

ACCOUNTABILITY, An Essential Element for High Performance

As I look ahead to the fall and winter and plan for what's to come I realize that it has been a while since I sat down and reviewed my yearly goals to see where I am at. It's easy to write down a goal and easier to forget about it, especially if it means changing habits or overcoming resistance. What's really needed is a system. What another system? The system I am referring to is ACCOUNTABILITY. Do we need more accountability in our lives, our organizations, with our kids? I think YES. How often do we plan to do something highly important and get caught in the urgency of firefighting problems that should not be there in the first place? It does give us plenty of excuses for why we couldn't accomplish the highly important task or goal.

I recently learned a new method for making myself and others more accountable. It is called behavioural contracting and was taught to me by Bob Davies, a trainer and coach based in the U.S. I tried his method and found it highly effective. To make this work you need to have someone, a coach or friend to work with you to form a behavioural contract. I wanted to achieve a goal of setting two new prospect appointments for my week. I made a contract with my coach and we agreed that if I did not achieve my goals, I would pay him \$100.00. The idea is that the anticipated penalty should be painful enough to make you take action to avoid it. Well last week I made three new appointments and in a shorter time than it would normally take.

I am now using this method with my 23 year old son. About a month ago we had sat down to talk about his goals for the fall and winter. One goal was to stop smoking cigarettes, but last week he was still smoking. When I brought up the subject, he was quick to moan about how difficult it is to stop and so on. I questioned if he really did want to quit and told him about the behavioural contracting approach to accountability. I used the example of my own contract with my coach to challenge him. We made a deal that he would stop smoking for 7 days beginning Sunday at midnight. The penalty is \$50 if he smokes. We are now Thursday and he still has not smoked.

Take a look at your one key goal you set for yourself this year, or set one now. My experience is that if we set and focus on one wildly important goal and take action towards achieving it, other areas of our lives or business improve as well. Here is an example. Let's say your goal is to better manage your time so you can spend quality time with your spouse or kids. If you were to re-phrase that to say, spend one evening alone with my spouse doing something we both enjoy. The outcome would be an improvement in the relationship but also improved time

management because in order to make it happen you would automatically arrange your schedule to be more productive or to delegate more responsibilities to others in your team so you could take stress free time with your spouse.

Now take that one wildly important goal and choose someone to make a behavioural contract with for the next 7 days. Make the penalty painful enough that you will really be motivated to avoid it. Put yourself on the line! You want change and improvement in your life? Try this approach and you'll see it is a much better bet than lottery tickets.

Need support to make yourself accountable? Give me a call and I will be happy to make a behavioural contact with you. Just have your credit card handy in case.

This month we are pleased to welcome a contributing article from Bernard Berzi of Bejicel Inc. who writes on production improvement methods for manufacturers. You can learn more about Bernard and Bejicel at www.bejicel.com

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