

# Reduce Staff Turnover and Increase Profits with The McQuaig System™

With turnover of over US \$100 million, Standard Coffee Service Company is one of the largest office coffee service companies (OCS) in the United States.

**B**rian Gueniot joined the company in 1997 as the manager of Human Resources and Development, after spending 20 years with the Dale Carnegie Organisation in a coach/consultant capacity.

“The president, Bob Maurer’s, key challenge was with the Route Sales Representatives (RSR)” Gueniot explains, “He was deeply concerned that the staff turnover rate was approaching 40 percent and, although it was hard to put his finger on what this was costing, he was certain that this was significantly impacting the company’s profitability”.

The RSR’s are the backbone of Standard Coffee Service Company’s operations, each one servicing from 150 to 400 corporate customers, on one of 275 routes across the U.S. They act as a terminal, delivery service and salesperson all in one. The RSR role was critical to the company’s success and Maurer wanted to get to the root of this turnover problem. With turnover reduction as one of his top priorities, Gueniot put the company’s hiring processes under a microscope and immediately spotted some potential problem areas. For instance, when an RSR was terminated or left the company,

the District Manager (DM) would have to cover the route until the position was filled. Needless to say, this led to what Gueniot called a ‘warm body’ approach to hiring. As Gueniot says, “The DM would spend most of the interview selling the job instead of assessing the candidate”.

As he continued his investigation into the hiring process, Gueniot found a copy of The McQuaig Word Survey® in the file of one of his current RSR’s. After reading it, he came to the conclusion that this was a highly comprehensive, accurate assessment tool which

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wasn’t being used effectively. For starters, there didn’t seem to be a clear definition on the part of the managers as to what type of profile

was required for the RSR job.

Additionally, the company’s former HR manager, who had been seconded from the accounting department, did not use the tool to its best advantage. After a candidate’s Word Survey was processed he would often simply leave a ‘hire/don’t hire’ voicemail for the district manager and division manager.

Gueniot set out to rectify the situation and to make better use of The McQuaig System™. After discussions with many district and division managers it became apparent to him that there were really two types of RSR’s. Gueniot explains, “There’s the RSR for



what we call ‘maintenance routes’, which usually have 350 plus customers. These RSR’s don’t get much opportunity to sell to new customers because keeping their existing customers happy is a full-time job. Then we have ‘growth route’ RSR’s with 150-200 customers, who we expect to generate three to four new customers per month”.

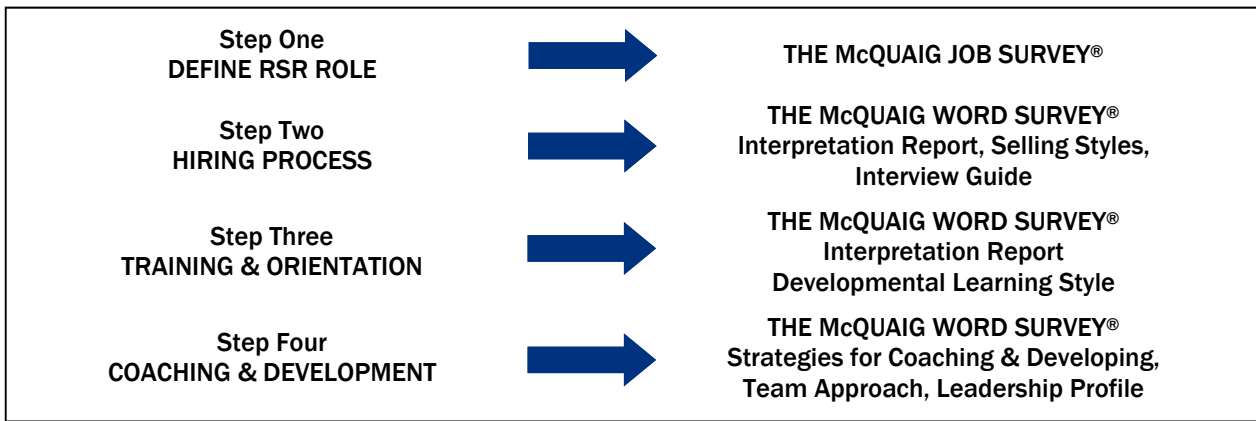
After assessing top performing RSR’s, Gueniot found that the typical leader profiles worked best in the growth routes while expert profiles worked better on the maintenance routes.

This is a significant change from how things were handled prior to Gueniot’s coming on board. “Our hiring managers, because they

YEAR	TURNOVER
1997	40%
1998	35%
1999	24%
2000	27%
2001	22%

were under pressure to fill the position quickly, would try to hire the individuals on the first interview. If they liked the candidate, they would give them the sales pitch of a lifetime”.

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So Gueniot had the district and division managers match the candidates to the specific route profile that they were looking for and trained them on how to properly use The Word Survey's Interviewing Questions. Once Gueniot's system was in place, the turnover reduction was significant, as shown in the table below. As Maurer had hoped, the company's profitability during that time period improved significantly.

Another improvement is that the use of The Word Survey doesn't stop once the person is hired. For example, when providing on-the-job coaching to RSR's, The Word Survey is used to help all parties reach consensus on developmental areas. As Gueniot explains, "The Survey is a great tool to help RSR's understand how their assertiveness or sociability can work for or against them".

**"The system helps us identify the kinds of people who will thrive in our environment. By having people with an above average chance of succeeding, the dollars we invest in training work harder for us".**

Also, The Leadership Profile is used in career-pathing for RSR's, district and division managers. Says Gueniot, "I have used many assessment tools in my consulting career. What most impressed me with McQuaig is the value of the information you get from the reports compared to the minimal time it takes a candidate to complete. It is truly a great instrument".

A more detailed outline of how The McQuaig System is used at Standard Coffee Service Company is provided in the flowchart above.

Gueniot is a big proponent of sharing results with the candidate during the interview stage. He says, "It's always received positively by the candidate. They are very thankful and it presents our company in a good light". Being the consummate coach, he even discusses The Survey with candidates that he is about to reject.

He will counsel them; even make suggestions from a career standpoint. Gueniot receives many thank you notes from rejected candidates and, once again, it presents his company in a very positive way.

In summary, Gueniot says, "Over the twenty-five years I spent at Dale Carnegie I developed a strong belief in the power of people. Many companies give lip service that people are their most important asset, but they do not develop their resources in a way that is consistent with this philosophy. The McQuaig Institute®

provides tools to help companies understand, lead, coach and develop their most important asset - people".

And President, Bob Maurer adds:

"By having people with an above average chance of succeeding, the dollars we invest in training

work harder for us. But, even more importantly, we are able to understand our people better and deal with them more effectively after they are hired. This translates into happier, more productive individuals who relate more effectively to outside customers and to other employees".

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