



The 100% Responsibility Bus

Have you ever wondered why it is so hard to get others to be responsible? Why is it so hard to get employees to do their job and meet their commitments in a timely manner? Why is it that people say they are going to do something and don't?

The challenge of creating 100% responsibility is an issue that small, medium and large companies all share. The art of getting individuals to be responsible and live up to their commitments is a key component of both successful management and coaching.

I am frequently asked, "How do I get my employees (or for that matter my child) to be responsible? How do I get them to help clean up the mess even when they don't make it?"

Contrary to what you might think, the answer is not through training. You do not need a training program called "pick up the piece of paper in the hallway." There is no need to design a five step program. At the very core, it is the culture that is lacking in responsibility.

To get everyone on your 100% responsibility bus, you need to consider why they are not taking ownership in the first place. Here are some norms that demonstrate less than 100% responsibility, along with some easy-to-apply solutions:

1. When people don't feel that they are apart of something bigger than themselves – e.g. "all I do is clean rooms" - they don't get connected to the real purpose of your business and how they contribute to it.

SOLUTION: Talk big about the impact of their work on the overall business and they will play big.

2. Many times people have not been responsible in the past, so they ride the wave hoping that it won't come up again. When you create an environment without follow-up, you create an "it isn't my responsibility" environment.

SOLUTION: Set up accountability before the work begins.

End every conversation with three questions that set up accountability:

- What will you do?
- By when will you do it?
- How will I know?

3. Your people think that you will buy their story hour...

SOLUTION: Stop asking them why they didn't (do something) and start asking what they will do.

- The attitude of "why" didn't you do something sets up the story and the excuse. The "why" doesn't matter, as it is focused on the past.
- "What are you going to do?" changes the conversation and puts the responsibility in their chair, not yours.

4. People are afraid to make a mistake or they just don't know what to do.

SOLUTION: Get curious and ask them how they will proceed.

- Take the time to work through the details. How will they get the work done before they start? Don't manage them, coach them.

- It is important to not coach on the fly. Take the time to hear the steps and approach. Ensure that the person responsible knows how to get the work done.
- Help them learn from mistakes. Mistakes can create a sense of empowerment or a sense of fear into the future. Your approach defines that impact.

5. There is no follow-through.

SOLUTION: Inspect what you expect. Then they will know that they are being held accountable.

- If you do not follow back to ensure that the work is complete, you can expect the same result next time.
- Follow through gives you a chance to anchor their impact, recognize good results and encourage and proactively deal with any problems.

Of course, you can just forget about these five approaches and stay ticked off?

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