

How to Balance Employee Autonomy and Accountability

Hi,

Mike Kotsis had this good insight, particularly for this outsourced world that we work in. I thought you might find it helpful.

Gene



Disengaged employees [cost companies as much as \\$550 billion](#) every year in lost productivity. As a result, frustrated companies are looking for better ways to increase employee accountability. But increased accountability on its own creates a culture of micromanagement that leads to unhappy workers. This, in turn, has a negative impact on employee productivity.

Some companies focus instead on creating a culture of autonomy, because a high level of autonomy increases employee engagement and ownership of the work. Employees that feel a high sense of ownership tend to be more productive, because they take greater pride in their work.

But the danger for these companies is discovering that their autonomous employees aren't all on the same page. As a result, their work doesn't align with the company's vision. In some cases, their productivity suffers because they have too little oversight.

The clear solution is to balance employee autonomy with clear and meaningful accountability. But how do you balance these two components?

Autonomy That Creates Ownership

Creating a culture of autonomy means that you give employees the freedom to determine how to reach your company's goals, within established boundaries. To do that, you'll need a clear vision and alignment on Core Values, quarterly priorities, and weekly to-dos. These components guide autonomy with a structure that gives your people the alignment and vision they need.

Structured expectations create a culture that allows leaders and managers to take a hands-off approach.

Accountability That's Clear and Meaningful

Employees want autonomy, but you might be surprised to learn that they also want to be held accountable. This starts to make sense when you realize that accountability gives you a way to measure success.

While autonomy gives employees the freedom to own their work, accountability holds them responsible for results, and for the actions that produce results.

To be effective, employee accountability needs to be clear and meaningful.

- Clear accountability—Expectations are communicated, observable, and measurable. Your employees know exactly what success looks like, and there's no question about whether their performance meets expectations.
- Meaningful accountability—You have a specific, understood plan in place if expectations aren't met.

The plan for accountability should have the goal of helping the employee get back on track, but also provide clear consequences if improvement doesn't occur within a specific time frame.

A Balancing Act That Pays Off

Purposefully balancing employee autonomy and accountability is the key to producing a work culture that creates employee engagement with the right kind of results. It may be a bit of a balancing act at first, but companies that are committed to it find themselves achieving new levels of success.

Next Step

Want to learn more about how to gain traction for your business? Call or email me for a free [90-Minute Meeting](#) to get a clear picture of what it looks like to run your company on EOS.

Keep Moving!

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Helping organizations clarify, simplify and achieve their vision.