Title:
It's Your Move: The First Step to Accountability

Word Count:
569

Summary:
A lack of accountability is frustrating. Tremendous productivity and
efficiencies can be gained when more people are accountable for completing their
tasks, commitments and expectations.

Keywords:
productivity, expectations, accountable, accountability, personal accountability

Article Body:
Every place I go, if I'm in an organization long enough, I'll hear people lament
about the lack of accountability. Specifically, I hear things like: "They just
don't seem to care enough, I guess." "Those action items never get done – I
don't know why we even identify them." "I have trouble getting people to be
committed to achieving the things they are responsible for." "Everyone wants to
blame someone else – it is never their responsibility."

These comments come from every level, and they are referring to people both
above them organizationally, as well as those that may work for them. In other
words the concern is widespread and includes everyone.

People are concerned because a lack of accountability is frustrating, but they
also know that tremendous productivity and efficiencies can be gained when more
people are accountable for completing their tasks, commitments and expectations.

Accountability is an important thing.

Unfortunately, inherent in most all of the comments above and in the many
conversations I've had is that people think the accountability gap is about
someone else. "They" aren't accountable. "They" need to improve. The focus is
on fixing the behavior of others.

While this might be true, this is the wrong place to put the focus, at least at
first.

Take a Look in the Mirror

If you want greater accountability around you, start by being more accountable yourself. Before you tune me out, I know what some of you are thinking…

"I'm just a middle manager – it's not my responsibility."

"I'm just a supervisor - I can't change it."

"I'm nobody – it doesn't matter what I do."

Maybe you are in one of these roles. Or maybe you are a senior leader, or the CEO. It doesn't matter what your role is or how long you have been in the organization. Let me say it again.

If you want greater accountability around you, start by being more accountable yourself.

If you want to engender and create greater accountability in those around you, you can start by being a good role model. You can be 100% accountable yourself.

I'm reminded of what my father often told me: "When you point a finger towards someone else there are four times as many fingers pointing back at you."

Being accountable is about figuring out how you can make things better. Other people's actions aren't in your control, and many events aren't in your control either, but your response to these situations and events is completely in your control. You can choose to be 100% accountable and responsible for your response.

Some Questions

While thinking about the challenges you face with accountability in your organization, ask yourself the following questions:

•   What is my role in this situation?

•   What am I doing (or not doing) to promote the situation as it currently exists?

•   What about this situation is in my control?

•   What am I thinking?

•   What are my beliefs?

- What can I do to have an impact?

- What can I do differently to change the result?

Asking these questions takes courage, because it takes away your ability to blame others. Asking these questions may be a change of your habits. Asking these questions may be hard, because the answers may require work.

Courageous and difficult, perhaps, but these are the questions of a 100% accountable person.