

TIPS for HOLDING COWORKERS ACCOUNTABLE

- **Master the “hazardous half minute.”** Survive the first thirty seconds—when most accountability conversations fail—by creating safety. When you help people feel psychologically safe, they drop their defenses and listen. When you don't, they resist your influence and either blow up or clam up.
- **Stick to the facts.** Avoid false conclusions about why someone let you down—such as selfishness, laziness, or incompetence—by starting your crucial confrontation with the facts not judgments or accusations. Describe the gap between your expectations and what you observed.
- **Take charge of emotions.** When someone lets you down, avoid the tendency to feel disappointed and upset. Try to give the person the benefit of the doubt while you prepare to talk with him or her in a way that helps you draw accurate conclusions.
- **Pick the issue you really care about.** Most problems come in large bundles. A single infraction may include anything from a procedural violation to insubordination. Address the most important issue—not the easiest—and resolve the problem that really matters.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH. The study collected responses via an online survey of 215 individuals in December of 2006. Margin of error is approximately 3%.

LEARN NEW SKILLS. To learn how Crucial Accountability™ can help you hold coworkers responsible, visit www.vitalsmarts.com or call 1.800.449.5989.

According to our survey of more than 200 people, **69 percent** of employees who avoid confronting coworkers are avoiding issues of accountability, and half say the reason for shying away from these discussions about behavior, expectations, or performance is that they are afraid of a negative outcome—like making an enemy, enduring a miserable argument, or getting fired.

The survey also revealed the top four reasons people avoid crucial confrontations at work:

- 50 percent are afraid of a negative outcome.
- 16 percent don't know how to start, hold, or finish the conversation.
- 10 percent can't find a good time to talk.
- 10 percent don't think the other person will care about the problem.

What's more, 93 percent said not having these sticky, yet crucial, discussions has negatively affected the quality of their work life. Rather than hold their bosses or coworkers accountable, most people resort to a host of unproductive tactics such as working around or avoiding the other person, talking behind that person's back, or acting out their frustrations in other ways.

An innovator in corporate training and leadership development, VitalSmarts combines three decades of original research with 50 years of the best social science thinking to help leaders and organizations change human behavior and achieve new levels of performance. VitalSmarts has identified four high-leverage skill sets that, when used in combination, create healthy corporate cultures. These skills are taught in the Company's award-winning training programs and *New York Times* bestselling books of the same titles: *Crucial Conversations*, *Crucial Accountability*, *Influencer*, and *Change Anything*. VitalSmarts has consulted with more than 300 of the Fortune 500 companies and trained more than one million people worldwide. www.vitalsmarts.com

KEY RESULTS

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