



Happy New Year from Security Bank! We hope 2020 provides opportunity for growth both in your business and personally, and proves to be prosperous. One of the things a lot of business owners anywhere in the country must do is ensure employees remain productive which can be rewarding for not only the business, but also the employees themselves on a personal level, and rewarding in many ways. This month we found what we thought is a good article on various ways to build accountability among your employees.

Best Regards,



KEITH KNUDSEN
PRESIDENT/CEO | SECURITY BANK

THE 4 SECRETS TO BUILDING ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

BY **MATTSON NEWELL** | *Partners In Leadership*[®]

Building a culture of accountability fosters positivity, productivity and employee engagement. But where do you begin when you're looking to set a tone of personal and professional accountability?

You may recognize the importance of accountability in general – but when it comes to integrating it into your day-to-day operations, where do you begin?

It's about elevating accountability from a buzzword to a business philosophy. Building a culture of workplace accountability means aligning your team around shared objectives to cultivate open feedback loops and encourage creative problem-solving. By boosting accountability at work, your company will be better equipped to drive results.

As a manager, you can focus on these four areas to foster a culture of happiness and productivity grounded in personal accountability.

CLARIFY YOUR COMPANY'S TOP RESULTS

We define Key Results as those that are strategically critical to the success of the organization. In our Workplace Accountability Study of over 40,000 employees across industries, a whopping 85 percent of survey respondents indicated that they did not have a clear understanding of their company's Key Results.

Given this data, it makes sense that 72 percent of respondents claimed they were holding people accountable, but rarely with success. It's because unclear expectations and desired results contribute to a lack of accountability in the workplace. What's more, 50 percent of those surveyed reported that they dislike accountability, namely because they didn't know how to effectively implement it. This is where company leaders can step in to provide the clarity employees need.

We recently met with the CEO of a large health care organization. In our initial





meeting, we asked him what the organization’s Key Results were and whether every employee could name them. He felt confident that the company clearly communicated their Key Results through a three-page handout outlining all 132 imperative results.

While open communication is important, limiting the number of Key Results is significantly more effective. After rigorously analyzing the list of 132 results, it turned out that most of them were tactics or KPIs that could serve larger goals. We helped him whittle down the list from 132 to the “Big Four.” Rather than referring to the cumbersome three-page layout, employees could easily remember the top four desired outcomes. It also made it easier for managers to define measurable goals and assign tasks devoted to the Key Results.

Defining three to four Key Results is the first step to focusing an organization and holding employees accountable for performance. The bottom line: The most important thing leaders can do to foster a culture of accountability is ensure that everyone understands what results the company must achieve.

GIVE EMPLOYEES CLEAR ROLES IN DRIVING KEY RESULTS

A lack of ownership is surprisingly prevalent in large organizations. In fact, 81 percent of the Workplace Accountability Survey respondents cited an inability to follow through on commitments as the biggest challenge they experienced with co-workers.

The problem often comes down to employees feeling their positions don’t contribute to the company’s overall success, which leads them to disengage from work. They begin to skirt their responsibilities, letting others pick up the slack and detracting from what could be a high-performing company culture.

When there are gaps between what an employee does each day and the results the company must achieve, it’s time to reevaluate expectations to better align actions and results. Motivate employees to complete their tasks by ensuring all team members understand how their individual contributions directly impact the achievement of Key Results.

Without micromanaging, connect expectations to those Key Results and make a point of recognizing when employees positively impact companywide goals. Doing so builds a team of focused and engaged employees who are successfully pulling their weight.

GIVE AND RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON A DAILY BASIS

Keeping the feedback loop open is critical for successful companies. It allows employees at every level to hear other perspectives and provide their own. Leaders can use employee feedback to clear roadblocks and adjust expectations before it’s too late to make a difference. Most importantly, a mutual exchange of feedback nurtures trust and respect by giving everyone in the company a voice.

Feedback often has a negative connotation of occurring only when something goes wrong, which explains why only 20 percent of survey respondents actively seek and offer such information. Give as much appreciative feedback as you do constructive feedback to create a healthy attitude towards feedback exchanges.

ENCOURAGE RISK-TAKING IN THE WORKPLACE

When a problem arises or a project fails, fear of punishment often leads to negative employee behavior. More than half of employees admit to playing the blame game to avoid taking responsibility in unfortunate situations.

Rather than resorting to finger-pointing, build a culture of trust, collaboration and transparency. You can do so by encouraging calculated risk-taking rather than discouraging ideas that aren’t guaranteed to succeed. While success often comes from creative problem-solving in response to failures, only 20 percent of survey respondents viewed risk-taking as a strength. Motivate employees to think outside of the box where it matters. Even when risk-taking doesn’t lead to the intended result, it contributes to a healthy culture of learning.

BRING IT ALL TOGETHER

As a leader, you’ll know you’ve successfully fostered a culture of accountability when your employees:

- Understand the top Key Results the company must achieve.
- Take personal accountability for fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Are comfortable giving and receiving feedback.
- Confront obstacles creatively and collaboratively.
- Take ownership and ask “What else can I do?”

QUESTIONS? Our lenders are here for you!

Laurel 402.256.3247 **Osmond** 402.748.3321 **Allen** 402.635.2424 **Hartington** 402.254.2455 **Coleridge** 402.283.4251