

ACCOUNTABILITY TEAMS

Scientific research shows that we will be far more likely to achieve our goals if we have people holding us accountable.



It's fine if you have just one person who is keeping you accountable. However, research shows that this person will often let you off the hook if you fail to meet your goals. It's all too easy for both of you to lapse, and to accept each other's excuses for why you're not moving forward. The accountability breaks down; neither of you accomplish your goals.

Therefore it's best if you can have a team of at least 4 to 6 people who will hold you accountable. Patterson, Grenny, et al. found that having this many people who are supporting you, coaching you, and holding you accountable will increase your chances of success by more than 40 percent!

Furthermore, there are two other things that increase your chances of succeeding:



First of all, you need to have regular deadlines by which you will achieve milestones. You want to see continual progress – “small wins,” in the words of Michigan business professor Karl Weick. This notion of setting small, concrete, achievable goals has been validated in researched by Harvard Business School professors Teresa Amabile and Steve Kramer.



Next, it often works very well if there are consequences for failing to meet your goals. Psychologists have shown that humans are very sensitive to losses. For example, we are more likely to achieve a success if something is at stake. Some people put money on the line; they give their accountability partners a check made out to an “anti-charity” – a group that they hate!

If you fail to achieve your goal by the deadline, then your accountability partner will send your check in to the group that is completely opposed to all your beliefs and values! This may sound extreme, but it has proven extremely effective!

On the following page, list your accountability partners, your deadlines, and your consequences for failing to meet the deadlines.

WHO

Who will be your
Accountability partner

HOW

How often you will be
accountable

Specific deadlines by which you
will deliver measurable goals

WHAT

What are the
Consequences of
failing to meet the goal

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