

Why put up with the broken promises, missed deadlines and bad behaviour that hold your business back?

When thinking about the focus of your business ask yourself the following question:

Holding people to account can be difficult. How good are you at turning accountability conversations into positive learning moments that result in a positive outcome and a stronger relationship with your people?

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STOP diving into accountability conversations unprepared

START by working on yourself first before you engage your mouth

1. The one 'Accountability' question you must ask to make sure you never again avoid a crucial conversation nor end up in a hostile confrontation

Holding people to account can be difficult. How good are you at turning accountability conversations into positive learning moments that result in a positive outcome and a stronger relationship with your people?

Where is the value in this question?

The value in this question prompts you to investigate how to make these vital conversations work better for you, your people and your business.

If an IT company can see quality improve by 30%, productivity go up 40%, and costs go down 50%, all because of a modest (22%) improvement in accountability, then shouldn't you improve your accountability skills too?

And when a large telecoms company improves the structure of accountability conversations and productivity from the same people improves by 40%, it's worth taking accountability skills seriously.

Below you'll find exercises and insights to share with your team, so that you too can tap into the business improvement possibilities that breakthrough accountability can bring your business.

IMPORTANT:

This question is about getting you to see a way to both get your people to improve AND to build stronger relationships too. Your business will then naturally perform at a higher level and deliver you improved results.

2. Two videos give you a deeper understanding about the value of accountability and how you can become stronger at these important accountability conversations

In this TedX talk Susan Juris shows how the workplace is either a source of personal improvement or the workplace inhibits people's improvement.

This important presentation also explores how important your approach to accountability is to helping your people develop so that your business develops too.



<http://bit.ly/susanjurisaccountabiity>



Accountability is the definition of a 'Crucial Conversation' and here's Joseph Grenny talking about mastering the art of crucial conversations.

It's an educational video that's also very funny in parts with some amazing accountability insights!

Joseph Grenny is one of the founders of [VitalSmarts](http://VitalSmarts.com) and author of 'Crucial Accountability'.

<http://bit.ly/crucialaccountabilitytalk>

3. Accountability checklist to guide your accountability conversations – start well...

To do or not to do – should you be tackling the under-performance that’s bothering you?

“...how do you know if you’re not speaking up when you should?”

“...how do you know if you are speaking up when you shouldn’t?”

Every circumstance is different, but it pays to stop and think before you act – should you or shouldn’t you? Going to silence, as described in the queue-jumping example in the Business Bitesize report, is always questionable. To help you get started the ‘Crucial Accountability’ authors suggest you use the contrast principle to create a ‘safe’ conversation. Take a look at this suggested accountability conversation starter below...

“I don’t want you to think I’m unhappy with how we work together. Overall, I’m very satisfied with things. I just want to talk through how we get your reports done on time.”

Notice how this opening uses the safety first **‘don’t want’** phrase to start the conversation gently and then is backed up with the phrase **‘I just want to...’**. This helps you talk about the gap between what was promised or expected and what actually happened.

Remember – your preparation is key:

A. Don’t rush in. Slow down! “Speed rarely leads to careful thought”

Imagine the distress a parent has when their daughter misses the midnight curfew agreed and promised earlier in the evening.

As soon as she returns, over an hour late with her dislikeable boyfriend, it’s easy to dive into a heated and confrontational argument.

But first take time to unbundle the problem...

B. Choose THE RIGHT PROBLEM

If you don’t consciously choose the right problem to focus on, you either end up going after the wrong issue or too many issues. Work out what’s bothering you the most from your **CPR** options:

- i. Is it a content issue – **C** – what just happened?
- ii. Is it a pattern issue – **P** – what just happened again?
- iii. Is it a relationship issue – **R** – what’s happening to strain the relationship?

C. Investigate THE CONSEQUENCES

Think about a work-related problem concerning a particular individual/colleague and along with your **CPR** guidance be curious and clear about the consequences created by the 'gap' in expected behaviours and outcomes:

- i. Work out the consequences of the behaviour for yourself – consequences on your customer, on your colleagues on you personally and on the individual
- ii. Ask the individual/colleague about the consequences of their behaviour – what do they see as the consequences on the customer, on their colleagues on you personally and on themselves?

D. Investigate THE INTENTIONS

Along with your **CPR** guidance be curious about the intentions around the behaviours and outcomes:

- i. Work out the possible intentions behind the behaviour for yourself – what do you think are the reasons for the behaviour?
- ii. Ask the individual/colleague about the intentions behind their behaviour – what outcomes were they hoping for or expecting from their behaviour?

E. Get clear about what you WANT and DON'T WANT

- i. What do you want and don't want for you?
- ii. What do you want and don't want for your colleague?
- iii. What do you want and don't want for your other colleagues?
- iv. What do you want and don't want for your customers and other stakeholders?

F. Agree next steps

- i. What is needed to rectify the current situation together?
- ii. What is needed to improve if the situation arises again – knowledge, skills training, mentoring and support?

4. Case study examples showing how accountability done well provides business breakthroughs

In the book 'Crucial Accountability' by the brilliant people at [VitalSmarts](#) the authors describe the positive business consequences from improvements in accountability skills and processes.

You're seeing these out of context here which is why we recommend you get yourself a copy of the book and consume the stories in and around the accountability skills we can't do justice to in the few pages here.

- a. 40 percent productivity increase seen by a telecoms company that saw a modest improvement in accountability measured at 18 percent.
- b. Whenever the authors and researchers asked about the most valuable employees they were usually the ones that were better at the accountability skills described in the book.
- c. For every 1 percent improvement in accountability a defence contractor saw a £1 million (\$1.5 million) gain in productivity.
- d. And how many lives are saved when hospitals improve compliance with hygiene protocols (by having accountability conversations) from 70 percent to nearly perfect.

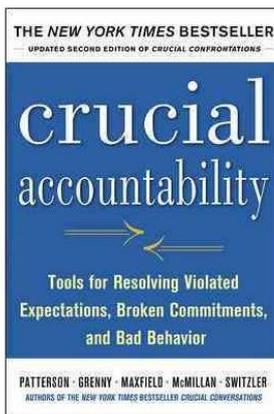
On reading 'Crucial Accountability' it's clear that seeing accountability conversations as a way to improve performance through skill, knowledge and system improvements PLUS a way to improve working relationships will bring success to you, your team and your business.

Couldn't your business benefit from such skills, improvements and relationship improvements?



5. The books and resources to help you master the art and science of breakthrough accountability

Kerry Patterson and Joseph Grenny: *Crucial Accountability: Tools for Resolving Violated Expectations, Broken Commitments and Bad Behaviour.*

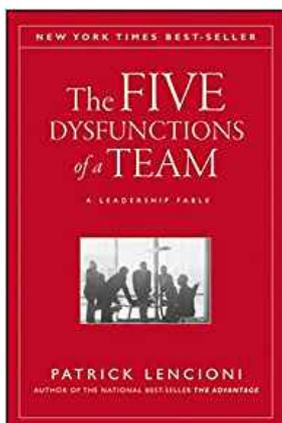


Harvard Business Review declared this book a must read stating: *Broken promises, missed deadlines, poor behavior—they don't just make others' lives miserable; they can sap up to 50 percent of organizational performance and account for the vast majority of divorces. Crucial Accountability offers the tools for improving relationships in the workplace and life and for resolving all these problems—permanently.*

You can get the book here:
<http://bit.ly/crucialaccbook>

Another publication that you may find of interest is:

Patrick Lencioni: *The FIVE dysfunctions of a TEAM.*



George Ambler, a banking business leader is a fan of this book: *The book is a small and easy to read and the model provided is simple to understand, making it a powerful tool for helping teams improve. I highly recommend this book to anyone who leads a team. This book will help you understand what a successful team looks and feels like.*

You can get the book here:
<http://bit.ly/5dysteambook>