

NUDGE TO ACTION ON:

Accountability

Ownership of and responsibility for actions, behaviors, timeliness, and decisions.



CULTURE IS AN EVERYBODY JOB:

Culture, in a quiet, compelling, unspoken way, drives how people approach problems and prioritize work.

- Commit to outcomes and strive toward delivering on time.
- Own your mistakes - learn from them without blaming others.
- Be transparent about your progress toward goals.
- Clarify and communicate trade-offs when competing priorities challenge your ability to successfully fulfill your accountabilities.

PRACTICE ACCOUNTABILITY

THINK:

- In a team and/or organization, creating a culture of accountability is an ongoing, regular practice; expectations of accountability pertain to projects that are going smoothly as well as those that fall behind.
- Accountability feels positive, rather than punitive, and relies on being as explicit as possible about desires, outcomes, and due dates.
- “What techniques do I use to hold myself accountable to delivering on the results I commit to? What can I use to gain commitments to timely results from others?”

FEEL:

What internal, physiological signals are you aware of when you firmly commit to and take ownership for delivering a specific result on time? What does it feel like when you think about holding someone accountable for a missed commitment that was clearly agreed on? That was not clearly agreed on?

DO:

- Be as clear as you can about what people are accountable for and how their work is connected to the big picture.
- Make progress visible to everyone by keeping a record of goals, commitments, due dates, and measures of success.
- Have frequent, regular conversations with individuals - and with the team as a whole - progress toward goals and any obstacles in their way.
- Give clear, honest feedback and coach people. Focus on their development.
- Check in with people along the way to ensure they have the resources they need to accomplish their goals.

ACCOUNTABILITY SOUNDS LIKE:

“When I imagine a successful outcome for this project, it looks like _____. What questions do you have?”

“What does support look like?”

“This project is due on (date). Let’s schedule our check-ins to track progress.”



SUPPORT FOR THE LEARNER LOOKS LIKE:

THE PEER:

When working with your colleagues, be transparent about what you are willing to commit to and where you have questions or misgivings. Clarity builds trust and impacts results.

THE BOSS:

Set people up for success. When you assign a goal or make a request, communicate the priority as you see it, and ask about any conflicts they may face because of other priorities.

THE DIRECT REPORT:

Ask questions to make sure you clearly understand what “done” looks like for any project or outcome, as well as the due date for that work. Ask your boss to be as clear as they can about what you are accountable for.



Mistakes WE MAKE:

- Hold people accountable to results and deadlines without being explicit about our expectations or without documenting them in a clear, visible way.
- Assign goal after goal without checking in on how each new priority might impact current work.
- Focus on the how and the what of goals without spending enough time on the why.
- Do it ourselves, rather than address underperformance with feedback and clear direction.
- Overmanage activities instead of focusing on the desired results.
- Fail to create a regular cadence of checking progress as a team.

