






## 5 Types of Bullshit Job (Graeber)

*“The ultimate, hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make, and could just as easily make differently.”*

1) Flunkies	2) Goons	3) Duct Tapers	4) Box Tickers	5) Task Masters
				
<p>Flunky jobs require people to work, in order to make other people above them in the organisational structure look good. E.g. Receptionists in firms with no visitors or callers.</p>	<p>Goons often try to sell things people neither need nor want. The jobs have an aggressive element and may only exist because other firms have similar roles. E.g. Corporate lawyers, some call-centre employees and lobbyists.</p>	<p>Duct tapers fix problems that should not continue to be a problem. If the firm were better organised, then the jobs would not exist. E.g. Data checkers in the absence of a spreadsheet with a v-lookup formula.</p>	<p>Box ticking jobs exist so that an organisation can say it is doing something that it is not doing. E.g. Bank corporate social responsibility programmes.</p>	<p>Task maskers exist to either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Supervise people that don't really need supervising and/or;</li> <li>2) Make new bullshit jobs that do not need to be done.</li> </ol> <p>E.g. Strategy leaders in academia</p>

What is a bullshit job?	What is not a bullshit job?
Anthropologist David Graeber asked people to e-mail their accounts of why they felt their job was meaningless: <a href="mailto:doihaveabsjoborwhat@gmail.com">doihaveabsjoborwhat@gmail.com</a>	In interviews Graeber stated that it was not for him to say what is and what is not a bullshit job. Graeber set out to hear from people who felt their own job was a bullshit job.

**MCQ Mini Test:**

- 1) Why is the job of an actress probably not a 'bullshit job'?
- A. Actresses probably add 'societal value' through their work
  - B. Unlike 'brand managers', actresses probably bring joy to others
  - C. Actresses probably do not consider their own job to be 'bullshit'
  - D. Actresses are probably not highly paid

- 2) The job of a luxury hotel doorman could probably best be classified as either



- A. A flunky or a duct taper
- B. A flunky or a box ticker
- C. A task master or a box ticker
- D. A duct taper or a task master

- 3) *"Our call centre's resources are almost wholly devoted to coaching agents on how to talk people into things they don't need as opposed to solving the real problems they are calling about."*

The description above best describes the work of a...

- A. Flunky
- B. Goon
- C. Duct taper
- D. Box ticker

- 4) *"I work as a personal assistant to an HR manager where most of my day I spend moving emails from his inbox folder into sub-folders"*



The description of the work of the personal assistant above best describes the work of a...

- A. Flunky & goon
- B. Flunky & duct taper
- C. Task master & box ticker
- D. Task master & flunky

5) "I manage a very competent team of 11 people who would probably do most of their work without my oversight. I feel bad passing them surveys and management documents that ask them to reflect on how what they do fits into the corporate strategy of the business."



The description of the work above is best described as the work of a...

- A. Flunky
- B. Goon
- C. Duct taper
- D. Task master

### Answers (Aitken format)

- 1) Why is the job of an actress probably not a 'bullshit job'?
- A. Actresses probably add 'societal value' through their work
  - B. Unlike 'brand managers', actresses probably bring joy to others
  - C. Actresses probably do not consider their own job to be 'bullshit'
  - D. Actresses are probably not highly paid

ANSWER: C

2) The job of a luxury hotel doorman could best be classified as either

- A. A flunky or a duct taper
- B. A flunky or a box ticker
- C. A task master or a box ticker
- D. A duct taper or a task master

ANSWER: A

3) *"Our call centre's resources are almost wholly devoted to coaching agents on how to talk people into things they don't need as opposed to solving the real problems they are calling about."*  
The description above best describes the work of a...

- A. Flunky
- B. Goon
- C. Duct taper
- D. Box ticker

ANSWER: B

4) *"I work as a personal assistant to an HR manager where most of my day I spend moving emails from his inbox folder into sub-folders"*  
The description of the work of the personal assistant above best describes the work of a...

- A. Flunky & goon
- B. Flunky & duct taper
- C. Task master & box ticker
- D. Task master & flunky

ANSWER: B

*"I manage a very competent team of 11 people who would probably do most of their work without my oversight. I feel bad passing them surveys and management documents that ask them to reflect on how what they do fits into the corporate strategy of the business."*  
The description of the work above is best described as the work of a...

- A. Flunky
- B. Goon
- C. Duct taper
- D. Task master

ANSWER: D