

## **Create it, Build it, Own it!**

### **Personal & Organizational Accountability**

By Matt Williams

I often struggled with the issue of employee “accountability”, whether it was the completion of business plans, process documentation or the application of processes and principles to drive productivity gains. While much is written around the importance of accountability and principles to support its application, it’s seems to be interpreted most often as something you impose upon another. My first response was often a desire to “change” them and was expressed in statements like “Why won’t they?” or perhaps “When will they?”. Questions that offered some release of frustration, but brought me no closer to building a culture of accountability.

We can believe accountability is about someone else and the focus will be on fixing the behavior of others. While there may be some responsibility there, our first responsibility as leaders is to create an environment that encourages accountability beginning with modeling our own. As defined in The OZ Principle, personal accountability is “A personal choice to rise above one’s circumstances and demonstrate the ownership necessary to achieve the desired goals” In his book, “Change the World”, Robert Quinn often references that one should be “inner directed” suggesting that we as leaders must first determine our direction (values, purpose, etc) that influence our choices and recognize that while the actions of others and many events are outside of our control, your response to and the choices you make are completely within your control. Effective leaders make better choices.

Making better choices requires that we ask some tough questions to understand what our role is, what’s within our control, what are we doing to impact the situation, and what our beliefs are around it? Questions that, as John Miller writes in his book on personal accountability, enable you to make better choices in the moment. These questions will begin with “What” and “How” and will often contain “I” statements rather than “they, them, or you”. By framing questions in this manner the focus remains on you and enables you to define how you can best contribute to, and be accountable to, the outcome and promoting a culture of accountability.

Beyond modeling accountability, how then do we enlist others in co-creating this culture of accountability? If you have engaged in some aspect of personal development, you recognized value in doing so. You took responsibility for it – you owned it. As it is with our organizations and instances of team responsibilities when we as leaders engage others in defining a solution and creating ownership through the process, we begin the process of encouraging others to higher levels of accountability. Additionally, through effective delegation (agreement, timelines, resource definition, etc) of responsibilities we better ensure that accountabilities are reinforced and met, strengthening the behaviors that support team accountability. In so doing, our organizational productivity rises and employee satisfaction is heightened.

Organizational cultures vary by the values that define them. Among them, integrity, trust, innovative, etc., all enviable characteristics. But those organizations that emphasize and value personal accountability simply outperform organizations that do not – will yours?

For more information on creating a culture of accountability and achieving breakthrough results, contact us at 877-689-8256 or at [www.DevelopInsights.com](http://www.DevelopInsights.com)

Conners, R. *The OZ Principle*.

Miller, J. *Personal Accountability, The Question behind the question*.

Quinn, R. *Change the World*.