

# Tips on Effectively Using the Accountability Model

## Making Your Expectations Clear

- Make crystal clear your conditions of satisfaction about the activities they're supposed to perform or not perform.
- Don't assume your common sense is their common sense.
- Be certain about how their performance is to be evaluated and what they need to do to get a positive evaluation.
- Be clear about timelines.
- Take the time to communicate how their work fits into the big picture and what really matters, otherwise you'll have to map it out step by step.
- Create an atmosphere where questions for clarity are encouraged, not viewed as "not getting it" (Manage non-verbal cues – especially impatience).
- Check for understanding by asking for what they heard.
- Ask good, probing questions to explore if they really get it.
- Set up frequent, brief check points to ensure they are on course and not off on a wild goose chase.
- Give candid, constructive feedback on an ongoing basis, not just when a deliverable is due.

## Making Your Expectations Credible and Reasonable

- Make crystal clear your conditions of satisfaction about the activities they are supposed to perform or not perform.
- Communicate the rationale for why they are supposed to do the things they are supposed to do.
- Ensure they have the capacity with time and resources to do what's required of them.
- Ensure they have the capability to do what is required (technical or professional training).
- Be sure that they receive credible guidance when a choice they make will support one organizational value at the expense of another (Example: Quality vs. productivity or compliance vs. speed and cost management).

## Following High Performance With Positive Consequences

- Treat top performers differently than average performers.
- Manage the work experience of top performers.
- Minimize or eliminate negative consequences for top performers. For example, avoid negative consequences for positive performance whereby top performers are given more work because they get things done.
- Use interesting developmental experiences to reward high performers.
- Make decisions about how to reward and recognize based on how you want the recipients to feel.

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- Recognize that the greatest power you have is to change the way someone feels.
- Recognize that *what you choose to reward* and recognize sends a “louder” messages than *what you say* is important.

### **Following Non-Performance With Negative Consequences**

- Withhold negative consequences until you have assessed if the clarity and credibility of expectations are in place, and if continuous and candid performance feedback has been provided.
- Use negative consequences to treat low performers differently than average or high performers; research shows that employees tend to feel highly resentful of tolerance for “dead weight.”
- Deliver negative consequences predictably, consistently, and fairly; people need to predict with 100% accuracy the consequences of their actions—if they can’t, accountability is not their fault, it’s leadership’s.
- Minimize or eliminate positive consequences for poor performers.
- It’s not what you say it’s what you do; don’t talk about “wringing necks,” instead follow through with appropriate consequences in order to change behavior.