# Building Organizational Accountability

Does your organization struggle to meet deadlines? Is the blame-game commonplace in the daily life of employees? Have client/customer satisfaction scores fallen below desired targets? If any or all of the following symptoms resonate, your organization might have an accountability problem.

Accountability is the willingness and interest to assume responsibility for one's actions and work. It occurs only when people accept full ownership of the results of their work. Without accountability, an organization is incapable of achieving and sustaining high performance.

Cultures in high-performance organizations have personal and team accountability that drives the execution of strategy and the delivery of value to the customer. Unfortunately, the concept of accountability has escaped many organizations in today's marketplace. Although the prospect of instilling accountability throughout an entire organization can seem daunting, every person within an organization has the capability to build personal and team accountability. Here are some practical steps you can implement to cultivate accountability within your organization:

- **Clearly define goals.**
  Individuals have a tendency to feel ownership of measurable goals and will work harder to achieve those goals.
- **Discuss the impact their work will have on the organization and/or the client.**
  There is more accountability among individuals who know the impacts of their contributions, and with this knowledge, they will likely internalize consequences of those impacts, both positive and negative. Be sure to link employee goals with customer goals and expectations, as well as explain what it means to exceed those goals and expectations.
- **Develop and train your workforce to feel accountable for their actions.**
  Accountability in the workplace is supported when you have ongoing discussions with your employees about their goals and the impacts the goals have on the organization. Also, discuss the consequences of not delivering on those goals.
- **Carry out on agreed upon consequences.**
  Once goals and outcomes have been agreed upon, follow-through on the various consequences for results that meet and do not meet expectations.
- **Remember the concept of accountability is contagious.**
  In a team environment, it is crucial that all members hold each other accountable. Team members should feel empowered to identify a need and identify solutions for how they can meet that need. In a team setting, it is likely that the members will hold each other accountable through peer pressure and the desire for the team to be successful.

Accountability can happen only when responsible leaders and workforces commit to holding each other accountable for exceeding goals and expectations. Although accountability is not always innately found within organizations, it can be cultivated through a focused effort and ongoing coaching and training.

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