Building a Culture of Accountability

KEY ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICES

1. **Start building a culture of accountability before the first meeting.** When you are talking with people who might join a network, confirm that they can commit the time and resources needed for success.
2. **When people commit to work in a meeting, follow up with them and remind them.** Immediately establish a pattern of people delivering on their commitments so that this becomes part of the group's norms. When you call and email them to make sure they will deliver that document on Tuesday, it sends a clear message that they are being held accountable for their commitments. And when people see others delivering on their commitments, they will do the same. Do whatever you need to do—early and often—to ensure that they deliver on time and to spec.
3. **Don't focus updates on what has not been done.** If someone hasn't done something they committed to do, just ask for a firm commitment to a new delivery date and specify to whom they will send the deliverable. Then follow up with them afterward to reconfirm. Don't spend the group's time on what didn't get done.
4. **Use a round robin method**. Have one person work on a product and send it to the next one when they're done, and so on. This creates a chain of accountability for people to get the work done so the next person can do his or her work.
5. **When people deliver, celebrate it!**
6. **If the group members fall into a pattern of not doing what they say they're going to do, raise this with the group.** For example, "I'm noticing a pattern of us committing to do things before the next meeting and not doing them. I'm concerned that this will impair our work together. Do you all share this concern?"

Remember that deep accountability emerges only when people feel like they are contributing meaningfully to meaningful work. Don't expect engagement and accountability from people who are being asked to contribute in marginal or transactional ways.

ELICITING ENGAGEMENT TO BUILD ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Pay attention to the energy throughout the meeting, including the pace that you set at the beginning.
2. Engage people early to speak by calling on them individually. Ask network participants to speak first, before backbone staff. When asking for opinions, call on network members by name to prompt their participation.
3. Keep updates at the beginning of a meeting very brief. Feature updates that will elicit excitement and momentum. You can have written updates in the agenda email they can read before or later.
4. Get into the meat of the meeting as soon as possible. This is why the people are participating and this will engage them the most.
5. Ask open ended, clear, directive, and engaging questions about content and strategy. "Ted said X, what does everyone think about that?" Use yes/no questions only to test or make decisions.
6. For Design Teams, only ask them to make decisions or give input on strategic issues. Spend the bulk of the time with them on content and strategy.
7. The backbone team can make the decisions around logistics. Inform and test for agreement on logistical questions at the end of the meeting.
8. Don't do all the talking to fill the silent moments during a meeting or after asking a question. If no-one responds to a question, just wait or call on people by name.

CoCreative™
WWW.WEARECOCREATIVE.COM