

# STANDARD COFFEE SERVICE COMPANY: REDUCING TURNOVER AND INCREASING PROFITS WITH THE McQUAIG SYSTEM™



Brian Gueniot,  
*Manager of Human Resources and development*



Turnover decreased from  
40% to 19% in five years.

Profitability increased  
significantly over the  
same period.

## THE RESULT:

Better return on training  
dollars. Happier, more  
productive employees.

With annual sales of over \$100 million U.S., Standard Coffee Service Company is one of the largest office coffee service (OCS) companies in the United States, and the only one to provide coffee and coffee machines to businesses in every state.

Standard Coffee has always been slightly ahead of the competition: it was one of the first route delivery businesses in the country to implement hand-held computers and one of the first OCS companies to sell specialty coffees.

In 1997, Brian Gueniot joined the company to work with president Bob Maurer as the manager of human resources and development. "Bob's key challenge was with the Route Sales Representatives (RSR's)," Gueniot explains. "He was deeply concerned that the RSR turnover rate was at 40% 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."

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 is 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." The right person and the right fit were regarded as less important than they should have been.

As he continued his investigation into the hiring process, Gueniot found a copy of a McQuaig Word Survey® in the file of one of his current RSR's. After reading it, he realized that, while this is a very valuable assessment tool, it wasn't being used effectively. For starters, no one had established a clear definition as to what type of profile was required for the RSR job.

Gueniot set out to rectify the situation. 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's 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. We expect these RSR's to generate 3-4 new customers per month."

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Wanting to use The McQuaig System to its maximum best, Gueniot started by assessing top performing RSR's, to determine their profiles. He found that the typical leader profiles (high Dominance, low Compliance) worked best in the growth routes, while expert profiles (high Compliance, low Dominance) worked better on the maintenance routes.

So Gueniot had the District and Division Managers match the candidates to the specific route profile that they were looking for and he trained them on how to properly use The Survey's interviewing questions. Once Gueniot's system was in place, the turnover reduction was significant – from 40 percent to 19 percent in five years. As Maurer had hoped, the company's profitability improved significantly.

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

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 career. What most impressed me about 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.”

## PRESIDENT BOB MAURER ADDS:

“We are committed to creating an environment where people feel good about coming to work in the morning – where they grow personally, professionally and financially. This is part of our corporate vision. The McQuaig System is the first step in turning this vision into a reality. The System helps us identify the kinds of people who will thrive in our environment. This is as true for finance, operations and marketing as it is in the field sales arena.”

“By having people with an above average chance of succeeding,” he adds, “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.”

