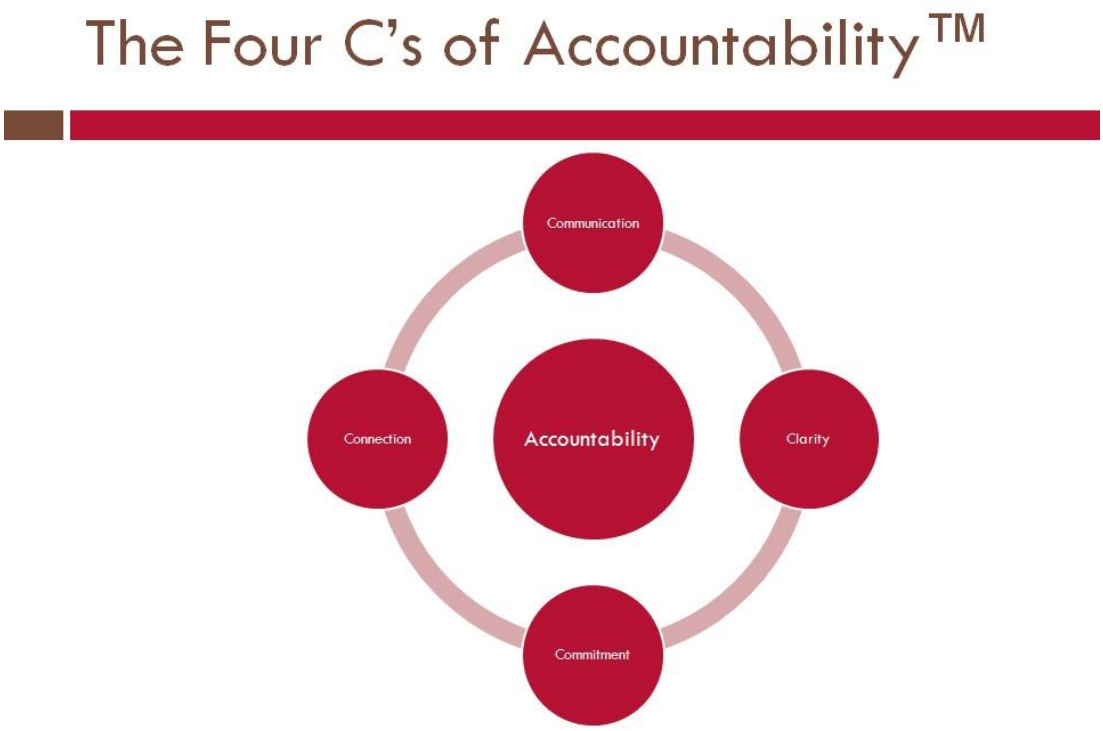
MONTHLY MUSINGS ON LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATIONS & COMMUNITY

From Roo to You

February, 2011

The Four C's of Accountability

Accountability – everybody talks about it, few organizations have it. What is this ethereal concept and how can we actually make it "real" in our organizations and our lives? While preparing a workshop on this topic I decided that if marketing can have the 4 P's (promotion, product, place and price), I could brand the 4 C's of Accountability: Communication, Clarity, Commitment, and Connection. I am most grateful to my colleagues who have helped me refine this concept and improve the content of the monthly workshop series.



We hope this month's newsletter encourages you to hold yourself accountable, and provides a common language to bring into your organization to implement effective accountability systems. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

For You: Accountability Self Check

Whether communicating up, down, or across your organization, self accountability is critical. We all must

"walk the talk" before we can expect others to be accountable. Consider the amplification effect we discussed in last Suit Up and Show Up newsletter. Take a moment to complete this Accountability Self Check to assess your current state of Accountability:

http://www.meetup.com/Roo-Solutions-Community/files/

If there are changes you would like to make, what is the first step? Who will you share this with that will hold you accountable?

For Your Organization: Integrating the 4 C's intro everyday operations

Theories and models are easy to talk about and challenging to implement. Sustaining progress and truly integrating concepts into an organization is even more difficult. Using the approach of "simpler is better", below are some suggestions for implementing and sustaining a culture of accountability in your organization.

Communication

- Communication is ongoing. The first time you communicate a request, it may not be perfectly executed or completed at all. Think about how this person communicates best – orally, in writing, visually, etc. Communicate in a way that is meaningful to them, and follow up to ensure progress and provide course corrections, if necessary.
- Communication is a dialogue. "Tell and Sell" is not an effective strategy for accountability. Provide the listener the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns. Most importantly, be available to the listener.
- Communication requires mutual understanding. We may not always come to consensus (indeed, too much consensus can be detrimental in an organization), but we do need to come to a mutual understanding of decisions made, priorities and action steps.

Clarity

- Clarity requires more than a magic wand. Most of us think we are crystal clear in communicating our requests. Remember that no one else is inside our head, and what is obvious to you, may not even be on the receiver's radar. Take time to prepare your message to

ensure effective communication of the task, outcome, priority and deadline.

Commitment

- Gaining commitment is essential. How often have you left a meeting with a clear decision, only to find that nothing really happens. Silence does not signal agreement, and lack of debate does not equal commitment. Even when people disagree with a decision, it is important to ensure commitment to implementation after the meeting. Subtle sabotage ("I never agreed to that" or an attitude of ignore it and it might go away) has derailed many a decision.

Connection

- People, not meeting minutes, are accountable. Anyone who knows me well, realizes I am the queen of meeting minutes. One decision, one owner, one deadline. Do or do not, there is no try. If two people own it, nobody owns it. Nonetheless, writing it down it not sufficient. Making an effort to connect with the person behind the action item will both cement your relationship and increase the likelihood your request will be completed. Take the time to understand the other person's priorities and responsibilities, and how your request fits into those accountabilities.

- What's in it for me? As a leader, we have the authority to declare "thou shall" and thou "shall not" to a certain extent. This approach will solicit compliance, but probably will not result in the person exerting any discretionary effort. Take the time to communicate the "why" behind the request – why is it important to the organization or department, and how it will help the individual.

We invite you to attend our March 8th Accountability Workshop, or contact Roo Solutions if you are interested in bringing an Accountability workshop into your organization.

http://www.roosolutions.net/Downloads/LIALeadership.pdf