



Creating a Culture of Accountability...a Winning Strategy Supported by Scorecards

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John Wooden, nicknamed the "Wizard of Westwood," is arguably the greatest basketball coach in history. According to his biography in Wikipedia, in a 12-year period as the coach for the UCLA Bruins, Wooden won ten NCAA Championships including a record setting seven in row. He gained lasting fame with UCLA, winning 620 games in 20 seasons including four perfect 30-0 seasons. Within this period, his teams won an NCAA men's basketball record of 88 consecutive games. Wooden has been inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame as both a player (1960) and coach (1973), the first person ever enshrined in both categories. In 2003, John Wooden received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, from President George W. Bush.

When Wooden arrived at UCLA for the 1948-1949 season, he inherited a little-known program that played in a cramped gym. He had immediate success posting a 22-7 record in his first year and transforming the program into the Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) champion. Prior to Wooden's arrival at UCLA, the basketball program posted a 12-13 record the previous year and only two conference championships in the previous 18 seasons. Not only was Wooden successful on the court, but he also influenced the lives of countless people in all walks of life. He was beloved by his former players, among them Lew Alcindor (later Kareem Abdul -Jabbar) and Bill Walton, to name a few.

Born in 1910 in Indiana, Wooden grew up on a farm with no electricity. Every day, early in the morning, he would milk the cows and do other chores before going to school. His father was one of his most important mentors and had a significant influence on his values. Wooden played basketball with his three brothers using improvised homemade material. In high school, he led his team to win the championship of Indiana in 1927. Enrolling in Purdue University, Wooden had a distinguished career. In his senior year, Wooden was considered the best college basketball player in the country and his team was voted national champion. Although he became famous for his coaching prowess, his playing career was also notable, including time as a professional player.

So, what made John Wooden so successful? What made him such an influential figure on and off the court? Accountability! In sports-101.com/john-wooden-coaching-philosophy, it is evident that through his 99-year life, Wooden demonstrated that being accountable to himself, his teammates, players, family, and friends produced outstanding results. Not only did Wooden have an enviable work ethic, but he also had a seven-point creed, which he read every day:

1. Be true to yourself.
2. Make each day a masterpiece.
3. Help others.
4. Drink deeply from good books, especially the Bible.
5. Make friendship a fine art.
6. Build a shelter against a rainy day.
7. Pray for guidance and give thanks for your blessings every day.

Wooden's simply motivational sayings are applicable today and known as *Woodenisms*: "Success comes from knowing that you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming."

Since his days on the farm in Indiana, Wooden searched for the meaning of success and how to achieve it. If he were here today to give us one nugget of wisdom, it would surround the fact we must be accountable for ourselves and stop making excuses for falling short of our expectations!

Accountability vs. Responsibility

Diffen.com explains that accountability is the action of being held responsible for the results obtained after performing an activity. The word accountable means being answerable for actions or decisions. In ethics and governance, it involves answerability, blameworthiness, and liability. The main difference between responsibility and accountability is that responsibility can be shared while accountability cannot. Being accountable not only means being responsible for something but also ultimately being answerable for your actions. Accountability is owned by you. Accountability requires you to successfully complete a task. So, what are the steps to hold someone accountable?

- Be clear.
- Follow up regularly.
- Share the brutal truth.

In the process of holding someone accountable, you have three choices: repeat, reward, or release. If you feel the other person lacks clarity on the task, repeat. If the task has been accomplished to satisfaction, reward. If the person is not capable of demonstrating accountability for a task, you have the option to release.

Accountability is not easy as it cannot be accomplished through edict. Rather, it is best taught through example by leaders who practice the principles they want their team to follow. While most business leaders preach the importance of holding employees accountable for their actions, far too many do not hold that same standard for themselves. The most successful leaders skip the blame and complain game, making things happen despite major obstacles. They follow through on their promises and remain committed to their own performance as well as others. Why? They want to meet or exceed organizational goals.

At Ollis/Akers/Arney -- a Best Practice Agency headquartered in Springfield, MO, Kevin Robbins, Chief Sales Officer has this to say about the importance of accountability, "It is the super sauce that builds mutual respect and energizes everyone on the team. It is exciting to be part of a culture of accountability where everyone works together to improve each day, overcome obstacles, and achieve personal and organizational goals!"

Creating a Culture of Accountability

So, what is culture and what does it have to do with accountability? Corporate culture is a set of values and principles that show up in the everyday behavior of your people. In many ways, culture is like personality. Culture is the outcome of a set of rules for working together and is so powerful that shapes your work environment, business relationships, and ultimately, how you serve the customer.

In today's competitive marketplace, it is essential that accountability is a fundamental principle within your organization's culture. You and your colleagues must understand where you fit into the firm's strategy for achieving results. This involves understanding the organization's vision and mission, your role within the firm, as well as the specific tasks or actions for which you are responsible. A culture of accountability can be shaped and molded. It is evidenced by the behaviors, beliefs, and values of every member of an organization.

Accountability Scorecard

In the April 2020 edition of *Rough Notes* Magazine, I authored an article entitled "Accountability Scorecard...Tracking Progress Toward Goal Actualization." I suggested that you embrace the concept of a scorecard as part of your accountability plan. Much like as you view a scoreboard in a stadium, an accountability scorecard is a visible indicator that measures and monitors the

results of your game. As a growth-minded industry professional, is it fair to say that you embrace a culture of accountability and as well as a desire to measure and benchmark organic growth, customer engagement, retention, cross selling, prospect pipelines, referrals, quality at bats, new business hit ratios, and more?

Here is what Matt O'Neill, Chief Experience Officer of Beyond Insurance, had to say about the importance of accountability scorecards, "An Accountability Scorecard is an essential element for achieving success in the business of insurance and risk management. Why? Because it serves as a means to measure the impact of your actions, behaviors, decisions, and ultimately, performance."

If you are interested in creating Producer and Agency Scorecards, I encourage you to reach out to Matt (moneill@beyondinsurance.com). Of interest, he recently engaged Smartsheet (www.smartsheet.com) to build prototype dashboards for both producer and agency performance.

Creating a culture of accountability...your winning formula to take your firm to the next level!

About the Author

Scott Addis, CPCU, CRA, CBWA, TRA is the CEO of Beyond Insurance and is recognized as an industry leader having been named a Philadelphia finalist for *Inc. Magazine's* "Entrepreneur of the Year" award as well as one of the "25 Most Innovative Agents in America." Beyond Insurance is a consulting firm that offers leadership training, cultural transformation, and talent and tactical development for enlightened professionals who are looking to take their practice to the next level. Since 2007, the proven and repeatable processes of Beyond Insurance have transformed individuals and organizations as measured by enhanced organic growth, productivity, profitability, and value in the marketplace.