



TriMetrix®HD Personal Accountability

Personal Accountability

A measure of the capacity to be answerable for personal actions.

Why is this skill important?

A person who has a strong sense of Personal Accountability has an internal responsibility to be accountable. It is this internal willingness to own up that will be exhibited in the person's actions. A person who has Personal Accountability will not try to make excuses for bad decisions and will normally make every effort to identify the cause of that bad decision. His or her focus will be more on correcting the problem to ensure future success than on protecting him or herself.

In contrast, a person with poorly developed skills in Personal Accountability will typically seek to place blame for bad decisions on any factor that does not lie solely with them, for doing so would detract from their abilities in the public's image. Although achieving goals and success can be important to this person, his or her self-image is often fragile, so protecting it becomes top priority.

Achieving your personal and professional goals takes courage, integrity and resiliency. You may have to take difficult or unpopular action to best serve your organization, or you may have to admit to making a serious mistake on an important project. The most successful people make well-considered decisions, do their best to implement what they believe is the best course of action, and handle any negative feedback or difficulties with grace and courage.

Basic principles of Personal Accountability include:

- Successful people do things that failures don't like to do.
- People will rise to the level of high expectations.
- Practice is an essential element of commitment to excellence.
- Be true to your word and honor your commitments even when you don't want to.

Someone who has a strong sense of Personal Accountability will perform well even when expectations aren't clear, resources are hard to find and competition is tough. They see accomplishment of personal and professional goals as a fundamental part of who they are, and they behave consistently and efficiently to accomplish these goals, regardless of obstacles.

What skills are associated with Personal Accountability?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Personal Accountability:

- Accepts personal responsibility for the consequences of personal actions
- Avoids placing unnecessary blame on others
- Maintains personal commitment to objectives regardless of the success or failure of personal decisions
- Applies personal lessons learned from past failures to moving forward in achieving future successes

- Set your own goals, professional and personal.
- Tie your goals to the organization's key missions and values.
- Break large goals down into smaller tasks that build on one another.
- Work every day toward your goals.
- Make commitments and keep them. Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Be available to employees, peers and managers if they need to discuss difficult issues. Show that you can be trusted by never giving away confidential information.
- When facing a difficult decision, analyze different alternatives, consult with appropriate individuals within your organization, and then take decisive action on whatever decision you make.
- Be prepared to explain your rationale. Be open to others' reactions and help them come to terms with your decision if they don't agree with it.
- Learn from the wisdom of others. Ask people you trust for their opinions and value their advice.
- If you make a mistake, admit it. Then work immediately to put the fire out!
- Once you have remedied a problem, analyze the mistakes you made. Think about how you could have handled things better and work to implement your new ideas into your daily life.
- If you are over committed or truly can't handle another new task, say "no." If your manager demands that you pursue a new goal, make sure she understands how it will affect earlier directives you were given.
- "Don't shoot the messenger of bad news."
- If a problem is the result of something you did, work to solve it. If it is someone else's project, help him understand the problem and give advice if he asks for it.
- Stand up for others when they need support. Not only is it the right thing to do, but people you support will be more likely to support you when you need their help!
- Stand up for what you believe in. If you are asked to do something you believe is unethical, blow the whistle.
- If you don't approve of how something is being handled, suggest alternative ways of achieving similar goals if appropriate.
- Don't make excuses for things you haven't done. Just do your best to achieve them as quickly as possible.

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Activities

Activity 1: Goal Setting

Using the table below as a guide, make a list of your top goals. Once you have listed your goals, figure out how to measure your success at reaching that goal. Will you have succeeded when the annual report gets published? Will you have succeeded when an existing client comes to you for a new project? Will you have succeeded when you set up a committee to work on a new initiative?

Do your best to determine how to measure your success. Then, give yourself a reasonable deadline for accomplishing the goals you set. Some may have a deadline in the next few days, while others may not be completed until a year from now.

| Goal | What is Success | Due Accomplished |
|------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |

Activity 2: Practice Makes Perfect

For the next two weeks, keep a notepad with you at all times. Each time you promise someone something, write down what you promised and when you promised to have it done. Review your list regularly to ensure that you are addressing the promises you made.

Activity 3: Helping Someone Else

Think about someone at work who needs your support. Write down the issue she is struggling with and try to define several action items you can take to support her in her efforts.

Activity 4: Self-Reporting

List for yourself three examples of times when you believe you have displayed Personal Accountability, why it was necessary to accept responsibility and how you felt about it. Then, list three examples of times when you didn't display the appropriate Personal Accountability, why you should have and how you felt at the time.

| Situation/Responsibility | Repercussions | Degree of Difficulty in Accepting Responsibility (1= Least difficult and 10= Most difficult) | How Felt at the Time |
|--------------------------|---------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |

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| 3. | | | |

