4 Ways to Teach Personal Accountability to Your Employees

By Cy Wakeman  January 19, 2016

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Traditional management practices have led many entrepreneurs to believe that employee engagement and happiness come from a working environment that is free of stress or problems. They falsely believe that if they can perfect an employee’s circumstances, contentment and motivation will automatically follow.
And while it’s true that good talent is hard to find, and we want to keep our teams happy, this assumption can be misleading. Unfortunately, many have already fallen prey to this form of emotional blackmail, investing great amounts of capital in employee requests for perks and benefits based on nothing more than the promise that they will deliver extraordinary results in return.

You see, while fulfilling employee requests may initially seem like a logical approach to motivation, the reality is much different. According to New York Times bestselling author Shawn Achor, 90 percent of your long-term happiness is predicted not by the external world, but by the way your brain processes the world.

Therefore, trying to perfect employees’ circumstances is an insane practice. It’s a shortsighted strategy that won’t provide a long-term solution and is simply a waste of time and resources -- a high price to pay for busy entrepreneurs who are already short on both.

To cultivate sustainable engagement that produces results for your business, focus instead on making your employees bulletproof by teaching them to be personally accountable. Once someone begins to view the world through a lens of accountability, they start to understand that they can affect their circumstances and situations.

Before long, they’ll realize that they are not victims of external factors but rather architects of their own lives. This mindset equips them to handle anything that comes their way, regardless of how challenging it is. Only then will they begin to attain authentic, sustainable happiness and engagement in their lives, both personally and
So, how can you help your team achieve a greater sense of accountability at work? First, you must understand that personal accountability is a product of both nature and nurture. Some individuals possess a higher natural inclination towards accountability, but it can also be learned.

To create a workforce that is engaged in a way that creates remarkable results, it's imperative to stop trying to take the pain away and start equipping your employees with the abilities they need to deal with the random challenges that are involved in working in today's modern economy.

Related: [Leading By Accountability Is Contagious](https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/254138)

To help this skill set evolve and develop further, encourage the following among your team.

### 1. Embracing challenges

Experiencing projects, assignments and tasks that have a significant risk of failure and call employees out of their comfort zones will enhance the learning and development of new and less developed competencies. This process forces the individual to quickly find what worked and what didn’t. From there, they can adapt and move forward.

### 2. Experienced accountability

Being held accountable on a consistent basis by people and processes molds the
3. Consistent and regular feedback

Regular developmental and performance feedback from a credible source helps employees understand and internalize how their specific behaviors and choices are contributing to their results. However, the feedback must be rigorous, consistent and ongoing to be effective.

4. Self-reflection

Engaging in regular self-reflection and introspection about one’s progress is critical. The focus of self-reflection is to account for one’s role in the results of their life and extract the lessons that will empower a different response in the future. Methods of self-reflection include meditation and journaling.

Armed with this knowledge, you will be able to adopt a different, more sustainable approach to employee engagement. It all begins with cultivating and celebrating personal accountability among employees at every level within your organization.

Once this is achieved, you will have created a workforce that’s resilient, committed to results, accepting of the consequences of their actions (good and bad) and is continuously learning. Not only will they raise the bar for everyone around them, they will make great things happen for your business as well.
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