



## Results from the SURVEY

### “ADD / ADHD Work Challenges”

Survey created and summarized January, 2012

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**PURPOSE of the SURVEY:** To determine the most pressing challenges facing professional people in the workplace, regarding their ADD/ADHD traits. The results will be used to create programs in 2012 that provide the strategies and solutions people need most, in the way that they most want to learn them.

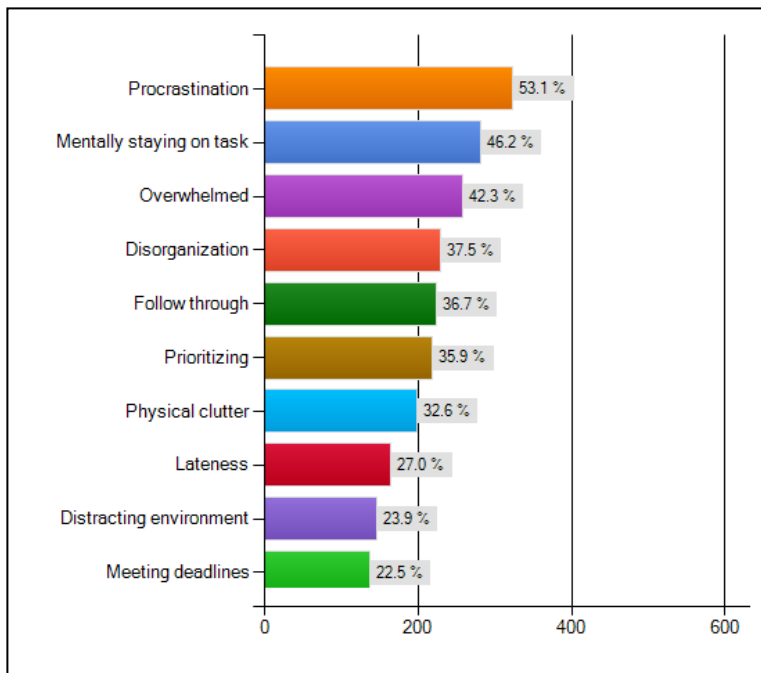
**WHO WAS SURVEYED:** The survey was sent to 17,400 people on the Thrive with ADD mailing list of ADD / ADHD Adults, who were invited to participate in a brief survey of ADD challenges in the workplace. The survey responses were anonymous.

**ANSWER SUMMARY:** Where the question was quantifiable, the charts show the answers in percentages, in descending order. I’ve summarized my thoughts below each chart.

**COMMENTS:** Some questions were open-ended, or provided for additional comments. From these, I’ve picked a few select comments that were illustrative of a common theme, or that I found especially poignant.

### SURVEY QUESTIONS:

#### Q: What are your top 3 to 5 challenges in being productive at work?



- The leading challenge cited was "Procrastination". A full 53% picked Procrastination as one of their top challenges. When I ran a similar survey almost 10 years ago, that had also been the main problem reported.
- The second most prevalent, "Mentally Staying on Task," should not be surprising in an ADD group. My guess is that answer doesn't come up as often among people who were taking medication.
- "Overwhelmed" in third place is very telling, and has probably gotten worse in recent years with so much downsizing. Being overwhelmed could play a big part in procrastination. It also goes hand in hand with Disorganization in 4<sup>th</sup> place. People are overwhelmed by disorganization, and disorganization makes everything overwhelming.
- I was a bit surprised to find "Follow Through" in 5<sup>th</sup> place, rather than in the top 3. Perhaps if people aren't able to get started, the follow-through doesn't come up as much.
- I was also surprised to find "Lateness" so far down on the list. My feeling is that people who are chronically late get used to that, so that it may be more of an annoyance to others than to themselves.

#### SELECT COMMENTS from RESPONDERS:

**"Every new and existing task seems overwhelming.** I just don't know where to start so I put it off and then feel shame at my lack of discipline."

"Shame and avoidance... I have passed up applying for the next level in my organization because of my fear of the paperwork... It affects my self-esteem. **I see people with less skills in my field advance because of their confidence in their ability to get paperwork done.**"

"Time-related matters... **I cannot easily estimate the time it takes to do something** or the passage of time."

"I just can't bring myself to record or file the task I just finished, so later **I panic digging through stacks, trying to find that important doc.**"

#### Q: What skill, ability or technique would make the ADD easier to deal with? (open-ended question)

- Free-flow answers included a desire for help with overwhelm, time management, perfectionism, anxiety, prioritization difficulties and poor memory.

#### SELECT COMMENTS from RESPONDERS:

"Seeing every step of my day and **understanding which parts are leading to the biggest problems.**"

“How to get from long-term goals and large projects to daily to-do lists... **The long-term issues slide until they become suddenly short-term.**”

“How to handle the overwhelm **that prevents me from even starting a task... and the boredom that prevents me from finishing** a task even though I was enthusiastic about starting it.”

“The ability to not get **knocked out of productivity by difficult people.**”

“I need to **communicate more effectively for people to listen to me.**”

“Teach me how to handle phone calls/emails that require my attention without **forgetting what I was already working on.**”

“**Being able to say NO** or NOT NOW without feeling as though I am incompetent or lacking.”

“Overcoming **fear of rejection and failure** that can lead to giving up on goals.”

“Being able to **keep current on project status** and report them to my boss... **to gain my boss’s trust** so that she’s not constantly asking me ‘what are you doing?’”

“Getting better at **recognizing when I’ve lost my way before I compound the problem by avoiding!**”

“My **horrendous memory** has caused me so many problems. Probably **20-25% of my time is spent looking for documents**, contact details, old emails....”

**Q: If you could get free training on any subject, what ONE QUESTION would you ask?** *(open-ended question)*

**SELECT COMMENTS from RESPONDERS:**

“How can I **stop beating myself up all the time?**”

“How do I **create a task system that can be followed** that will keep me organized?”

“**How does everyone else manage** to get it all done in a timely manner without exhaustion or neglecting other commitments? **Are they all faking it?**”

“How to **break out of the cycle of overwhelm, panic attack, and work stoppage that leads to intense shame and depression?**”

“How do I open myself up to new duties, new priorities, new instruction ... **how do I overcome hesitancy asking for input?**”

“At 57 years of age, **will I be able to continue to improve and learn to manage my ADD?**”

**“What does the non-ADDer do differently from me, and why?** What exactly is it that I’m doing wrong?”

**“How do I accomplish self-pressure** without dying of stress?”

“Whenever the phone rings I wonder ‘what ball did I drop now?’ **How do I get rid of my anxiety of failure?**”

“How do I **communicate with people without offending them?**”

“I have no problems being enthusiastic when I’m motivated, but **how do I bring that same work ethic to a less desirable job?**”

**“How can I turn off the negative, critical voices in my head** so I can get something done?”

**“How can I set up a schedule that’s strict enough, but flexible?** If I plan too much, I feel like I’ve failed if I don’t get it all finished.”

“How do I move forward... and deal with the backlog without feeling overwhelmed and going into shutdown. I feel like I **‘know’ the answer, but I don’t ‘DO’ the answer.**”

“I would be interested in **finding ways to STAY ENGAGED with boring tasks.**”

**“How can I become a ‘FINISHER?’** I have unfinished everything and I don’t know why. I can’t seem to even see what finished looks like.”

**Q: Would you be interested in an online / phone program for ADD/ADHD work challenges that provided in-depth solutions and strategies for the problems that you’re struggling with?**

**ANSWERS:**

- YES – 44%
- MAYBE – 48%
- NO – 8%

**SELECT COMMENTS from RESPONDERS:** *(on what would make the “MAYBE” responders more interested):*

**“... Solutions... not interested in brainstorming.”**

**“Relevant and tangible.”**

**“Really tool-oriented and didn’t just contain vague directions.”**

“Will I feel intimidated by the level of experience and education of others in the program?”

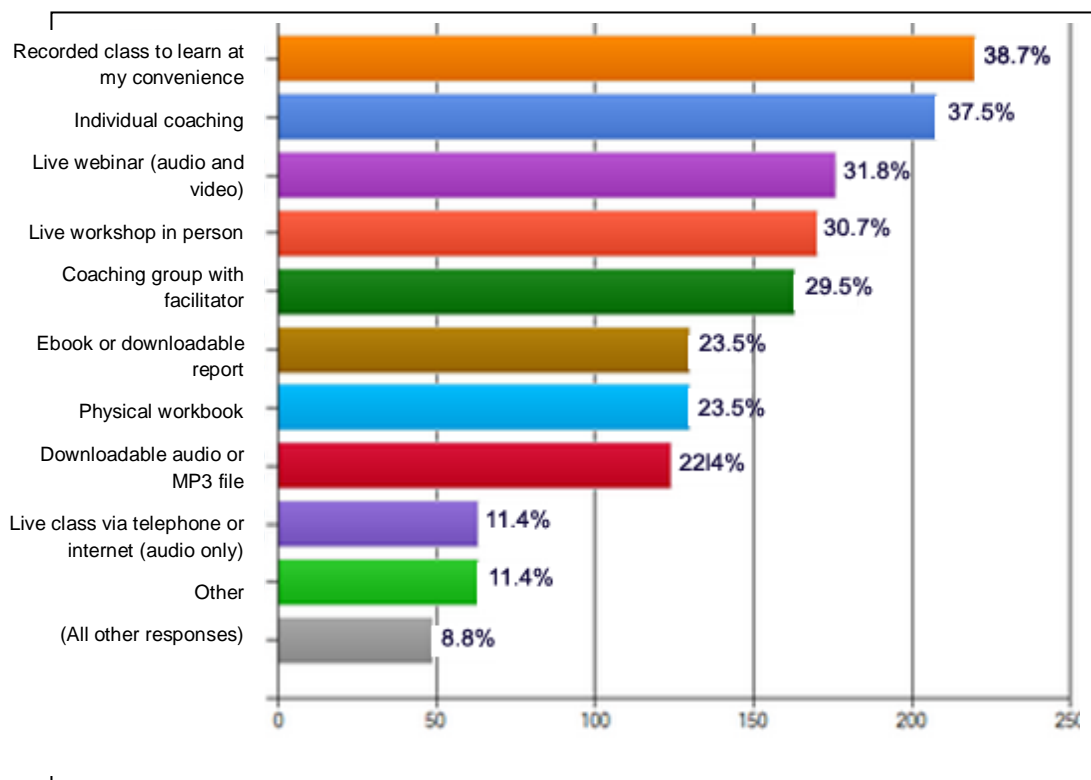
“Sometimes the stuff I read or learn about seems overwhelming in itself.”

“Part of me still thinks the problem is just a lack of willpower.”

“I **wouldn't feel so alone that I am not the only person dealing with this personal issue.** (I'd like to form a network so everyone could support each other down the road if they chose.)”

## Q: How do you prefer to learn strategies to manage ADD /ADHD?

*(Please choose no more than 3)*



- Convenience is king; a recorded class is preferred over a live webinar. The comments showed there was concern about different time zones, especially from responders outside of North America.
- The immediate gratification of downloadable written material was more attractive than a physical workbook.
- In the open-ended comments, there was a lot of mention of accountability and support in learning.

#### SELECT COMMENTS from RESPONDERS:

“Going on my own with recorded information... I tend to lose impetus to complete.... Afraid I won't succeed and will look foolish; at the same time, **I need structure.**”

“**Some venue that you can actually practice what you learn**, or have homework and tests to **make me accountable for doing well and therefore learning.**”

“I would need at least **weekly assistance/contact/work in order for monthly training to be effective.**”

“I would love to be able **to listen to strategies on the go**, when in the car, walking or otherwise when I have free time.”

“(There should be) **emphasis on accountability, individual challenges, sharing of resources, measuring progress, setting and reaching goals.**”

#### Q: Any additional thoughts you would like to share?

#### SELECT COMMENTS from RESPONDERS:

“I am realizing my ADD-related issues create a lot of stress and anxiety for me. The anxiety turns into avoidance. **I am really good at parts of my job and love my work... it is the areas that I struggle that cloud the whole experience.**”

“**I know I could do things much better**, with discipline that I don't seem to have.... There must be lots like me.”

“It sure would have been nice to have had this information 40 years ago. Who knows what I would have done. **I have a genius IQ and it has been wasted.**”

“...to have **hope that 40-year old habits can be changed. Feeling hopeful is the greatest motivator.** The most important thing you can do is to give people hope... and to forgive themselves. ..Shame is so disabling.”

“**Perfectionism prevents me from turning anything in on time**, because I 'must' turn in something worthy of the paper it's typed on. I'm interested in why that is.”

“**Who might I be if I could ever get all of the 'dots' into a row...?**”

“**I'm looking forward to this work-related theme** (of training). Especially since most companies are doing more with less staff... **being organized is critical to stay in the game.**”

“I really **appreciate the opportunity to think thru this survey** – I'm at wits end!”

"I feel that I need a **strategy that feels like someone is watching guiding, agreeing, correcting**, in short a technique that feels like someone is holding my hand thru the day..."

"I feel that I am not able to follow through and use the info given to me. ...I spend most of my day trying to figure out what to do next.... **When I think about 'work' my heart starts to palpitate!**"

"I was diagnosed with ADHD when I was 47... it explained a lot in regards to my past challenges with work, relationship and education....**I would welcome some tools that would assist me in the next chapter of my life.**"

**"I am sick and tired of feeling like part of a misunderstood minority."**

"I accomplish a LOT in a very short period of time. People seem to think I'm very productive, but I know the truth – they seem to only remember what I have done right, but **I seem to be the only one who realizes how much more successful and productive I could be. I haven't even touched the surface of my capabilities..**"

"I think it's great to have help!... At the end of the day, **without a support system and learning environment, I can't do it on my own.** My job is my biggest struggle...without a job, i(ADHD) can make or break my family, home and relationships and eventually my mental stability... **It's worth getting help when it's offered!**"

### *Note from Bonnie Mincu:*

Thanks so much to everyone who responded to this survey. There were so many insightful comments that people wrote in, I wish I could include them all.

**Watch for emails from "Thrive with ADD"**, as I launch some free training, and work on creating a valuable program of STRATEGIES, SOLUTIONS and SUPPORT to help ADD / ADHD Adults succeed in the workplace.

Make this your year to THRIVE!

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*Help a friend, colleague or loved one understand Adult ADD / ADHD...*

*See the 5-minute online video, "The Attention Movie"  
at <http://www.TheAttentionMovie.com>*