

The Power of Accountability in Leadership

BUILDING A CULTURE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND RESULTS

Accountability Unpacked

Moving from common **knowledge** to common **practice** means understanding the skills and embodying the concept as your everyday way of being. In the beginning, it **takes** practice, and eventually, it **becomes** your practice.

LEADER

As a leader, you:

Are accountable for your actions and decisions.

Consistently hold individuals accountable to their commitments and quality of work.

Strive to be open and transparent in your decision-making process.

Accept responsibility for your part, and hold others accountable for theirs.

LEADERSHIP

Your behavior impacts those that you lead by:

Inspiring others to take **responsibility** for their work and performance.

Increasing **motivation** to meet expectations and achieve goals.

Building **trust** with your team, stakeholders, and customers.

Avoiding the blame game and keeping the **focus on solutions** and continuous improvement.

Leaders

If you are a leader: Communicate clear expectations. If your team doesn't have a clear target, it's impossible for them to be accountable because the goalposts keep moving.

As it relates to **behavior**:

- Proactively communicate what behaviors you expect from your team. Remember that behaviors are outwardly visible to the human eye. For example: "If you are showing up to a meeting, plan to be fully engaged; this means you are not multitasking."
- Recognize and appreciate when you see the behaviors in action. This is important because it's easy to ignore stuff that's working. Address it quickly and directly when someone is operating outside of the behavior expectations you've established. If you miss this even one time, the message to the team is that bad behaviors will be tolerated.

As it relates to **deliverables**:

- Describe what you want as clearly as you see it in your mind's eye. Take a minute to reflect and get honest with yourself – what do you already know about your expectations?
- Set a date by when you want it, and then check in to see if that's reasonable.
- Set a reminder on your calendar to check in between now and the deliverable date with: "How is it going? What does support from me look like?"

Team Members

If you are a team member: The goal is to consistently take responsibility, meet your commitments, and exceed expectations whenever possible.

As it relates to **behavior**:

- Model positive leadership behaviors as often as you can, regardless of whether your peers are doing the same.
- Take responsibility for your own development. It's your responsibility to drive the direction and pace of your growth. It's your leader's responsibility to support you along the way.

As it relates to **deliverables**:

- Ask for a clear description of what the deliverable looks like when it's complete. What form will it take? In what context will it be used? What problem will it help to solve? The thought of asking for more detail from your boss may make you cringe, but oftentimes these questions, which will help your boss get clearer on their expectations, ensure your success.
- Be honest about what can be accomplished and by when. If you don't know how to get started, the natural instinct will be to procrastinate. Instead, ask for help.
- Keep or change your commitment. It's okay to change an agreement; it's not okay to break one. If your original promise was ambitious, renegotiate well before the due date!

