

Accountability

Competency Development Activities

Competency Definition

Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely and cost-effective results; determines objectives, sets priorities and delegates work; accepts responsibility for mistakes; complies with established control systems and rules.

Developmental Activity Levels

All (A)

Applies to all competency levels

Beginner-Basic Knowledge (B)

A person at the Beginner-Basic Knowledge level has limited experience applying the competency. He/she applies general knowledge in common situations but has limited practical experience in applying the competency in a work environment presenting more complex situations.

Mid-level (M)

A person with mid-level proficiency has applied the competency repeatedly and successfully in the performance of his/her job but still has much to learn about the advanced aspects or behaviors associated with the competency. A person at this level can usually apply the competency on his/her own.

High (H)

A person at the High level has extensive knowledge of and experience with this competency and can apply the competency exceptionally well on the job without assistance. At this level one is an expert and has enough experience to teach the competency to others.

Articles, Books, and Websites

B R. Nelson and P. Economy, John Wiley & Sons: Managing for Dummies (2nd Edition), January, 2003.

Quick and easy reference guide covering key topics associated with achieving results. Provides anecdotes and checklists on goal setting, monitoring, providing feedback and inspiring employees to better performance. A useful reference for new managers and a refresher for all managers.

B Clinton O. Longenecker and Jack L. Simonetti, Jossey-Bass, Inc: Getting Results: Five Absolutes for High Performance, June, 2001.

Two thousand high-performing managers show readers how to improve their own performance,

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as well as that of the people for whom they are directly responsible. They show how managers can elicit high performance and improve results, by building a model of key practices, what they call the "five absolutes".

B Allen, David, Viking Press “Getting Things Done”: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity, January, 2001.

This book provides insights into attaining maximum efficiency and relaxing whenever one needs or wants to. The author offers tools to focus energies strategically and tactically without letting anything fall through the cracks. He provides tips, techniques, and tricks for implementation of his workflow management plan, which has two basic components: capture all the things that need to get done into a workable, dependable system; and discipline oneself to make front-end decisions with an action plan for all inputs into that system.

M Niven, Paul R., John Wiley & Sons: Balanced Scorecard Step-by-Step for Government and Nonprofit Agencies, June, 2003.

Balanced Scorecard Step-by-Step for Government and Nonprofit Agencies identifies the opportunities-and helps eliminate the obstacles-of bringing the popular and proven Balanced Scorecard approach to public and nonprofit organizations. The author shows how to translate today's leading results-based management methodology to these vital sectors and effect a truly transformational change in the way your organization measures, manages, and accomplishes its goals.

M Mackenzie, Melody and Mackenzie, Dr. Alec, AMI Publishing, “Investing Time for Maximum Return”, June, 1995.

This book shows employees' time-saving tactics for optimizing work performance and increasing the company's bottom line. Time-preservation strategies put employees in control of schedules, goals, and their personal success.

M Smith, Douglas K., John Wiley & Sons, Make Success Measurable! A Mindbook-Workbook for Setting Goals and Taking Action, February, 1999.

Use this guide to emphasize outcomes as opposed to actions in setting goals and avoid activity-based goals that can go on indefinitely. Articulate aggressive outcome-based goals which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

M Hale, Judith, Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, Performance-Based Management: What Every Manager Should Do to Get Results, October, 2003.

With the help of the tools, techniques, and guidelines covered in this book, you will be able to facilitate the deployment and adoption of major initiatives; assess the worth of an opportunity or problem and recommend an appropriate array or combination of solutions.

M Schaffer, Robert H., “Demand Better Results - and Get Them”, HBR On Point Article,

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August, 2000. HBR 4495

The author states that few organizations reach their productivity potential because most leaders fail to establish expectations of performance improvement in ways that get results. To set high goals that employees respond to and are accountable for, managers must invest their own time and energy. The first step is to set a modest, measurable goal concerning an important organizational problem.

H Robert Simons, Levers of Organization Design: How Managers Use Accountability Systems for Greater Performance and Commitment, Harvard Business School Press, July, 2005.

The design of an organization--the accountability system that defines roles, rights, and responsibilities throughout the firm--has a direct impact on the performance of every employee. In this book, a new design theory is presented based on four key yet often underrated categories: customer definition, critical performance variables, creative tension, and commitment to mission. Building from these core areas, the author lays out a step-by-step process leaders can follow to create structures and accountability systems that positively influence how people do their work, where they focus their attention, and how their activities can be aligned to contribute to overall strategic goals.

Activities

B Create a consistent process for prioritizing work on a daily or weekly basis.

B If your job requires you to track or maintain a regulated process, then establishing your own checks and balances system.

M Implement periodic time-outs to regroup, recognize individual and team accomplishments, and reinforce the payoffs of staying focused.

M Volunteer to help review and identify discrepancies/ differences in key documents to ensure understanding of important details and changes.

M Consult with your manager on the extent of authority available to you in making unilateral decisions. Do not be daunted by the prospect of making important decisions.

M Work with your team to discuss and agree on measurement and evaluation criteria for group goals at the outset of a project.

Coaching Suggestions for Managers

M/H Ask staff members to develop compelling visible ways of tracking and publicizing progress against goals on projects and assignments. Encourage them to involve their team in the generation of innovative approaches that will motivate team members to achieve targets and milestones. Ask them to think through what they will do to overcome problems or shortfalls in

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order to keep the team motivated and identify solution alternatives and action steps to achieve results. Encourage them to plan how they will work and win as a team.

M/H Ask staff members to identify measurable goals and objectives at the start of any new assignment or project and to describe how and when they will measure progress against them. Ask them to identify what they will do to ensure that they achieve or exceed their measurable targets. Agree on their measurement and evaluation criteria at the onset of their assignment/project.

M/H Each time colleagues or direct reports take action to meet a short-term objective, ask them to identify a long-term goal to which the action can contribute. Encourage them to maximize the benefits from their activities by always trying to accomplish more than one goal.

M/H Empower your employees to do more. Review your employees' assignments and duties to see if they would be able to assume more authority or responsibility. Employees who are performing well, especially at tasks they have been performing for a long time, may be ready to assume greater responsibility and decision-making authority. Discuss possibilities with them to determine opportunities that will enable them to learn, gain visibility, and add to the high performance of the organization.

M/H Have staff members commit to personal accountability at the start of a new assignment or project by agreeing to analyze what happened when issues or problems arise, to identify what they could have done differently to prevent or deal with the issue or problem, and to identify what they will do differently in the future based on their experience in this situation.

M/H Have staff members identify milestones for a complex project together with their team members. Encourage them to set challenging but achievable targets. Have them review progress against milestones with their team on a regular basis and problem-solve issues/problems that pose threats to meeting milestones. Have them keep you informed of progress without you having to ask them about it.

M/H Have staff members plan and implement specific ways that they will recognize team members' efforts and successes in achieving results at the start of a project or assignment.

M/H Have your staff establish a peer process for reviewing the effectiveness of the goals that they set. Encourage them to ask tough questions to reality test how challenging their goals are, how they will be measured, and how each individual or team plans to ensure their achievement of the goals.

M/H Require staff members to suggest action plans for any aspect of a project or initiative that is missing deliverables, timelines or other objectives.

M/H Require that team members present plans that have milestones, progress checks and contingency plans built in. Review and critique the plans individually and maintain a copy of the latest draft. Ask the individual for updates informally during conversation or formally

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during team meetings.

M/H Set the performance expectation that staff members will provide status updates on important projects or deliverables in advance of deadlines. Require advance warning on issues or problems that will impact completion of tasks by agreed upon deadlines. Remind staff that identifying problems or potential delays in schedules ahead of time is considered effective management, while failing to surface them early is not. Also require that staff members propose solutions when raising problems.