Generating a Culture of *Supportive* Accountability

Accountability is key to the success of any organization.

But why is there a widespread absence of accountability?

Accountability is often equated with blame when things go wrong. The good news is that there is a much more productive way to use accountability.

Thank you for joining us for a discussion on how to create a culture of supportive accountability.

Brad Zimmerman

(248) 561-4740

brad@phoenixperform.com

Tom Willis

(313) 445-8976

tom@phoenixperform.com

***.phoenixperform.com

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ACCOUNTABILITY

What is accountability?
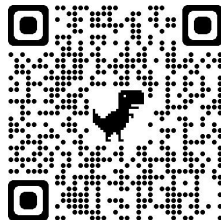
CULTURE

What is culture?

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast." ~ Peter Drucker

**Harvard
conducted a study of more than 200 organizations and
discovered that a
strong culture
increase profits by
756%
over a period of 11 years**

CULTURE *eats*
EVERYTHING

ACCOUNTABILITY

What are the natural barriers to accountability?
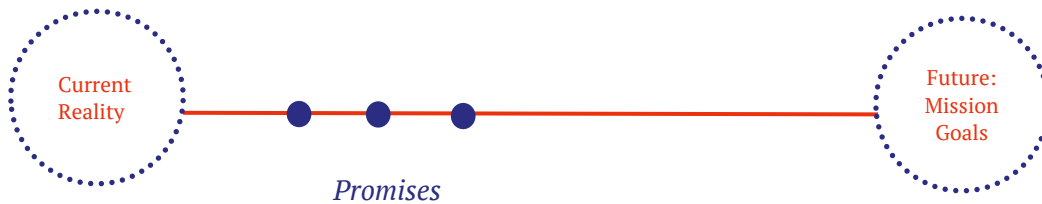
LEADERSHIP

What's your why?

Being personally committed to, or ON A MISSION, is not the same as memorizing a Mission Statement.

What is *Supportive Accountability*?

Leadership + Management + Coaching = RESULTS

LEADERSHIP is the first step; *engendering in each person's imagination* a unifying and compelling vision, mission and goals for the future (as well as generating an aligned view of the current reality). The power of "creative tension" causes all team members to create good ideas and actions that overcome the inertia of the status quo.

Promises

Promises from people for achieving Key Performance Indicators, tasks or specific actions are required to create progress toward the Mission & Goals.

MANAGEMENT must follow leadership; creating a structure of accountability and integrity (requests, promises and accounting for actual performance vs. promises) is required to transition from vision to action. This transition to action is what moves the current reality forward, toward the future state and is produced step by step; promise by promise. People are willing to make promises and be held to account because *they* are committed to the mission and goals.

> *"The key to growth is to learn to make promises and to keep them."*
> ~ Stephen R. Covey

COACHING creates a culture of support; for the organization to grow beyond the current reality, each person must grow beyond their default success strategy and be willing to request support; and support must be readily available. When people are committed to the future state and have made promises that require behaviors or knowledge beyond their current capabilities, they must *grow* in order to fulfill the promise. This creates the demand for "coaching".

The *conscious and* skillful application of leadership, management and coaching *together* produce a culture of personal growth, a learning organization, an organization that produces breakthrough results.

YOUR PERSONAL CHALLENGE IS TO DEVELOP BOTH THE CONSCIOUS AWARENESS OF WHEN THEY ARE NEEDED AND THE SKILL TO APPLY THEM.

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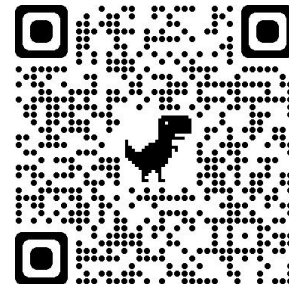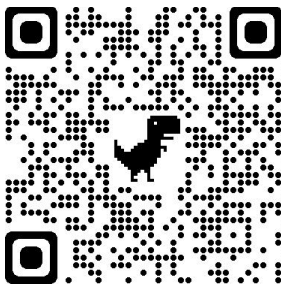
APPENDIX:

FROM PERSONAL PURPOSE TO SHARED PURPOSE

"The first step in mastering the discipline of building shared visions is to give up traditional notions that visions are always announced from "on high" or come from an organization's institutionalized planning processes."

The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization
Peter M. Senge

Being personally committed to or *"ON A MISSION"* is not the same as memorizing a Mission Statement. A Mission Statement <u>represents</u> the actual mission. Most real-life organizations are much too complex to be fully defined in a <u>short soundbite</u>. However, people need to fully understand and believe into the *Grand Purpose* that energizes and empowers, both internally and externally.

The organization's purpose or Mission is a view of the future that resides within the mind of each person that is on the mission.

Such a mission can *unite people* in the enterprise; but only if leaders are successful at evoking it in the imagination of all team members.

Such a mission can also *clarify for people* why they are being asked to do what is being requested; it provides clarity. The function of clarity also provides an orienting point in the future, a "guiding star," for decision making.

For a purpose/mission to be unifying and clarifying, it must inspire and motivate each team member. The purpose/mission must "connect" to each individual's personal purpose. The more *personal* accomplishment people can achieve through the mission, the more powerful the organization. For this reason, there will be many individual perspectives of the purpose or mission. ***When individuals share their interpretation of the mission with others in the enterprise, the mission becomes clarified and more inspiring.***

In the absence of an inspiring organizational purpose or Mission, the default motivation is people's default success strategy. When people's commitment to comfort is the motivating force, commitment to the status quo takes over and organizations languish and ultimately fail.

The job of leadership is to evoke the creation of an inspiring and motivating view of the future, in the minds of each member of the team, that they can adopt as their own. To have the desired effect, the mission/purpose must be continuously re-created, over and over and over again.

SUPPORTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

"If only people around here were more accountable for results"
"Managers don't hold people accountable here"

These are a couple of the complaints we hear frequently from both organizational leaders and staff. We all know that accountability is a key ingredient to the success of any organization. Why then does there seem to be such a widespread absence of accountability?

A large part of the answer lies in the frequent misunderstanding of the word and the concept itself. Accountability is often equated with blame when things go wrong. Often when the cry is heard "someone needs to be held accountable" it really means someone needs to be fired. Equating accountability with blame and subjecting people to negative feedback that undermines their sense of pride in their work is counterproductive. Recent studies have shown that performance reviews that focus principally on blame for performance problems are de-motivational. Productivity has been shown to suffer for months after such a review. This explains why people dread reviews and why many managers avoid doing them.

Another factor in the absence of accountability is the theme that they (not I) aren't accountable. Accountability seems to be something that others are lacking. It is rare indeed that an individual thinks that they themselves are lacking in accountability.

The root of the word "account" gives us the first clue to the most productive definition of accountability. Accountability involves simply keeping an account of results produced compared to results promised. That is it. It is the basic act of clearly stating actual performance. Nothing more. If an accounting is to be done, there must be clearly agreed upon KPIs that measure a person's effectiveness in their job.

Reviewing the accounting of actual performance compared with promised performance reveals that the person is succeeding in some areas and failing in some areas. Black and white; no blaming, no excuses. This objective review of the promises a person has made sets the stage for a plan to improve performance; a coaching discussion.

A system of rewards (for better than promised performance) and consequences (for worse than promised performance) can be an effective mechanism to reinforce accountability by individuals sharing in the proceeds of both successes and failures… but such a system by itself will not bring accountability about.

All the above defines and describes accountability. But what about the supportive aspect? What is it that is being supported? The simple and superficial answer is the person… but the deeper answer is that person's commitment to their goals.

When leadership engenders this level of commitment from and within people, they will embrace being held accountable for results. Effective management then becomes a natural support for the attainment of each person's commitment. They want to make the promise because the result is important to them, and they know that having someone hold them accountable is a good way to support their personal success.

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