

“How to Hold People to Account Effectively”

In my previous article we explored why holding your staff to account is SO important; and also some of the reasons why you might not be doing it currently, such as not recognising it's importance, or not having sufficient time.

In this article we'll concentrate more on how to do it well, for those of you who *do* recognise its importance, or for those who make the time, but are still struggling to do effectively.

The checklist below is a good starting point to explore what needs to be in place in order for you to hold staff to account well. This will help you see that accountability can be easy when it's the end of a process involved with setting people up for success, clearing obstacles from their way, and regular two way communication.

Work through the points below to see where you are currently falling down.

1. Know your key organisation, department, or team targets/objectives
2. Know your people's roles and responsibilities, and what are acceptable standards of performance
3. Know your people – their competence and confidence levels, and what motivates them
4. Set goals and key priorities with your people
5. Set the parameters for accountability (what they will be measured against, how, when, where and why)
6. Ensure processes are in place to support achievement (e.g. training, appraisal, reward etc)
7. Know your company procedures for preventative counselling, discipline and grievance
8. Recognise progress and reward achievement
9. Deal with underperformance issues promptly
10. Minimise and manage conflict if it impacts on standards of performance and therefore service or product quality

If you feel you can't hold staff to account because they refuse to accept responsibility, then it's *your* job to help them take personal responsibility for their own jobs and their performance levels, in the same way that you must do for yourself.

This may not be easy, and with some, you may need to take the directive approach and “tell it like it is.”

| The 4 Rules of Monkey Management [link to article 6](#) might be a good starting point, but the bottom line is that you'll need to go right back to basics. This means:

- having initial meetings with people to clarify specific goals

- discussing how they will achieve these goals and whether they need support
- agreeing the support, training or resources required to achieve goals
- arranging and holding regular follow up meetings to check progress and encourage and reward.

If you use this in conjunction with the 10 point checklist above, you should find the “holding to account” or “reviewing,” a fairly straightforward process. As I mentioned earlier, it’s actually the work you do before this in sharing information, setting direction and empowering people that is crucial to its success.

Given all that, I live in the real world and I know from personal experience that sometimes setting goals and standards of performance and holding every member of staff to account can be difficult!

Sometimes companies or senior managers tolerate underperformance by some members of staff e.g. personal friends or family members, or long standing employees who are coming up to retirement. They decide that life is just easier to tolerate the status quo!

In these circumstances you must decide for yourself whether you want to tackle it, by weighing up the risks and consequences of action versus doing nothing. At the end of the day, it’s down to your own personal integrity and the principles and values that guide you.

© Julie Johnson. Reprints welcome so long as by-line and article are published intact and all links made live.

About The Author:

Julie Johnson, formerly a manager and development specialist, created The Leadership Coaching Company to help managers solve one of their biggest business problems: how to get the most from themselves and their staff. She is now a leadership success specialist and has attracted a loyal following who praise her down to earth yet inspiring approach.

If you liked this article, then you’ll LOVE her Leadership Success newsletter with regular intense doses of her personal leadership and success strategies. [Click here](#) to find out more