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**KCS**

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## Let's Talk About Accountability & Leadership

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**Accountability is a pre-requisite for promotability to begin with, but even more, it's about expanding your leadership capacity.**

In his book, [The Next Level](#) by Scott Eblin, he talks about the difference between responsibility and accountability being the difference between doing and leading. "Too many new executives continue to spend time acting directly in the realm of their functional expertise"... "but are now accountable for seeing that others deliver multiple streams of work". By the way, I highly recommend the book for leaders moving up the ladder.



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## Let's look at a few areas where accountability can be a challenge:

1. For yourself
2. When it's a direct-report
3. When it's a peer
4. When it's someone above you

### **1. You must first be accountable in order to lead others to be accountable.**

What does it mean to be accountable? It's more than just getting things done. It is getting it done on time, up to or exceeding the level of quality expected, with enthusiasm, without complaining, without having to be reminded or coaxed and without worrying others that you aren't going to get it done because you do everything last minute. Doing the complete job also means going above and beyond and including additions that others will be grateful for but not necessarily expecting. It might be things like supplemental information, visuals, added references, links, or tools that will help people use what you're giving them. Open your eyes and ears and pay attention to ways to bring added value to the work you do. It will be noticed.

**How do you handle others' lack of accountability and cooperation?** Maybe they just don't embrace accountability, they are a bit lazy doing the bare minimum or they push their work onto others. There are different strategies depending on their related status.

### **2. When it's a direct report who you supervise:**

**Holding people accountable begins with your responsibility to set clear expectations.** If you are not clear in laying out all six elements of good goals, (see my article "[Top Down Bottom Up Goal Alignment](#)") then you give them the opportunity to say something wasn't clear or they didn't understand that was what you wanted. By the way, I have added a 6<sup>th</sup> element to the 5 Elements of Good Goals, which is the "WHY" which is incredibly important that people

the C-Suite who are seeking a new position or promotion, internally or externally, and those starting a new role. Let me share a little about the process I use to help you land in the RIGHT job and then start strong to show that you were the right choice!

**First**, I will work with you to understand and help you get clear about what you want.

**Second**, I am skilled at helping you uncover strengths and skills you don't recognize in yourself. I'll show you how to dig deep and raise your awareness of the value you bring to a potential employer.

**Third**, it's not enough to recognize your value. I will help you develop your "elevator pitch" and learn how to characterize and communicate your value, skills and strengths in ways that cause networking contacts, interviewers and hiring managers to sit up, take notice and remember you in a very positive way.

**Fourth**, I will show you effective ways to broaden your network and open doors.

**Continually**, I will be a thought partner through your job search or promotion process and beyond. I will help you

understand for any goal or task. Here's the [link to my form](#) for writing those goals and presenting them to folks. Be sure they understand this form is for your clarity in communicating and not because you don't think they can follow directions without it (even though they might not). Some people can be offended by receiving the form if you don't explain.

Once you've set clear expectations, **it's also your job to follow-up periodically** (usually at agreed upon times) and don't just accept the answer, "Oh, everything's on track". Ask them to show you or tell you or walk you through what steps they've taken, what is done and their next steps. If they are being vague, that's probably a clue that you need to really see what they are doing. **This is your opportunity to re-set where needed and correct course** if they're not on it. Don't let them off the hook. Others are depending on you to properly manage your own direct reports for good results. Feedback is critical. If they are not hitting the intermediate targets for your check-in times, you need to be clear and assertive in terms of where they are meeting expectations and where they need to step it up.

### ***3. When it's a peer:***

**It's still good to communicate up front and together set the expectations and clarify each of the elements of the goal.** Confirm them all in an email or a joint document. Don't leave things open to interpretation or assumption. **If you can't get an agreement with them, at least document what you need from them** for your part, so they cannot later tell a boss something different. **If you find they are not holding up their end of the plan,** ask what's getting in the way, how you can help, etc. and also let them know your needs and deadlines and the why behind how their work impacts yours. Also, it's good to give yourself buffer time in the deadlines you share with others.

Another technique is to **find an alternative way for them to meet your needs.** Maybe you do more work up front to make it easier for them to do their part. Sometimes you can reorganize the work or pre-populate forms or data to help make their part easier.

strategize for interviews, serve as a consultant in preparing for and negotiating job offers, and walk you through a process to prepare for your first days on the job and make onboarding a tool you use to fast-track your success in the first few months.

**Reach out for a complimentary call and let's chat.**

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AND SHARE!**

Since 2016, Joy has been publishing monthly articles to address everyday challenges in the workplace which are common to many. Often, topics come from you, her readers and clients. These articles are designed to help you, your direct-reports, peers and leaders. Feel free to download and share them.

Click [here](#) to go to the library!

People tend to procrastinate when they don't know where to start or they feel overwhelmed. **See my article** [“Delegation Made Easy with Great Results”](#).

**In approaching a peer – take them to lunch to talk about it.** Be tactful about how you raise the subject or suggest they are not doing their part. Start with a question. For example, “How are you feeling about the project status?” If they think everything is fine, then explain you're not quite experiencing it the same way. Then they'll give you the opening to share what you need. Or, they may share information that helps you understand why they haven't gotten to it and what their intentions are.

#### ***4. When it's someone above you:***

Yes, this is a whole lot trickier. **It still starts in the same place, by jointly agreeing on expectations using the six elements and confirming in writing.** A gentle reminder before their piece is needed is helpful. Be tactful. Remind them of your need and ask if they're still able to get to it or if you need to go in a different direction? **Sometimes you may need to get creative and find a way around that person or have a back-up plan.** With a leader above you, I would suggest **doing as much as you can and asking their help with just the part you cannot do.** You may also ask if there's someone else who has the knowledge, information or skill who could help.

#### ***In General:***

- Always set clear expectations up front.
- Check-in with folks well in advance of deadlines.
- Organize things for others if you are delegating.
- Be prepared with a back-up plan.
- Think about creating incentives at every level – what is the positive outcome for them by doing the work?
- Hold direct-reports accountable, including, if necessary, by meeting with HR, putting them on an improvement plan or implementing consequences.

## Accountability from the beginning sets the tone so be clear, precise and informative!

Would you like to chat? Reach out for a complimentary call with me.

### Joy Conley Kacik

Joy is a conference speaker, team and leadership development consultant, customized trainer and facilitator and a Certified Professional Coach with expertise in personal career coaching, job offer and salary negotiations and leadership coaching.

As an Insights Discovery® licensed practitioner, Joy provides clients the added value of the Discovery® Portfolio of tools when working with individuals, teams, leaders and organizations to create inspiring visions for collaborative, cohesive teams to produce superior results.

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