

Accountability

To
One's self, Co-Workers and the Business

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Introduction to Accountability

- A challenging issue for operations managers
- Highly personal
- About what you do, not what others do to you
- About opportunities you now have
- Not about opportunities you wish you had

Accountability

- ❖ Having responsibility
- ❖ Being answerable for the actions of others
- ❖ Accepting blame
- ❖ Being liable
- ❖ Also about being a manager who is a:
 - Visionary
 - Problem solver
 - People-helper

A note of encouragement

- Intended to be an encouraging session
- Make the topic a happy one for you
- This is about:
 - Helping people
 - Enjoying the people part of your business as much as the cows
 - Helping your business succeed because your people are succeeding
- Tom Wall says, "*Lead your people, your cows will follow.*"

Preview

- ▶ Sharing ideas for you to consider; not recipes for you to follow
- ▶ Drawing heavily on lessons I learned from managers and farm families, my life experiences and thoughtful people I know
- ▶ Goal is for you to leave here challenged and motivated to make handling accountability an important management strength

Some confidential questions to get you thinking

1. Do you often find someone to blame for problems on your farm?
2. Are your co-workers mostly people you are unable to trust?
3. Do you worry more about how you are going to get through today than about plans for the future?
4. Do responsibilities often overwhelm you?
5. Do you fear being liable for mistakes co-workers have made?

Implications of the results?

1. The more yes answers you have to the five questions, the more likely accountability is damaging your management success
2. Yes answers signal possible areas for corrective action back home
3. Important to believe you are capable of whatever changes may be necessary

4 questions to guide our discussion

1. For what and to whom am I accountable?
2. What is my plan for delivering more than promised or expected?
3. How am I actually doing compared to how well I planned to do?
4. What are my needed changes and corrective action?

Our first question

For what and to whom am I accountable?

For what am I accountable?

1. Leading
2. Building a farm culture that fits your goals (Culture is what we believe and norms of behavior on the farm)
3. Creating opportunities
4. Producing good outcomes given the opportunities
5. Success or lack of it
6. Operating within community and industry standards of responsibility

To whom am I accountable?

Session's title partially answers the question:

1. One's self
2. Co-workers
3. The business

But there's a bigger picture

1. Your family
2. The dairy industry
3. Society

Accountable to one's self

- If you don't manage your life and your career to accomplish your goals, no one will!
- Here is one of the happy parts of this topic – You make many choices yourself
- Perhaps your biggest choice – **Will you ignore your responsibilities or step up to the opportunities you have?**

Accountable to co-workers

- No business succeeds while its people are failing!
- As an operations manager, you are accountable to:
 - People you employ, lead and supervise
 - Other managers in the business
- They carefully watch, listen to and often follow what you are saying, doing and implying
- You communicate your attitudes more by what you do than what you say

Accountable to the business

- Cows, milk prices, weather, milking parlors, and barns make no management decisions
- It is operations managers who manage, i.e., **plan, organize, staff, lead and monitor**
- No business manages itself; management ***IS*** the managers' responsibility

Personalizing the first question

- ▶ For what do you feel accountable as an operations manager?
- ▶ To whom do you feel accountable?

Our second question

What is my **plan** for delivering more than promised or expected?

Delivering more than promised or expected

- ❖ Hardest part of exceeding accountability expectations is having a plan to do just that
- ❖ Delivering more than promised or expected is rarely accidental or due to luck
- ❖ "Success is when hard work meets opportunity"
- ❖ Planning IS part of this hard work

Some wisdom about planning

- ▶ "In battle, plans are worthless but I never go into battle without a plan."
General Dwight Eisenhower
- ▶ "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there."
Lewis Carroll
- ▶ "Understanding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) greases the planning gears."

Planning, guessing and passiveness

- ▶ Future cannot be known with certainty so:
 - A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow
 - Serious managers insist on planning so they can do better than guessing
- ▶ The process of planning matters more than the plan that is produced
- ▶ Without plans, managers are *allowing* things to happen to them

Personalizing the second question

- ▶ What is your short-run plan to start improving accountability?
- ▶ What is your longer-run plan to improve accountability?

Our third question

How am I actually doing compared to how well I planned to do?

Planned versus actual results

- This is a plea for measurement of results
- The question, "How am I doing?"
 1. Ask don't guess
 2. Look in the mirror
- Deal with facts not fiction

Is comparison of planned versus actual results necessary when:

1. A batter swings hard but misses every time
2. A student studies much but often fails exams
3. A worker is well trained but performs poorly
4. A manager plans well but does not deliver
5. An experienced worker refuses to change

Personalizing the third question

- ▶ Who are you going to ask, "How am I doing?" to help you better understand how others perceive you?
- ▶ How can I use an open mind to help understand my accountability problems?

Our fourth question

What are my needed changes and corrective action?

Change and corrective action

- ❖ Here is the heart of the accountability challenge
 1. Clearly understand needed changes
 2. Take the necessary corrective action, i.e., make the needed changes
- ❖ Understanding needed changes and taking action must happen while improving your:
 1. Self-esteem
 2. Support of co-workers
 3. Business

A change process

- ▶ Need a well-understood & easy process for change
- ▶ **Unfreeze-Change-Refreeze**
 1. **Unfreeze** → Paves the way for a new habit or way of doing things
 2. **Change** → Practice your new way
 3. **Refreeze** → Continuously reinforce the new habit or new way of doing things

Personalizing the fourth question

- ▶ What is on your list of needed changes for better accountability to yourself, to your co-workers and to your business?
- ▶ What is your plan for improvement during the next 12 months?

Some take home guidelines

1. Approach accountability as a happy challenge and an opportunity
2. Enjoy helping other people while helping yourself and the business
3. Remember unfreeze-change-refreeze
4. Learn how to be more successful this year than you were in previous years

Some take home guidelines

(Continued)

5. Learn to balance:
 - Career goals versus personal goals
 - Work life versus your family and personal life
 - Self-interests versus helping others
 - Work versus fun
6. Learn to leave the need to know everything about everything to somebody else
7. Avoid the curse of excuse-making to explain why change is impossible