

Hi, this is Wayne Rivers at FBI, and *We Build Better Contractors*.

This week, I want to talk about how the best teams hold themselves accountable. Why is this important to you? Well, golly, we all struggle with accountability in our organizations. The worst organizations don't have any accountability. Mediocre or average organizations have the boss holds people accountable, maybe. The best organizations hold themselves accountable. Everybody holds everybody else accountable. Lack of accountability is a negative that affects everybody in the workplace. And now, maybe we should try to define accountability a little bit. It's not butt chewing. It's not coming down on people like a ton of bricks. That's reactive. That's probably an overreaction in some cases.

Accountability is a value that everybody in your organization ought to share. Good people want to be held accountable. Employees that are marginal or worse just try to stay under the radar. They avoid detection. And if they can go undetected, they can be unaccountable. Accountable people do what they commit to, they accept responsibility for their own actions, and they help their teammates. So, accountability is more than just wagging the finger at somebody that did something wrong. It's about your culture in a way. So, three tips for how to get better accountability in your organization.

The first thing is no surprise here, it starts at the top. The leaders have to hold themselves accountable. They can't deflect. They can't shirk. They can't blame. They can't point fingers. They can't say, "Somebody didn't deliver for me." Uh-uh (negative). They have to be willing to receive feedback. Nobody can be accountable without being willing to receive feedback, right? And they have to create an environment, they have to nurture this accountability environment where it's okay for Dennis to call me out or me to call out John. That's just the nature of the organization you have to have if you want top to bottom and bottom to top accountability.

Second thing is you have to set and manage expectations. A few weeks ago, we talked about Chad Goodfellow's article, and he talked about having written roles and responsibilities. Well, you can't really set expectations, I don't think, without writing down what those expectations would be. How am I going to be evaluated? If I'm an employee and I work for you, I want to know, how am I going to be evaluated? I don't want any assumptions. I don't want to have to assume stuff. And I don't want you to be assuming stuff. We need to be clear on this. Roles, responsibilities, and accountability have to be spelled out. The team has to hold each other accountable. And there's got to be some structure to it. For what am I going to be held accountable? When am I going to have these formal meetings? What resources do I need to prepare for the meetings and to understand the nature of the periodic review? What milestones do I need to be hitting? How can I know if I'm on target, on schedule, or off target and I need to make some changes? So, all those things help set and manage expectations.

And the third thing is giving and receiving feedback. There's no accountability without feedback, right? So, there's got to be an element, a sense, an atmosphere of psychological safety in the organization. If I'm always afraid that that ton of bricks is going to fall on me, that's a tough place. If you're giving feedback, you got to keep some things in mind. It could be wrong. It could be inaccurate. You could have a misunderstanding of a circumstance. So, there's an occasion when you're trying to give constructive feedback and you might actually be wrong.

So, you've got to understand that you've got to be respectful when you're giving feedback, and you've got to focus more on listening when delivering feedback. So those of us in senior leadership, you're probably going to be giving feedback more than receiving feedback. So those are three key tips for you.

I'd like to know what you guys do. What's working for you and your organizations to hold yourself, the other leaders, and everyone of the organization accountable? How do you do it? What are your secrets? What are your tips? Share with us in the comments. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI, and *We Build Better Contractors*.