

Accountability --- The Secret Ingredient to Execution

We all “Talk the Talk”. We understand that we must introduce accountability into the organization if we have any hope of achieving our objectives. Yet, many companies struggle, some unknowingly, with this concept for many different reasons. Long term employees can become complacent, competencies can be limited, a free pass is sometimes given for a variety of reasons and the “Peter Principle” is still alive and in existence today; promoting people beyond their ability to perform. I believe that many employees, often the majority, understand the concept and want to be held accountable. But, what about those that don't?

Here are some simple concepts that may help you “Walk the Walk”.

- Make sure you have clearly defined job descriptions and put performance expectations in writing with measurable goals.
- Demand that every supervisor invest a minimum of thirty minutes a month discussing job performance with every one of their direct reports. Record this informal discussion on a 4 X 6 card and put it in a file. When it comes time for the annual performance review, you now have eleven documents--- informal performance discussions--- to guide you in completing the formal annual review. If you don't do this, burn your annual reviews. They are worthless.
- Do not accept incompetence, don't give free passes. It can become cancerous and effect the entire organization. It is rare that you ever terminate an employee and other employees don't wonder what took you so long.
- Practice and train supervisors on coaching and mentoring. Document all performance discussions. When an employee is struggling, do everything in your power to help them including additional or remedial training. Don't neglect using probationary status as a tool to make sure the employee knows you are serious and provides an opportunity for them to turn things around but with a timeline of patience defined.
- Make sure you have a good new employee orientation program. Consider having a new employee sponsor for each new employee for a 60 to 90 day period. Compensate this champion.
- As a leader, you must demonstrate, by example, a low tolerance for mediocrity.

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