



CASE STUDY

Team Trust and Accountability Resulted in Most Profitable Year in 30 Year History

CHALLENGE

The obstacles in growth were:

- Lack of trust
- Lack of common goals (client satisfaction, organizational profitability, and growth)
- Lack of honest conversations about issues rather than people
- Lack of agreed upon and clearly communicated organizational processes

SOLUTION

Having first addressed trust and honesty as the new norm for executive meetings, Stambaugh next focused on systems:

- Identified ownership of tasks, expectations, timelines etc.
- Identified gaps in the hand-offs from one department to the next
- Introduced tools and practices to bring clarity and accountability to communication
- Focused on ownership of issues to replace blame

OUTCOMES

- Three years into the work with Stambaugh, the company had its most profitable year in its 30-year history
- Customer measures of satisfaction: 99% satisfied
- 15% reduction of costs on average in operational divisions
- The year following, by February the sales team had met its sales goals for that year

The Challenge

In the spring of 2016, the leadership team at Culinary Concepts gathered for their first meeting with Pamela Stambaugh, President and Founder of Accountability Pays.

The catering company had growth as an objective, and clientele ranging from major international and national corporations to local enterprises, providing off-site catering for groups ranging from 10 to 10,000 guests. This owner — CEO — knew she had successfully amassed a highly creative team of executives; five intelligent, passionate individuals. At issue was the group's ability to work together as a team focused on achieving the revenue and profit goals of the business.

Instead, executive meetings were unpredictable hotbeds of distrust and finger pointing. Although clients were satisfied as evidenced by verbal feedback, the company was not able to achieve growth and increase their capture of the industry's market share. Internally operating costs were rising, business opportunities were lost, and employee turnover was expensive.

It was immediately apparent to Stambaugh that individual department directors were not accepting responsibility for anything other than their own department, creating silos and distrust. The toxic culture of "my department did it correctly — the problem must have been your department" kept the company in a whirlpool of stagnation. It was not yet clear to them that the gaps in productivity were occurring in the transition from one department to the next, in the area often recognized as "that's not my job".

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The Process

As Stambaugh created a safe space and guided the owner and her directors through a series of deep, truthful conversations about the state of company processes, shared goals and accountability for them, the executive team began to take ownership of their results as a team and silos disappeared.

At the heart of their obstacles in growth were the following:

- Lack of trust
- Lack of common goals (client satisfaction, organizational profitability, and growth)
- Lack of honest conversations about issues rather than people
- Lack of agreed upon and clearly communicated organizational processes

To address these issues, Stambaugh began by facilitating conversations that allowed each of the directors and the owner to discover their own truths about accountability and their expectations of themselves and each other. One by one, Stambaugh introduced tools and practices to facilitate accountability. Through Stambaugh's feedback debriefings with each executive, authentic communication and taking responsibility became welcomed.

In this increasingly safe environment with team and individual coaching provided by Stambaugh, each executive moved from loyalty to their own department to loyalty to the organization as a whole. The presence of a new executive TEAM — “Together Each Achieves More” — began to emerge as the lens through which all actions and decisions were viewed.

With trust and honesty as the new norm for executive meetings, Stambaugh tasked each executive with identifying the processes (tasks, expectations, timelines, response times, etc.) of their department's contribution to the whole. As executives shared their processes (in the form of feedback loops), the gaps and leaks became visible, each leader became vulnerable and open, and productivity gaps were filled.

Team Results

By implementing the tools and practices learned from Stambaugh, the TEAM elevated the company's competitive advantage.

Pamela Stambaugh profoundly changed the culture of the company as follows:

- The TEAM developed a culture of trust and open communication
- The TEAM used metrics to chart common goals and make informed decisions
- The TEAM identified gaps in communication to shore up productivity and engagement
- The TEAM adopted a research-based assessment to pinpoint behaviors that needed improvement.
- The TEAM held each other accountable!

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Financial Results

- ✓ In 2019, the company had its most profitable year ever in its 30-year history
- ✓ Feedback was measured and confirmed 99% customer satisfaction
- ✓ In the operational divisions, costs were reduced by 15% on average
- ✓ By February of 2020, the company had already met its sales goals for the year

In Summary

By providing communication, execution, and optimization tools and practices, Pamela Stambaugh transformed Culinary Concepts leadership from a group of individuals into a team. Coming from anger and apathy to trust and honest communication about processes and goals, executive team meetings focused on accountability to each other and the company, and the shared excitement of the future of Culinary Concepts.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Pamela Stambaugh pstambaugh@accountabilitypays.com
(619) 231-0195