

### Accountability...

#### Commitment or Compliance ?

**“How can we get the people here to be accountable for results”...**

The answer lies in our understanding of the word *accountability* itself. If you ask several people what

*Do your people see themselves as personally accountable for the organization's results?*

*How effective are you holding your people accountable?*

*What is the relationship between accountability and integrity?*

*accountability* means to them, you will get several different answers. One of the most common views is that holding people accountable involves the distasteful job of being an enforcer. This view of accountability as a hammer explains why so many managers are less then effective when it comes to holding people accountable. Who wants to be seen as “big brother”, looking for someone to

hammer? Even for those who are willing to be the enforcer, using the hammer often results in fear and low moral and will often cause the loss of good people as well as the nonproductive. It is no wonder that accountability is one of the most prominent concerns in organizations.

**All of this concern surrounding accountability can be completely altered by redefining the “Mental Model”.**

The root of the word *accountability* is *account*. *Accountability* involves simply keeping an account of results produced compared to results expected or promised. That is it, the basic act of acknowledg-

ing actual performance vs. what is expected. Nothing more. Once the account is reviewed , a system of rewards (for better than expected performance) and consequences (for less than expected performance) can be agreed upon.

The key to a simple and effective accountability system is determining what is “expected”. All managers expect certain things from employees. Although people are aware that they are expected to produce some result, they often view what is expected of them much differently then “the boss”. Many employees operate as though the only thing expected of them is that they will *try*, perhaps even diligently. In short, they never promise to produce a specific result.

Very often, people take on a job with the intention of doing well. The problem arises from the fact that, in most cases employees do not view their job responsibilities as personal promises. They are agreeing to try to do something that the boss needs, they rarely treat their duties as a personal promise to deliver the agreed upon result; a promise that they make because of their commitment to something to which they are truly devoted. Consequently, many people say yes to what the boss has requested without “personalizing” the commitment. They are compliant—not committed. Hence the breakdown in personal accountability.



**Accountability without leadership; is a hammer.**

People are energized and motivated to attain what they are committed to accomplishing. What is important and compelling for *them* is what *they* are committed

## Accountability...Commitment or Compliance? (from page 1)

to. For all of us, the most primal commitment is to survival. Just beyond survival is comfort. In the absence of a compelling reason, most people will comply with what is expected of them in order to do what it will take to make the boss happy, thus assuring their security and comfort. When the most compelling motivation is to hold-on to a sense of security, the only management tool that can be used is to threaten that security. This may, in the short run, create limited results, however the price for this arrangement is the total loss of personal *accountability*—replaced with fear and intimidation.

### To become masterful at managing, one must first become masterful at leadership.

Leadership is the act of getting someone to *be* committed to a future possibility that the leader has communicated. The more compelling the commitment to the future; that is, the more people engage at a level that is really meaningful to them, the more power is generated. A leader who engages people in a purpose that allows them to make a difference, to contribute to the lives of others will generate more power than one who engages people in a commitment to survival and/or comfort.

When leadership engenders this level of commitment from and within people, **they will embrace being held accountable for results.** Effective management then becomes a natural support for the attainment of each person's commitment. They have made specific promises to produce measurable results within a certain time frame. They want to make the promise because the result is important to them, and they know that having someone hold them accountable is a good way to support their personal success.

This may sound idealistic, but consider this example: You have a friend that is very overweight and you are concerned and committed to her health and well-being. Out of *your* commitment, you approach her and suggest that she change her eating habits and begin an exercise regimen. The result is predictable; she gets angry, hurt and embarrassed. She feels attacked.

What went wrong? You had such great intentions. The problem is that you were trying to advance *your* commitment to her health, which is in direct opposition to her unconscious commitment to comfort and stability.

Now consider instead that you sit



**Effective Management  
Supports People's  
Commitments.**

down with this friend and express your commitment to her health, that you let her know of your concern for the example they are setting for her children, talk about how a diet and exercise plan allows you to do the things you love to do; things that your friend has lamented not being able to do... specifically, **engender** within her, a commitment to her own health that is more compelling than her unconscious commitment to comfort and stability. The result; she asks you for your help and support.

takes courage to have this discussion with people, but when you are successful, they will naturally look for someone to support them. You can now be that person by getting specific promises from them that will allow you manage their well-being. In fact this happens all the time, people commit themselves to losing weight and getting into shape and hire a personal trainer and/or an organization like Weight Watchers to hold them accountable for doing what they know they need to do but are too stuck in their past behaviors (comfort zone). *They are willing to be held accountable because it is their commitment that is being supported.*

To manage effectively you must first lead effectively. Generating **commitment** is the key to successfully generating accountability. Commitment, excitement, energy, focus—toward something that will bring personal satisfaction.

Now that will generate true ACCOUNTABILITY.



Call or write  
Brad Zimmerman; (248)  
647-9290

[bzimmerman@pmpcoach.com](mailto:bzimmerman@pmpcoach.com)

# Tools for Effective Management

One characteristic shared by most of the really great organizations of our day is integrity. I don't mean honesty or someone's version of moral behavior. The root of the word is *integrate*. And what is being integrated here is a persons word and their actions.

Leadership inspires commitment. Management then ensures those commitments are acted upon. Managers are therefore the keepers of our word. Here are some tools which you can apply in your own way to manage more effectively:

## Requests and Promises:

If you want something, ask for it. All too often we want people to do things, but we don't ask them to. We operate like they should just know, and then we get upset when they don't do what we expected but were unwilling to ask them to do. A request is a very effective way to gain a promise from someone. A request is:

- ◆ **Direct**, person to person.
- ◆ **Specific**; asking for an action or result that is clear. No room for interpretation or misunderstanding.
- ◆ **Has a due date**; Without a by when, it will always fall to the bottom of anyone's' list.

A request is designed to evoke a promise, so make sure you get one. Don't be rigid, be willing to negotiate, but get a promise. Promises are the only things you can manage.

## Hold people to account:

Keep an accounting of all your people's promises. Have regular meetings and review their actual performance vs. what they promised. Acknowledge when they exceed their promise and when they fall short. When they do fall short, and we all do sometimes, give them the coaching they need to attain promised results. In most cases the accountability part of this discussion takes a few short minutes. Coaching to improve should be the bulk of the conversation.

## Rewards and consequences:

Design and administer a system of rewards for promised performance and beyond and consequences for performance below promised levels. The best systems use 3 tiers of performance. The mid level is the "promised" (sometimes called expected) . It is just that, the target that is promised. The highest level is the "maximum probable". This is the level beyond which the organization cannot promise resources. Usually bonus compensation kicks in at the promised level and continues to build, up to maximum probable. The lowest level is "minimum acceptable". The level below which the person loses the right to keep the job. Good managers enforce consequences below expected down to minimum acceptable. The most effective consequences are very tight management and frequent coaching to help improve performance.

## Personal Information Managers & Project management software:

Max. Probable	
Expected	
Min. Acceptable	

As a society we are experiencing productivity gains that are heralded as the source of economic growth. What looks like productivity gains from a macro view, translates to you and I and everyone else in the workforce having more work to do than we feel capable of handling.

New technologies exist that enable us to produce much more in a given amount of time, to manage complex projects never before manageable. It does exist, but many of us have not yet adopted it or are not aware of the full capabilities. As an example, I use Microsoft Outlook, as do most of the people I know. Many use it for e mail, and calendar functions. Fewer use it's task management functions, which remind you when you need to start a task or project and when it is due. Still fewer use it's ability to delegate tasks to others and be updated on the task status. I could go on, and list pages of features that would save many of us hours in a day, and allow us to manage ourselves and our associates but you get the point. All this in a personal information manager, not to mention a computerized project management system or an enterprise wide system. If you are trying to manage promises from your memory or with a pencil and paper, consider getting trained in one of these new systems. Not only will you regain some sanity, you will be more successful.

# EXTRA

## CHANGE LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMS ORGANIZATION...

### Personal Mastery

Programs deliver change management services; supporting the development of cultures that foster creativity, openness, and accountability.

Concentrating support in behavioral health and human services organizations, PMP has partnered with some of the most innovative organizations nationally, both large and small, to implement change initiatives:

- Adopting Evidence-Based Practices
- Implementing Electronic Health Records,
- Ushering in the Recovery Model
- Increasing productivity
- Integrating Behavioral and Primary care

PMP's approach to change management is based on a "personal growth model": An organization, by nature, is a group of people organized to fulfill a common purpose. Therefore any effort to expand an organization's capabilities must focus on personal growth for each individual.

**PMP promises sustainable value** to each individual in client organizations. The

*"PMP has served as a leadership consultant, trainer, and coach for me and members of my executive cabinet and senior leadership team. In my nearly 30 years of executive leadership I have encountered scores of management consultants, though none in PMP's league. They are very smart, insightful, and truly committed to the success of their customer. I have found their work to be of enormous benefit to both the organization and to me personally."*

**David Guth, CEO,  
Centersone of America**

PMP Change-Leadership programs are comprehensive in nature, combining three distinct disciplines:

**Breakthrough Workshop**

**Personal Coaching**

**e-learning**



**If you are faced with the daunting task of reducing costs, increasing productivity, improving quality of service; while keeping staff motivated and included, we can help. Call or write Brad Zimmerman; (248)647-9290 [bzimmerman@pmpcoach.com](mailto:bzimmerman@pmpcoach.com).**

*"Projects with specific outcomes that impact the bottom line build the business case for engaging PMP. All of us have hired consultants that got everyone excited and then we went back to the office and fell back into the same old patterns. The involvement of Brad since the retreat truly holds us accountable to change.*

*If you find yourself in a situation similar to ours and are truly committed to change, engage PMP. I highly recommend them, but only, if you are committed to break through thinking and operating."*

**Marn G. Myers, President & CEO  
The Judson Center**

**Executive Coaching / Leadership Development / Change Management**



### Personal Mastery Programs

*Transforming Organizations Through Personal Growth*

**[www.pmpcoach.com](http://www.pmpcoach.com)**

31000 Telegraph Rd., Suite 260, Bingham Farms, MI 48025  
(248)647-9290