EXECUTIVE GUIDE – *Chapter 3 of 7*

Seven Costly Mistakes Executives Make that Cause Productivity, Performance and Profits to Suffer…

…and People Suffer TOO!

This Executive Guide features practical solutions that effective leaders can use to re-establish strong accountability in winning organizations.

ACCOUNTABILITYPAYS

One Conversation at a Time

Introduction

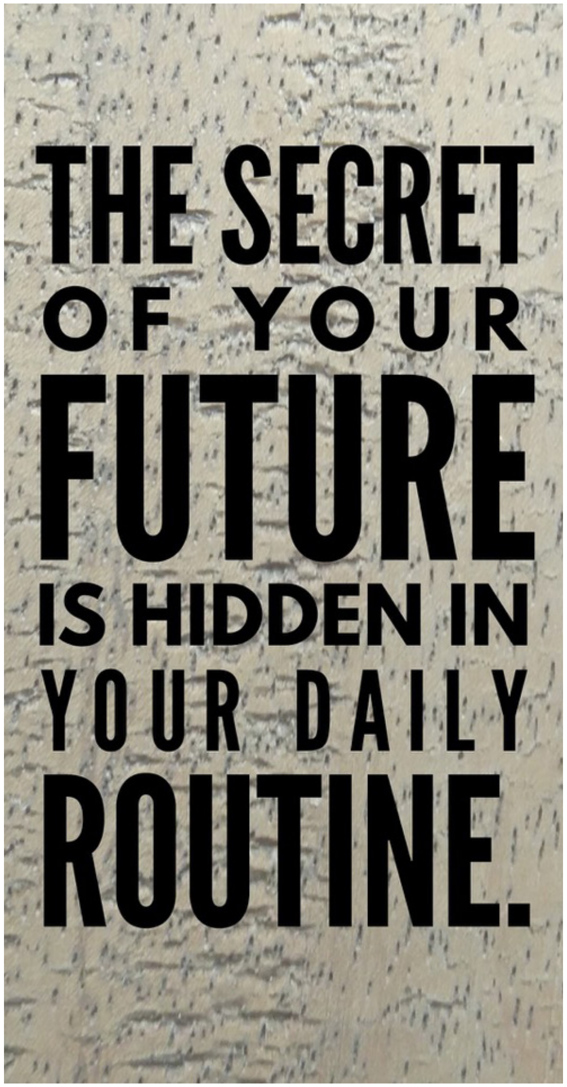
Performance is how well work is performed (quality). Productivity is how much work gets done (quantity).

People – the human spirits – are the source of the work that gets measured. My guess is that if you hold an executive position in an organization, you will find yourself in this report at least once. All personal stories are true accounts of real situations and real costs. Names changed to protect the innocent.

Every one of these seven costly mistakes finds its source in either faulty thinking or faulty communication or both.

Seven costly mistakes executives make that cause performance, productivity and profits to suffer.

1. **Poor communication, in particular:**
   a. Being unwilling to have difficult conversations
   b. Not communicating expectations
   c. Making statements when questions are in order
   d. Not Listening
2. **Acting as if your assumptions are the truth**
3. **Lack of focus and a plan**
4. **Lack of clear thinking that leads to poor decisions**
5. **Using the wrong measures of performance**
6. **Using poor systems (or environments) and expecting people to overcome them to produce superior results**
7. **Ineffective, off-putting or damaging relationship management with employees and/or service providers**



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Lack of focus and a plan

This is a particularly virulent problem today because the rules of the game are changing so quickly with the economic and regulatory environments shifting dramatically, especially post-Covid. Even the best of leaders could be lost, given the pillars of business have been challenged with the banking squeeze on lending, investor dollars shrinking, and the cost of worker's compensation and health insurance escalating. Commercial real estate hasn't even seen all the hardships that are to come.

It isn't even the plan so much that is of value, but rather the thinking process that gets an executive team to the plan.

With all those circumstances facing leaders, it is easy to be in reaction mode, function from fear, and spend insufficient planning time at the executive level. Too many priorities, communicated randomly cause mayhem when employees need confidence the most.

> *Nancy, the co-founder of the company, was arguably a genius – a most inventive person. She hardly had a day go by without a new idea and had filed many patents on her inventions. However, the company was substantially in the red financially.*
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> *When a new CEO came into Nancy's company, he questioned the 64 projects in development within Nancy's team. The CEO also noted that the company was experiencing high growth, however several customers of the company were complaining about the quality of service they were getting. Morale was bad and no one at the company was thinking strategically, they were merely responding to the daily "hair on fire" environment of too many projects.*
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> *The new CEO reduced the research team's projects to three and reorganized the company around planning and restructuring of the company to address the new growing markets. As a result, the company soared from an unknown laboratory*

to world leadership within three years. Productivity increased through intense training programs, active recruiting of top people to the company and open transparent communications that allowed all associates to participate in making changes in the company. The morale changed from rumors and gossip to one of teamwork and superior customer satisfaction.

The company made more money in the next three years than it had lost in the prior fourteen years.

I have spoken with leaders of all sizes of organization that operated without a business plan. Some have justification and validation for why their business is "too fast-paced" or some other perfect explanation. Others are more sheepish, recognizing the hole in their logic.

It isn't even the plan so much that is of value, but rather the thinking process that gets an executive team to the plan. Get away for a day or a weekend and be thoughtful about the future and how the company will get there. I have thought of writing an e-book called ***It's Not Rocket Science***, the point being if you go through the thinking process you will have to be more consciousness about moving forward than if you don't. Though it does require time and attention, planning provides the consideration for prioritization and for addressing changing environmental impacts.

Cost: Spread too thin, failure to develop adequately where strengths exist, putting the entire organization at risk; growing through the stages of an organization more slowly than could be possible with better focus.

Actions:

1. Follow a business planning process that includes formal steps that challenge your company's assumptions. Accountability Pays offers the CEO Tools™ structure, which stands for Communicate, Execute, and Optimize, a customized strategic planning process.
2. Speak and write so that what, by when, and the consequences get completely communicated.
3. Get into a peer group or hire a coach who will challenge your thinking.
4. Do your research.
5. Ask lots of questions.
6. Listen deeply and thoroughly. Value the opposing position for its contribution to deepening your thinking. Don't rely 100% on "data"; learn to check in to your inner sense of right and wrong, what "feels" right, balancing intuition with the facts. Appreciate your critics, they care enough to say what they see at great risk to themselves.
7. Make reflection time a regular part of your routine.
8. Close the door, turn off the phone, put your feet up, and spend time in deep, considered thought.

These are seven mistakes, and the truth is, we are all human beings, which means we're fallible. Human beings make mistakes. We have blind spots.

I offer an assessment that provides feedback on behavioral preferences and tendencies, including leadership paradoxes. **To learn more, go to https://accountabilitypays.harrisonassessments.com.** There, you can book a demo of the assessment with me. Or, you can go ahead and schedule a :30 discovery conversation right here.

Here's my online booking calendar - https://pamela-stambaugh.youcanbook.me

About the Author:

Accountability Pays President and Founder Pamela Stambaugh, has practiced as a Behavioral Change Master for over 25 years. Her focus is growing leaders inside growing companies, coaching and training in leadership mastery.

Client outcomes have included improving operating results, upgrading team performance, and creating a culture of trust and open, authentic communication. She has worked with global, small and mid-sized companies across many industries.

Her clients have included Kodak worldwide, SKF worldwide, Coca Cola in Greece, Efes Pilsen in Turkey, The Old Globe Theater, The Ken Blanchard Companies, GE Healthcare, CBIZ, and the University of San Diego, to name a few.

Pamela has spoken and trained around the world on topics related to accountability and developing high performance teams and is co-author of two business books. She is an ICF Certified Executive Coach, and a Certified Woman Owned Business. In 2023, she is Chair of the San Diego WBEC-West Forum, and is a member of the Board of Governors of the University Club atop Symphony Towers.

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