The Bureaucratic Mass Index

The Bureaucratic Mass Survey covers ten questions, each scored on a 0-10 scale, where zero denotes the complete absence of bureaucracy-related traits, and 10 a high degree of bureaucratic drag:

1. **How many layers are there in your organization (from frontline employees up to the CEO, president, or managing director)?**

   ○ Three or fewer layers: 0 points

   ○ Four layers: 2.5 points

   ○ Five layers: 5 points

   ○ Six layers: 7.5 points

   ○ Seven layers or more: 10 points

2. **How much time do you spend on "bureaucratic chores" (for example, preparing reports, attending meetings, complying with requests, securing sign-offs, or interacting with staff functions such as HR)?**

   ○ Virtually none: 0 points

   ○ Less than 10%: 2.5 points

   ○ 10%–20%: 5 points

   ○ 20%–30%: 7.5 points

   ○ More than 30%: 10 points

3. **How much does bureaucracy slow the decision making and action in your organization?**

   ○ Hardly at all: 0 points

   ○ Moderately: 2.5 points

   ○ Significantly: 7.5 points

   ○ Substantially: 10 points

4. To what extent are your interactions with your manager and other leaders focused on internal issues (e.g., resolving disputes, securing resources, getting approvals)?

○ Less than 10% of time focused on internal issues: 0 points

○ 10%–30%: 2.5 points

○ 30%–50%: 5 points

○ 50%–70%: 7.5 points

○ More than 70%: 10 points

5. Within your work environment, how much autonomy do you or your team have to set targets and priorities?

○ Complete autonomy: 0 points

○ Substantial autonomy: 2.5 points

○ Moderate autonomy: 5 points

○ Little autonomy: 7.5 points

○ No autonomy: 10 points

6. How often are frontline team members involved in the design and development of change initiatives?

○ Always involved: 0 points

○ Frequently involved: 2.5 points

○ Occasionally involved: 7.5 points

○ Never involved: 10 points

7. How do people in your organization react to unconventional ideas?

○ With enthusiasm: 0 points

○ Interest: 2.5 points

○ Indifference: 5 points

○ Skepticism: 7.5 points

○ Resistance: 10 points

8. **In general, how easy is it for a frontline employee in your organization to launch a new project that requires a small team and a bit of seed funding?**

○ Easy. We have a well-honed approach that is open to all (e.g., an internal Kickstarter). (0 points)

○ Not easy. You can make it happen, but you need the right connections and plenty of courage. (5 points)

○ Very difficult. It takes a lot of effort and a lot of sign-offs. (10 points)

9. **How prevalent are political behaviors in your organization?**

○ Never observed: 0 points

○ Occasionally observed: 5 points

○ Often observed: 10 points

10. **How often do political skills, as opposed to demonstrated competence, influence who gets ahead in your organization?**

○ Never: 0 points

○ Rarely: 2.5 points

○ Occasionally: 5 points

○ Often: 7.5 points

○ Almost always: 10 points

To establish a cross-industry baseline, we conducted an online survey, again with the help of Harvard Business Review. More than ten thousand individuals participated (For more information on who took the survey, see Table 1 below).

TABLE 1. BMI SURVEY: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Size of organization (# of employees)	% of respondents	Role	% of respondents
< 100	14.7	CxO	11.2
100 – 1,000	29.6	VP/SVP	24.3
1,001 – 5,000	20.1	Manager	36.4
> 5,000	35.6	Frontline employee	28.1
	100.0		100.0

Adding results from individual questions together, you can calculate an overall BMI score for each respondent, ranging from zero to 100. Figure 1 presents the distribution of BMI scores by decile of the 10,000 people who took the survey. The average score across the survey was 65.

FIGURE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES FROM THE BMI SURVEY BY DECILE
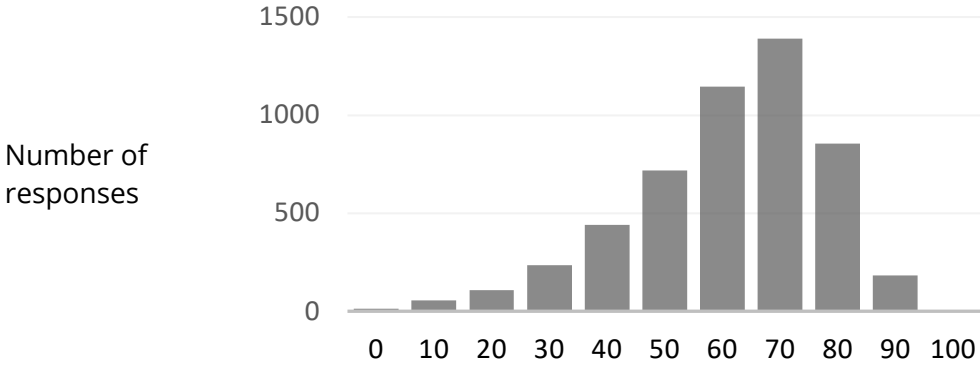
For a fuller summary of the key findings from the BMI survey, see Chapter 3 of Humanocracy (pp. 51-56 in the hard cover version of the book)

You can also take the survey online, and compare your results with our benchmarks, at humanocracy.com/BMI