!

Bad for us right?

It happens to us all and surprisingly no matter who you talk to or at what level, they'll all tell you stress is part of their life. Arguably it's an increasing part of modern life but pretty universally it's seen as a bad thing, it causes heart attacks and nervous breakdowns, countless days off work and the odd bout of weeping in meetings! But once again the truth is a bit more complicated and it's worth a look at the science and how that can be applied to motivating **Top Performance**.

STRESS

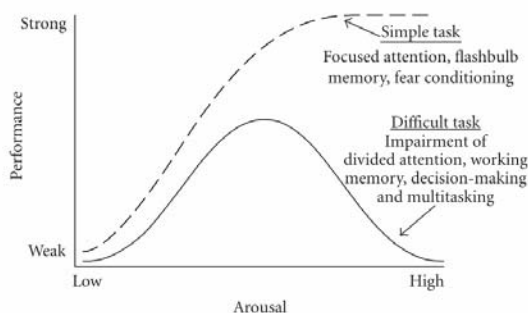


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The Yerkes-Dodson 'law' suggests that there is a correlation between how a person performs and the level of 'arousal' (stress to you and me), up to a point increasing the stress level actually improves performance, beyond that point performance diminishes and at some point yes you can actually break the individual; so how much stress is good stress? Obviously this is an individual scale, what's good for you may break one of your team who you are trying to motivate, it's also clear that what might stress you might not be something that motivates a reaction in your team member (your mortgage repayments for example are unlikely to worry someone else). Knowing your team members is imperative if you are to provide the right stimulation without pushing beyond that peak where some stress improves performance. One size does not fit all and sometimes you can see a manager react with shock when a good employee gives up under the pressure that highly motivated another employee, they see it as weakness when in fact it's difference.

There is a universal law that Yerkes-Dodson established however that the peak 'good stress' level differs depending on the task the individual is undertaking. That tingle before an exam or the nervous twitch before a speech or key presentation are good things at the right level but there is a limit and that's because those are cognitive tasks, difficult things benefit from a small amount of stressing but interestingly it's almost impossible to add too much stress to a physical task. A runner or a swimmer can be really hyped up and perform well, in fact they probably need that level of arousal in order to compete. However trying to complete a sales call with that level of agitation would likely to be a disaster, imagine playing golf hyped up like a 100m runner.



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level of agitation would likely to be a disaster, imagine playing golf hyped up like a 100m runner.

When we've completed a recruitment assignment we give the client a coaching report for the new employee and we use the same Psychometric assessment in coaching and development. Judging how much pressure to allow an employee to take on or to

induce in them to get them to peak performance is a key management skill and Psychometrics are a really good tool to help to understand the employee better than they know themselves.

You can download our free exec guide to assessments and how we use them here <http://bit.ly/execguide> (no signup required)

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