CREATING A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

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Beginning with the end in mind, let us examine the components of operational effectiveness:
What is organizational effectiveness? Goals are achieved through adherence to a well-conceived and well managed plan which mobilizes your assets and focuses your resources on an unwavering dedication to persevere. Not your eloquent plan, not your intelligence nor your team's tenure nor even how well you have documented processes are enough to make you successful. What then is the key to sustained success?

If you thought deeply enough, peeled away enough layers and looked in places we seldom search and rarely invest you probably concluded that in some way; *the only sustainable advantage possible is an ongoing investment in your culture and your people. Alignment and focus on human capital have been and always will be, at the core, your sustainable differentiator.*

YOU are responsible to create a single-mindedness of purpose and an ability to filter out distraction. The result: a motivated and mobilized team acting at all times in support of the vision. Success is based on your ability to align the corporate goal with your team and, by extension, each individual on that team. You must understand the critical connection of **each** team member's commitment to the vision and strategies of the enterprise.

Accountability in the workplace is all about setting and holding people to a common expectation by clearly defining the company's mission, values, and goals. ... Fostering this culture of employee accountability helps yield a high-performing organization.
                        Definition of Accountable by Merriam-Webster

Accountability is an elusive attribute of a culture that all companies revere, frantically seek but rarely master. Those companies that successfully create a culture of true accountability achieve an uncommon alignment and focus resulting in a remarkable ability to master their own destiny. This seemingly nebulous attribute creates a powerful advantage to its masters.
Many companies cite lack of accountability as one of their top impediments to success, yet they seem unable to establish accountability despite their frustrations.   If you conduct a root cause analysis you will uncover many contributors to this lack of accountability.

The byproduct of poor accountability is:
- Inconsistent results
- Long cycle times
- Rework
- Waste
- Delays
- Customer dissatisfaction

In a manufacturing environment, materials and sequential processing are predictable and controllable. Whereas Human Interactions are less consistent and less predictable because emotions and attitudes and resulting comfort zone influence their actions. This "human wild card" is what makes accountability so very challenging for front like and mid-level managers who spend their time serving as BOTH Leaders and Managers.

Often these two roles are mis-applied in the heat of a busy day. One way to view the differences between leadership and management is to explore the prime objectives of each role. You see leadership serves to inspire, align and empower, whereas the focus of management is to complete key objectives in an efficient and timely manner. Supervision is yet more rudimentary and ensures oversight of the tactical plan to insure it is administered in an efficient manner (on-time and in spec). The primary differences between these roles are summarized in the chart below:

Role	Responsibility	Focus	Answers
Leadership	Vision	Inspiration / Alignment	Why
Management	Strategy / Tactics	Effectiveness	Who / When
Supervisor	Tactics / Through-put	Efficiency	What / How / Where

When engaging in LMA, you must clearly adopt your role as a manager and leader in enabling corporate change:
- Your objective as a manager is to create organizational efficiency.
- Your objective as a leader is to maximize your team's organizational effectiveness.
- Align the team, develop your people.

People fail for several primary reasons:

1. Insufficient Training.
2. They did not know what constituted Acceptable performance.
3. The importance of their job. (and how they fit into the master plan) was never conveyed to them.
4. The payoff for good performance was never conveyed. Thus, they lack Motivation.
5. Manager is too Autocratic- dictating direction VS allowing employee to Share in their planning & Success.
6. Employee had Deficiencies not uncovered in the hiring process.
7. The manager manages their team as a group VS individually. Smart managers manage individuals

Here is a schematic of creating alignment:

RESULTS

ACTION

GOALS

STRATEGY

MISSION

VISION

Consider the premise that LMA really is YOUR single most important function in your role.

Does your team truly have a culture of accountability? This is not something that can be switched on like a light switch. Without setting a solid foundation you really cannot require accountability simply because you want it or because you send an email edict. Instilling true accountability requires diligent focus on culture, coaching, alignment and empathy. ***There are NO SHORTCUTS***.

Here is a four-stage template to create accountability. Please do not move to the next step until you can confidently check off each successive step below:

1) DEFINE LMA:
 What specifically are your primary responsibilities within LMA?
      How much time do you spend with your people each week?
      What is the quality of that employee engagement? (from Their perspective)
      What is the agenda of your employee time?
      How do you augment their learning and development given your time constraints?
      How effective is your communications? Is it bi-directional or unidirectional?
      Are you empowering your people or enabling them?
      What is your mixture of coaching, mentoring or supervising?
      Are you seeking employee growth or tactical implementation? How can you achieve both?

2) ALIGN THE TEAM
This is **_absolutely foundational._** _NO Shortcuts!!_
NOTE: You may have to reset the entire team paradigm, beginning with values
      Does everyone share the vision, the one-year plan and the quarterly Rocks?
      Are they <u>committed</u> to the team vision and goals?
      Do they know precisely how their performance contributes to the final customer solution?
      Do they really care?
      Are they actively participating in planning and solutions or being dictated actions?

3) COACH YOUR PEOPLE.
The most overlooked and underutilized leadership function!
- RPRS? …'Nuff said !!!!
- Top 5 Accountabilities of that team member?
- Have you set **_clear and specific_** objectives and timelines?
- Are the expectations clearly understood and acknowledged by BOTH you and the employee?
- Does the employee adopt 100% responsibility for their performance of the initiative assigned to them?
- Are you creating a closed loop? Ensure their completion of the task is reviewed regularly.
    - KPI's AND SOP's
- Are you providing consistent and authentic feedback by adopting fierce conversations?
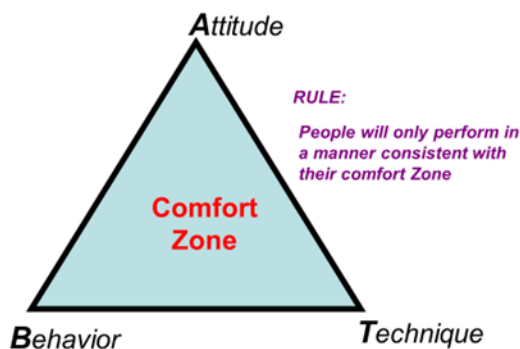
Common sense solutions that enhance enterprise value

COACHING: The connection between comfort zone and personal accountability

What is the root cause??

Trimetrix and coaching

Attitude

RULE:
People will only perform in a manner consistent with their comfort Zone

Comfort Zone

Behavior   **Technique**

5

4) GET THE HELL OUT OF THEIR WAY

- Is the team focused on the critical short-term metrics?
- STOP doing and start delegating.
- Inspect, encourage, and provide feedback.
- Recognize and reinforce positive results.

RINSE and REPEAT… (see "1" above) A culture of accountability is not a goal… it is a way of life.

"We are…What we repeatedly do.
Excellence then is not an act, but a Habit."   *- Aristotle*

Both you and your people must adopt more effective habits. Stephen Covey in his 7 habits of highly effective people cites 7 steps to personal effectiveness. Adopt them and see your effectiveness soar!

Common sense solutions that enhance enterprise value

Habit 1: Be Proactive ...
Take responsibility for your reaction to your experiences, take the initiative to respond positively, and improve the situation. Recognize your Circle of Influence and Circle of Concern.

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind ...
Envision what you want in the future so you can work and plan towards it. All things are created twice. Before we act, we should act in our minds first. Before we create something, we measure twice.

Habit 3: Put First Things First ...
prioritize what is important and mitigate what is urgent.   Are you and your people focused on the vital few or distracted by the trivial many?

Habit 4: Think Win-Win ...
Generate mutually beneficial solutions or agreements in your relationships.

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood ...
Use empathetic listening to genuinely understand a person, create an engaged and motivated team. Pose the situation _then_ listen. Seek their input.

Habit 6: Synergize ...
Combine the strengths of people through positive teamwork, to achieve goals that no one could have done alone. Engage and empower.

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw
Balance and renew your resources, energy, and health to create a sustainable, long-term, effective lifestyle.

Common sense solutions that enhance enterprise value

To make it easy, review each employee engagement. Ask yourself the following questions to gauge the effectiveness of gaining employee accountability:

The Accountability chart

performance Standards | consequences | ownership
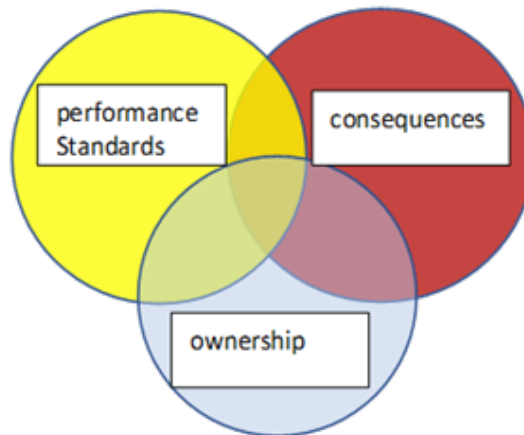
STANDARDS:
   Do they know what precisely is expected and specifically when the task is due?
CONSEQUENCES:
   *Are the consequences for their performance understood **AND** accepted?*
OWNERSHIP:
   Do they feel the responsibility for performance is theirs?
   Do they understand the importance of the task and downstream impact to the mission?

The clarity of your communications when assigning an initiative is Paramount.
Your conversation with your employee defines that employee's corporate engagement.
Are you being clear, concise and collaborative in your communications?

So, in conclusion; how do you "Raise the Bar??

- Raise Your Expectations
- Raise Their Expectations
- Hold Them Accountable to Higher Standards… Are there Consequences?
- Live the vision.
- Coach the person.
- **NO EXCUSES. PERIOD!**

It is a matter of creating effective habits.

About your author
Don is an executive business coach focused on strategic planning and implementation, organizational development, and talent management. A Certified Franklin Covey Coach, Past President of the Buffalo Niagara Sales & Marketing Executives, active member of the CEL alumni board and member of the International Coaching Federation.
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