



Mastering Accountability

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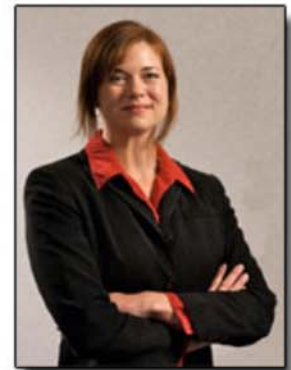
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Happy Holidays!

Do you struggle with accountability issues on your team? You're not alone, many companies do. Ask yourself these questions:

- Do people on your team get defensive when they've missed a deadline or failed to meet expectations?
- Do people on your team constantly seek guidance even though they know what they should be doing?
- Are people on your team quick to point fingers when problems arise?
- Do you have trouble getting people on your team to take initiative?



These are all signals that you may be facing issues of accountability within your team. Ponder these things both in the work environment and in your personal life. People become immobilized by fear. Namely, fear of repercussions and hurt pride. The most effective way to manage issues of accountability actually lies in your hands. You have the power to create a culture of accountability in your team, organization and at home.

"Be the change you want to see in the world," Mohandas Ghandi said. This is a striking call to action for all of us and is applicable in the workplace too. As leaders, we have the means to influence others simply by setting the example and creating the environment to enable a culture of accountability.

Start by reflecting on how you behave. When people seek guidance, do you give them all the answers (so that they do it your way)? Or, do you allow them the opportunity to suggest their own ideas and support them in this? The next time a team member asks you for guidance, try asking "what do you suggest?" Then, support them in their thoughts. Provide encouragement and support, even if they get it wrong. Learning from their mistakes when the environment is supportive allows them to think creatively without repercussions.

Next consider how you react in times of crisis. Do you add to the intensity by becoming demanding, finger pointing or chastising? If so, you're sending signals that mistakes are punishable. No one wants to take responsibility when the culture is one of damnation. Supportive and creative comments when things go awry, such as "tell me about what happened" or "what can I do to assist" allow for an open dialogue and flowing creativity. People

naturally will let their guard down and be proactive to solutions when they are not focused on defending themselves.

Hurt pride can be a huge hurdle to overcome in creating a culture of accountability. You must lead by example in acknowledging your own shortcomings and being sensitive to nourishing the pride of your team members. Be the first to announce your own faults with statements such as "I should have communicated this more clearly" or "I messed up when I ...". Demonstrating that you are willing to own up to your own faults paves the way to a culture of accountability.

Finally, holding others accountable requires you to inspect what you expect. Providing regular feedback and using metrics to illustrate the importance of the expectations communicates that you value the work. People naturally feel a sense of ownership and pride in their work when it is valued, they will work earnestly and hold themselves accountable for the results.

If you would like some help on *mastering accountability* in your company, you may want to partner with an expert. Contact Amy Bergman, at MasterMind Consulting Network to get started: 517-917-5730, or amy@mastermindconsult.net.

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