

# Performance and Accountability



Accountability is different from responsibility. Accountability has nothing to do with blame and everything to do with outcomes.

## Conversations are necessary

In the performance and accountability world the very first question, anyone in your team should be able to answer is:- 'Tell me exactly what it is you should be doing and how I will know that you have completed it to everyone's expectation'?

The conversation that results should be about performance, everyone's performance against the goal that is to be achieved. Yours, mine and theirs. The conversations are about how we stay on track and how do we redirect our efforts when things are off track. Everyone is accountable.

Mistakenly, we make accountability about what you did or did not do. Am I accountable for my performance - I should be! Does that mean I get blamed for what I did or did not do? No, not blamed. Highlighted, examined factually (who, what, where, when, why, how, circumstances) explained from multiple perspectives, and new, more personally specific expectations set and consequences agreed upon.

Obviously there are some bad behaviours that produce quite a delightful payoff for us. Common examples of these types of patterns of unwanted behaviour include: overeating, procrastinating, problematic ways of interacting with other people, excessive spending, and personal use of internet or social media and avoidance. Each one of these is a coping strategy and tells the savvy supervisor that attention is needed.

People either live up to, or down to, the expectations you set for them. Setting expectations is a fundamental of both management and leadership, yet many of us fail to take this very important step. People truly can't read your mind, but they very quickly learn what they can get away with. Setting an expectation is asking others to live up to a belief that you have about them or the situation, by clarifying in advance what can realistically be achieved.

The next discussion is about how the performance of that expectation will be measured (what you will be looking for) so that everyone knows beforehand. That's how expectations are met. Now it is not a battle to have a conversation about unacceptable performance. That conversation is about achieving the goal and whether what "we" are doing now is meeting the expectation. You want people to ask for help when they are lost, overwhelmed or out of their depth. That's the culture of great performance and accountability.