Achieving Results
through
GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY

- Increase Revenues

- Reduce Costs

- Implement Key Initiatives

- Performance Improvement

- Leadership Development

- Teambuilding/Alignment

- Change Management

- Personal Development

- Accelerating Culture Change

P
Partners In Leadership®

THE ACCOUNTABILITY TRAINING COMPANY

Creating A Culture Of Accountability®

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KEY SHIFTS

Creating higher levels of accountability in business seems to be a topic on every corporation's agenda. Most companies can draw a link between the results they are achieving and the level of accountability they see manifested throughout their organization. Knowing how to create and sustain a culture of accountability for most organizations is the greatest challenge.

Companies that are operating with a high level of accountability are organizations that have been able to:

1. Clearly define their results

2. Create alignment around those results

3. Instill accountability needed to deliver those results

4. Sustain change

How do successful organizations enable their people to take ownership for delivering on their intended results? Staying competitive usually means finding practical answers to that question. From our perspective, creating higher levels of ownership often drives better results and increases the value and growth of the company. To be truly effective in today's corporate environment, leaders must be able to help find ways to create higher levels of ownership and joint accountability for achieving key results.
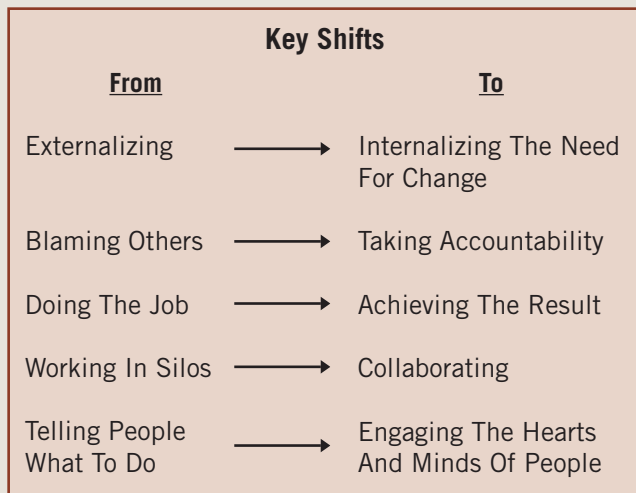
Key Shifts

From		To
Externalizing	⟶	Internalizing The Need For Change
Blaming Others	⟶	Taking Accountability
Doing The Job	⟶	Achieving The Result
Working In Silos	⟶	Collaborating
Telling People What To Do	⟶	Engaging The Hearts And Minds Of People

Diagram 2 - Key Shifts

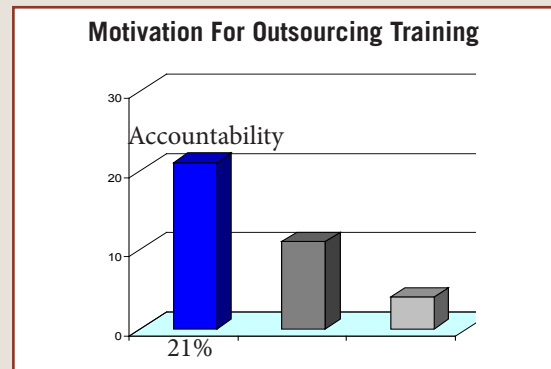Motivation For Outsourcing Training

Accountability

21%

Diagram 1 - According to the 2005 ASTD State Of The Industry Report, 21% of companies outsourcing training are doing so to increase accountability.[1]

Organizations are able to do so by making several key shifts in the way people think and act:

Externalizing vs. Internalizing the Need for Change

People have a tendency to externalize the need for change. Most people are quite skilled at recognizing there is a problem. For example, "I sure wish marketing would start doing their job better" or, "I wish management would be more responsive." People inherently struggle, however, with the ability to define themselves within the problem. An accountable mindset is one that says, "If I'm part of the problem, I'm part of the solution."

Blaming Others vs. Taking Accountability

Human nature drives people to blame others when things are going wrong. For some organizations, the Blame Game has become so commonplace that it becomes not only accepted but expected when someone doesn't deliver. Organizations that are able to instill a Culture of Accountability are able to take all of the time, energy and resources employed in the Blame Game and channel them into a consistent focus on the organizational results.

Doing the Job vs. Achieving the Result

Most leaders are fairly capable when it comes to creating accountability for activity levels. Less common is a leader who has created accountability around organizational results — a key shift in Creating A Culture Of Accountability.

Telling People What to Do vs. Engaging the Hearts and Minds of People

The "Tell Me What to Do" Culture is a culture where people check their brains at the door, punch the clock, and check off the list of activities that define their job. This activity-oriented mentality tends to be devoid of pro-activity because, "No one is telling me what to do" A critical shift is engaging the hearts and minds of people instead of just their hands and feet.

[1] 2005 ASTD State of the Industry Report

THE TRADITIONAL VIEW

Most people view accountability as something that belittles them, happens only when performance wanes, or occurs when problems develop or results fail to materialize. In fact, many think accountability only arises when something goes wrong or when someone else wants to isolate the cause of the problem--all for the sake of pinning blame and pointing the finger.

When the organizational ship is sailing along smoothly and failure has not yet sunk the ship, people rarely ask, "Who is accountable for this success?" Only when the hull springs a leak does anyone start looking around for the responsible party. As a result, the notion of accountability for many employees has taken on a hard, critical edge that is often negative. The better question to ask is, "Who is accountable?" before it's too late. This needs to occur prior to deadlines, and in advance of the problems. By establishing accountability up front, people are enlisted and empowered to do all they can to ensure the desired result.

Most dictionaries present a definition of accountability that promotes a seemingly negative view. Consider Webster's definition:

> "Subject to having to report, explain or justify; being answerable, responsible."[2]

Notice how the definition begins with the words "subject to," implying little choice in the matter. This confession-oriented and powerless definition suggests what we all have observed--accountability is viewed as a consequence for poor performance; it's a principle you should fear because it will only end up hurting you. Little wonder people spend so much time avoiding accountability and trying to explain and
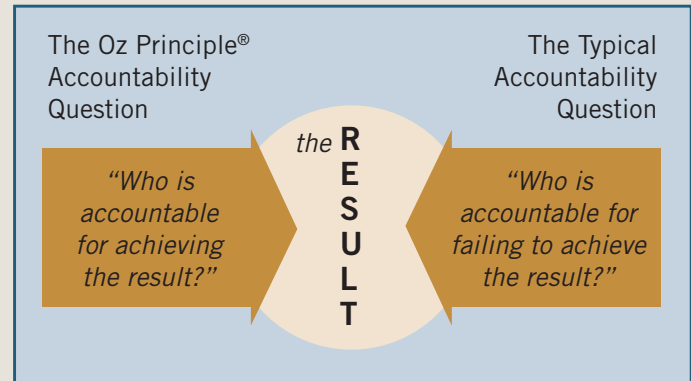

Diagram 3 - Accountability Definition

justify poor results. A more positive and powerful definition of accountability can do more to achieve outstanding results than all the finger pointing and blaming that typically occurs.

In Diagram 3, the question on the right is really asking, "Who is to blame for this?" It is activity focused rather than result focused. When considering these two approaches, which of these two approaches will have the greater impact on fostering and improving an organization's ability to achieve results--the 'before-the-fact' approach or the 'after-the-fact' way of establishing blame?

THE ALTERNATIVE VIEW

Consider the following alternative definition of accountability:

> "A personal choice to rise above one's circumstances and demonstrate the ownership necessary for achieving desired results."

This definition suggests a mindset or attitude of continually asking, "What else can I do to rise above my circumstances and achieve the desired results?" It involves a process of seeing, owning, solving, and doing, and requires a level of ownership that includes making, keeping, and answering personal commitments. Such a perspective embraces both current and future efforts rather than reactive and historical explanations. Armed with this new definition of accountability, organizations can help leaders and employees do everything possible to both overcome difficult circumstances and achieve desired results.

DOING THE JOB VS. ACHIEVING THE RESULT

The first step towards Creating A Culture Of Accountability is to define clear results within an organization. Nine out of ten companies have either not clearly defined results or have failed to communicate them broadly. It is virtually impossible to create a culture of accountability if people are unclear about the key results they are expected to deliver.

Whether the focal point is a sales goal, a specified delivery period for a product, or a minimum return on investment to achieve, people have to be clear on the direction. Once a company-wide direction has been decided, accountability requires that employees from the bottom to the top are clear on the results.

Leaders will often say: "I don't care how you do it, just get it done!" Many times, organizational charts and job descriptions push people into boxes. They give people the idea that they are getting paid and using their skills to perform a defined function or set of tasks. This task-oriented mindset leads people to believe that if they perform their functions, they've done what they're supposed to do, whether or not the desired result was achieved.

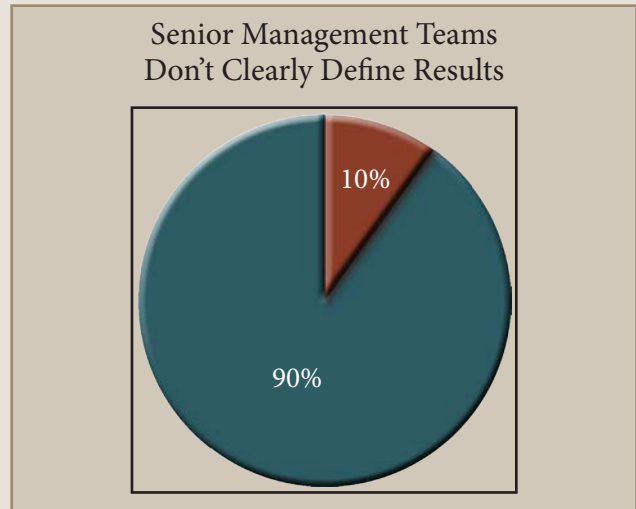### Senior Management Teams Don't Clearly Define Results

10%

90%

Diagram 4 - Nine out of ten senior management teams do not clearly define company results

ask, "What else can I do?" until the results are achieved. Rather than treating the circles in Diagram 5 as mutually exclusive, they lead their people to recognize their "job" as

Doing The Job

Doing The Job IS Achieving The Result

Achieving The Result

Diagram 5 - Doing the Job versus Achieving The Result

People are accountable for doing their job, but they're not accountable for delivering results.

Creating accountability requires that doing the job and delivering the result are one in the same. Creating accountability means the job is not done until the result is achieved.

Effective leaders operate on the premise that people are more productive when they focus on achieving the result. They lead people beyond the boundaries of their jobs and inspire them to relentlessly pursue desired results by creating an environment that motivates them to repeatedly

achieving the desired results. This mindset can become part of the culture only if people clearly understand the results they are expected to deliver.

3

CREATING ALIGNMENT

Without clarity, there can be no alignment. The targeted result must be clear to everyone on the team and then the results must be shared. Each team member must share accountability for achieving the result.

Many management teams confuse agreement and alignment. Alignment means that a team may have some measure of agreement but not necessarily total agreement. This means that a team can have some disagreement and still be aligned. In fact, an organization cannot have true alignment without disagreement.

True alignment does not occur until people have had the opportunity and assume the accountability to say what they really think in a manner that lets them work issues through and gain some buy-in. Disagreement inevitably accompanies the process, and that can be good. People who entirely disagree with a course of action will find it difficult to stay in alignment for long.

Alignment does, however, bring agreement--the agreement to move forward, the agreement to support the direction or decision, and the agreement to speak up if you become unaligned. It is essential to work with people to develop some level of agreement about where the organization is headed and why.

Unfortunately, a company's culture does not maintain alignment by itself. Alignment is a process, not an event. It is a process because the forces working to push the company out of alignment are constant.

"Our organization never seems to be aligned!"

Companies frequently get mired in their attempts to gain alignment around their key results. Even the world's most successful companies and leadership teams consistently struggle to create and maintain alignment.

Alignment begins at the top. It refers to a shared understanding of the results the organization must achieve, and of the actions needed to achieve those results. If a company is out of alignment, if people lack a shared understanding of the targets and the means of achieving them, organizational structure becomes a side issue. The leadership team must create it, starting with themselves.

Creating alignment means moving from just one manager feeling accountable for quality, customer service, or financial performance to everyone in the organization feeling accountable for such results. A company gets out of alignment when managers work on isolated results. Having a common focus and sharing accountability for key results keeps them united. The quality control manager is as committed to achieving the bottom line as the financial manager is committed to quality. They share a sense of ownership for key results.

MAINTAINING ALIGNMENT

While managers need not agree with every decision, each of them must actively promote every senior management decision. This means owning the decision as if it were their own. This is essential to maintaining alignment. Leaders can promote a particular decision in three important ways:

1. Advocating a decision translates to more vigorous and proactive support.

2. Sponsoring a decision involves taking vocal ownership of the decision and linking your success to its success.

3. Championing a decision means actively leading people in efforts to make it a success and keeping it on the daily agenda.

Alignment does not require every senior manager to champion every decision, but when each leader champions or sponsors three or four key initiatives, the company makes great progress.

The goal of alignment is to think and act as a team. Alignment is not an event--it's a process. There are always forces working to throw the team out of alignment. Few of these forces can be addressed effectively by changing the structure of the organization. People will reliably produce results if they have an aligned team at the top leading them.
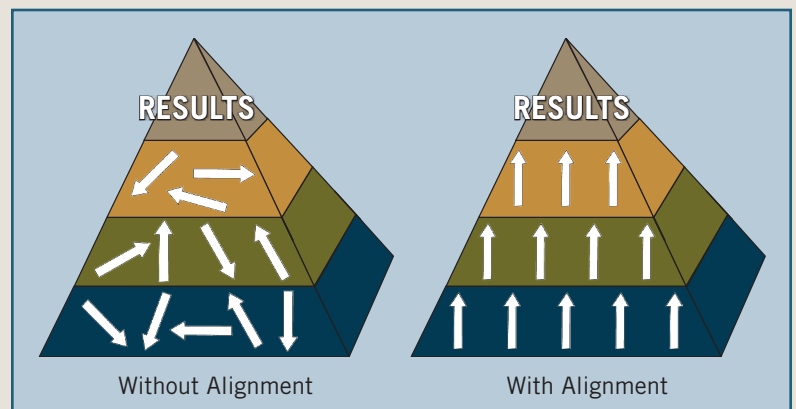

RESULTS — Without Alignment | RESULTS — With Alignment

Diagram 6 - Alignment On Results

ABOVE THE LINE® VERSUS BELOW THE LINE®

The process of creating clarity around results and alignment around their delivery also reduces the amount of time people devote to the Blame Game. Minimizing the Blame Game, a hindrance so prevalent in many organizations today, is a crucial step in creating higher levels of accountability.

Diagram 7 summarizes the trap into which many organizations fall when addressing accountability.

The chart is divided by something we simply call "The Line." Below The Line® is where one sees the Blame Game, where the focus is on why results are unachievable. Above The Line® are the Steps To Accountability,® focused on what else is needed to deliver results. Above The Line attention is on working with those things that can be controlled taking the initiative to identify and implement solutions. In short, an Above The Line mentality gets results, fulfillment, and forward movement.

Below The Line is where the focus is centered on what cannot be controlled. People will feel victimized and frustrated; they become frozen in their actions and don't seem to ever move forward professionally.

When individuals are Below The Line they have a story explaining why they cannot deliver. Above The Line, they have

a story about what measures were taken to overcome the obstacles in the way of achieving the result. In an Above The Line culture, people are constantly asking, "What else can I do?" as opposed to the Below The Line question of, "How else can I explain and justify why I didn't get the results?"

Below The Line habits of thought and action are where people and organizations often go when results aren't forthcoming and performance is lacking. These habits of mind and behavior can become so accepted as part of an organization's culture that people become unaware of their pervasiveness. The behaviors simply allow people to avoid or deflect accountability for something that has happened or something that should have happened but did not.

These behaviors occur on both the individual and the collective levels. An individual or an entire organization can be functioning Below The Line relative to a specific result they are trying to achieve.

Organizations that have people consistently operating Below The Line always pay a price. Energy that could be focused on achieving results is instead focused on explaining and justifying why results are not being delivered. Organizations that are able to lift people Above The Line and maximize the amount of time they spend there significantly improve the performance of their organizations.
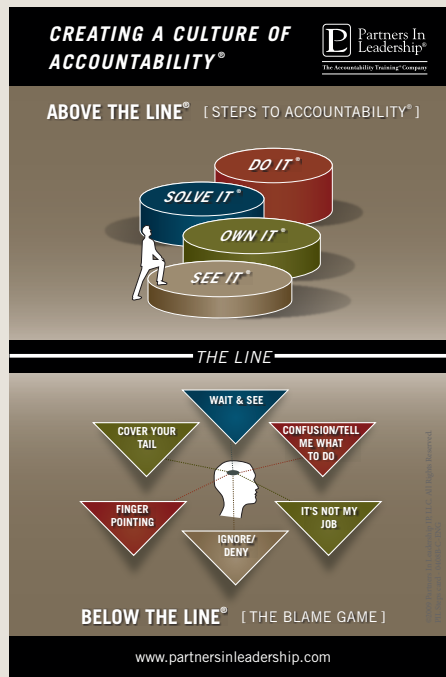
CREATING A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY®   Partners In Leadership®   The Accountability Training™ Company

ABOVE THE LINE® [STEPS TO ACCOUNTABILITY®]

DO IT®
SOLVE IT®
OWN IT®
SEE IT®

THE LINE

WAIT & SEE
COVER YOUR TAIL   CONFUSION/TELL ME WHAT TO DO
FINGER POINTING   IT'S NOT MY JOB
IGNORE/DENY

BELOW THE LINE® [THE BLAME GAME]

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Diagram 7 - The Steps To Accountability Chart

Common Below The Line® Phrases:

▼ Ignore/Deny:

"What number did you think we were trying to achieve?"

"From where we sit, we don't see a problem."

"That's not what my reports are telling me."

▼ Finger Pointing:

"It's the IT Department's fault"

"Marketing gave us bad forecasts."

"Don't blame me. That's what the boss told us to do."

"If you had told us it was that important, I would have done it."

▼ Cover Your Tail:

"We hired the best in the business and they recommended that we do this. Look, it's right here in the report I sent you."

"I warned you that this would happen — here's a copy of the email I sent you."

▼ It's not my Job:

"I delegated that to my people."

"That's not what I'm paid to do."

"I'm not concerned about things outside my realm of responsibility."

▼ Confusion/Tell Me What To Do:

"Which did you want us to focus on, quality or quantity?"

"I thought you said customer satisfaction is how we would be measured."

"Why don't you tell me exactly what to do and I'll go do it."

▼ Wait And See:

"We've got everything in place to have an outstanding year next year."

"Time will tell."

"We're just waiting on a decision."

Diagram 8 - Below The Line Behaviors

IMPLEMENTATION

Unfortunately, we find many leaders walk away from training with the following complaint: "This was a great day, but I don't really know how to apply it." We think they ought to be saying: "This was a great day and I know exactly what I am going to do to apply it in our company to achieve our results." Implementation cannot be assumed. It must be planned.

If people are not clear on what they're going to start doing, as well as what they're going to stop doing, by when, and how they're going to measure it, then it's difficult to sustain change. Implementation and follow through have to be built into the process.

A Few Words on Outsourcing

Many training organizations claim to have the magic bullet for solving culture problems. When you seek outside help for improving accountability, be sure to ask the following key questions:

- **Who are the company's clients?** This question alone will not reveal the quality of a training process, but may provide insight if the clients are respected, industry leaders.

- **How long have they been conducting accountability training?** Ask the company to back up their claims with examples. Speaking directly with their clients can be the greatest help in determining the impact of the training.

- **Do you actually conduct the training?** Ask to speak directly with the individual who would be conducting the training. Many training companies will outsource their sales and marketing efforts to people/companies who can "talk the talk" but don't truly understand "the walk."

- **Where do your methodologies originate from?** Some companies that train on accountability do so with materials that are in the public domain but don't originate with that company. It's difficult to overstate the importance of working with experts who not only understand the concepts of accountability, but also have a track record for operationalizing it within organizations.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

ABOUT PARTNERS IN LEADERSHIP

Partners In Leadership, Inc. is a widely respected international management consulting and training company. Founded in 1989, the company has grown to become the premier provider of Accountability Training® Services around the world with over 700 clients in 56 countries. They are The New York Times Bestselling authors of the books, *The Oz Principle: Getting Results Through Individual and Organizational Accountability, Change the Culture, Change the Game: The Breakthrough Strategy for Energizing your Organization and Creating Accountability for Results, and How Did That Happen? Holding People Accountable for Results the Positive, Principled Way.*
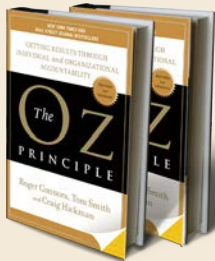
THREE TRACKS TO CREATING GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY

Partners In Leadership has created a comprehensive training program for Creating A Culture Of Accountability® with their unique Three-Track approach that systematically builds capability and leadership at every level of the organization.

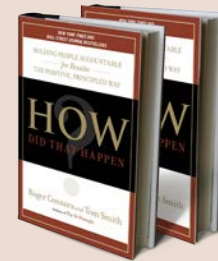| self track	culture track	others track
The TAKING Personal Accountability Track™	**The BUILDING An Accountable Culture Track™**	**The HOLDING Others Accountable Track™**
This one-day training is based on The New York Times Bestselling book, ***The Oz Principle**: Getting Results Through Individual and Organizational Accountability.*	This one-day training is based on The New York Times Bestselling book, ***Change the Culture, Change the Game**: The Breakthrough Strategy for Energizing your Organization and Creating Accountability for Results.*	This one-day training builds on the principles and methods that form the basis on The New York Times Bestselling book, ***How Did That Happen?** Holding People Accountable for Results The Positive, Principled Way.*
This track helps individuals take greater personal accountability for achieving organizational results by learning how to operate Above The Line® while taking the Steps To Accountability.® Accountability for key organizational results is tied directly to individual work objectives and participants learn how to consistently See It, Own It, Solve It, Do It.®	This process helps leadership teams use The Results Pyramid® to define the shifts in the way people need to think and act to produce key organizational results, create alignment at all levels of the organization around those shifts and then implement the key cultural management tools essential to accelerating the shift to a Culture of Accountability.® This high-impact, results-oriented process builds accountability at every level and across functional boundaries for thinking and acting in the manner necessary for achieving results.	Using the Accountability Sequence™ model, training participants learn how to hold others accountable in a positive principled way that ensures the fulfillment of expectations and learn what to do when faced with unmet expectations. Here, leadership capability is developed as participants learn to master the Why-What-When™ model of communicating expectations, along with a number of other practical tools and models that are easily remembered and applied.

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CONSULTING ◆ COACHING

Partners In Leadership®

THE ACCOUNTABILITY TRAINING COMPANY

- Corporate Training
- Sales Organization Training
- Train-The-Facilitator

- Speakers and Keynote Addresses
- Executive Coaching
- Business Consulting Services

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