

“Things Are So Crazy,”

Or So Says the Trend-Follower



I don't find it highly useful to have a lot of trend-followers working for me. By definition, they don't think very creatively, preferring to just watch what other people (usually other trend-followers) are doing. As a result, I've got someone following the crowd, usually at quite a distance, and that's no way to get ahead.

But occasionally the trend-follower will at least provide you with some interesting insight on what “people” are doing. By people, I mean absolutely everyone, I guess – since the trend-follower is always telling you that “people” do this, and “people”

like that, and “people” think this.

And because the trend-follower is so attuned to what's going on with “people,” you learn which times of year are bad for trying to get things done because of the preoccupations of “people.”

Here's what I've discovered: there are two windows of opportunity in the calendar year in which you can get something done. The first runs from the last week in January through about the first 10 days in February. The second runs from the last week in September through about the second week in October.

That's it. If you try to accomplish stuff at any other time of the

year, you're screwed. Why? As I loudly bemoan that I keep getting people's voice mail and out-of-office e-mail replies, my trend-following employee explains:

“Things are so crazy for people right now.”

Why right now? Well, because it's a special time of the year. And as you dig deeper, you'll find that this is true pretty much whenever it is.

Early January:

“*Why can't I get ahold of anyone?*”

“You know, D.F., people are sort of recovering from the holidays.”

Recovering from the holidays?

Did they have surgery?

Now, by around January 15, even my trend-following friend acknowledges that they've all had enough time to recover, so I can start to get a few things done. But not long after February starts, we're back in the muck again.

“*Is anyone working these days?*”

“Gosh, D.F., things are so crazy for people right now, with spring break and everything.”

Spring break? Some of the people I'm calling are over 60. Are they going to Ft. Lauderdale to get drunk and try to push their walkers in a straight line? Hey, that'll impress the spring break babes.

But wait. This whole spring break phenomenon lasts through April. OK, so fine. We make our way into May. Now people will become reachable once again. Or so I think.

“You know what, D.F.? Things are just so crazy for people right now, what with graduations going on.”

All right, just hold on a second. Graduations? Now granted, I have only one kid – strapping, eight-year-old T.F. Krause. So I’ll only have to deal with a graduation one time in my life. But let’s assume the average person has two or three kids. Let’s also assume that this person’s professional life will extend roughly from the ages of 22 through 65. This means that the average person will have to deal with a graduation maybe three years out of a 43-year career. And every single freaking one of them is dealing with one this year?

Now we move on to summer.

“Where the hell is everyone?”

“Well, D.F., things are pretty crazy for people in the summer, what with vacations and soccer and everything.”

Vacations? Let’s say everyone on Earth gets two weeks of vacation, and let’s say they all take them in the summer. You’re still only gone one-sixth of the summer. This means that if I’m calling you on any given day, I have a five-out-of-six chance at getting you when you’re not on vacation.

And soccer? That’s keeping people from working?

Well, at least it’ll all be over in September. Right?

“You see, D.F., things are really crazy for people, with school starting.”

School starting? That’s when



you’ve got free day care! How is that making you unreachable?

But by late September, even my trend-following friend doesn’t use that excuse anymore, so once again, I can get work done. (I notice that she doesn’t seem to think baseball play-offs will be a problem. They might be for me, were it not for the fact that my phone and laptop go with me everywhere, and why don’t yours?)

But by late October, things are “so crazy for people again” with the onset of “the holidays,” and at this point I have no hope of reaching anyone for any reason until late January.

We often make fun of the French – at least I do – for thinking 30 hours constitutes a work week. But apparently we only work a full week in theory. We may be on a 40-hour

schedule, but because “things are so crazy” for us, we never get a damn thing done.

Anyway, I can’t concentrate right now, what with soccer and everything. Am I involved with soccer? No way. That’s for Euroweenies. But I need an excuse, just like the rest of you do. **N**

D. F. Krause, a former business journalist, has owned his own small business for more than eight years, handling clients in a wide variety of industries – including banking, real estate, logistics, manufacturing, among numerous others. Lacking patience for much of the jargon used in the business community, D. F. established the “Phrases That Must Be Destroyed” list in his last newsroom, with “Synergistic Alignment” ranking as the all-time most objectionable phrase. D. F. loves capitalism but thinks capitalists have a tendency to act weird.