

The five least stressful jobs, as ranked by Japanese working people

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Photo: PAKUTASO

All jobs have some element of stress, and depending on your personality and your skills, some could be more stressful than others. But if you're going to be spending your precious time at work, you'd want it to be as stress-free as possible, wouldn't you? That's why Japanese business consulting company Biz Hits decided to conduct a survey to find out which jobs are low-stress.

The survey polled 532 working men and women of all ages throughout Japan from Oct 17 to 29 about the jobs that they've worked in, asking them about their levels and sources of stress. First, the survey asked what kinds

of jobs were stressful, and a majority of people either answered with jobs that involved working with people or high-pressure jobs.

Other, less-prominent stress-inducing work factors that made the top 10 list, but which were all in the bottom four, were having only simple tasks to do (25 respondents), having no flexibility (24 respondents), having too much responsibility (23 respondents), and requiring physical activity (11 respondents).

Since these are the qualities of a job that respondents said cause stress, we can only assume that the least stressful jobs don't require many of these things. Let's look at the top five and find out.

5. Waiting tables

Since it's a job that requires both fairly strenuous physical activity and constant interaction with customers, this one is rather a surprise. However, the lack of deadlines and quotas probably helps lower the stress level for these jobs. Some of the reasons the respondents chose this as a low-stress job were, "I love food and I love people," "When people said the food looked good or they thanked me, I felt encouraged," and "The work responsibilities were standardized and easy to understand."

If you're someone who likes people, the kinds of interactions you'd have with customers at a restaurant can be motivating rather than stressful, so depending on your personality, waiting tables could be a pretty low stress job. Considering that Japanese people are probably far more polite and far less demanding than your average North American or even European customer, waiting tables in Japan could be a far less stressful occupation than we expats might be inclined to think.

4. Data entry

Coming in fourth place is data entry, which is generally without stressful

deadlines and probably completely devoid of quotas. One of the reasons for selecting this job was, "I can do it without much thinking at my own pace," and another was, "I don't really need to do much communicating."

Though some people might find the mute monotony of data entry to be boring, others might relish in the quietude and lack of human interaction, so we can see why this job was picked as a low-stress option.

3. Sales

Completely unexpectedly, sales made it on to the list, and into the top three, no less. But don't be too surprised; in this case, "sales" refers to retail jobs, such as a sales associate for apparel or food products. For many, the "lack of strict sales quotas" in these jobs was defining trait that made them low stress, despite being highly customer service-oriented.

Once again, though, this job proved to be popular among the extroverts, as respondents said things like, "I enjoyed chatting with customers," and "I like talking to people." Others were more happy to be selling things they like, and were perhaps able to feel a sense of pride in their work as a result.

2. Administrative work

Coming in at number two for low-stress jobs is administrative work, whose low-pressure atmosphere respondents seemed to appreciate. "Since it's fairly standardized, as long as I did it properly there were no issues," said one respondent, and another said, "I could do it at my own pace, so it was easy." Still others enjoyed the lack of human interaction involved: "I could do it by myself on the computer."

We're beginning to see a pattern here: the extroverts liked low-pressure jobs where they could talk to people, while introverts liked low-pressure jobs where they could avoid people and work quietly by themselves. But what about the least stressful job as selected by the participants in this survey?

1. Warehouse/Factory jobs

Out of the 532 people who responded, nearly 20 percent said that warehouse or factory jobs were the most low-stress jobs they've had. These jobs, too, proved popular for people who prefer to work alone. Reasons included: "I could quietly work by myself", "We have to concentrate on our machine and our work, so it was quiet", and "There was no particular skill required, and no push to advance."

Without quotas or deadlines, without competition among colleagues, without high-level skills and results demanded from bosses, and with a regular routine, these jobs are certainly low stress, though some might find them, on the contrary, a little dull.

Other jobs that made the list beyond the top five included receptionists and truck drivers/delivery people, both of which are a little different but maintain the same standard of low-pressure work.

There is a business management theory called the Job Demand-Control Model, which theorizes that a person's work stress level is affected by the level of demand from the job as well as the degree of control the person has over it. According to this theory, the most stressful kind of job is one that has a high degree of demand (whether that means difficulty, time, workload, responsibility, physical labor, or what have you) but a low degree of control (whether that means you have no autonomy within the position, no ability to decide the level of demand, or not enough of the skills or knowledge to complete the job). On the reverse side, a low-stress job is one that has low demand but high levels of control. Each of the jobs listed have varying degrees of control, but they are all low-demand jobs. So in the scope of this model, it makes perfect sense that they were picked to be on the list of low-stress jobs.

Of course, what jobs have low demand and high control differ for each individual, so really what makes a job low-stress is up to your own

personality and skills. Also, it's important to note that a stress-free job isn't the same as a satisfying or enjoyable job; some people might find a low-demand job to be boring, and might need a job with high demand as well as a high degree of control in order to stay motivated.

So what about your job? Are you coasting in a low-demand job and enjoying a stress-free work life? Or do you find yourself stressed about deadlines and overtime all the time? If you're stressed, try to find out if there's anything you can adjust to make you feel more in control of your work environment and work life.

Source: [Biz Hits](#)

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