

A Quest for Accountability Solidifies a Management Team

When I took over this agency five years ago, I wanted to set up a system that would help us do a better job of tracking progress and holding ourselves accountable for results.

Also, we have 15 management-team members in three detached offices. I had a close relationship with some of them, but I rarely met with others, who ran their own areas. So I wanted to increase interaction and teamwork among our management team.

One of my fellow study-group members had told me about the periodization system of establishing four 90-day deadlines instead of focusing on one year-end goal.

I looked into the system and realized that it was just what we needed. At our annual planning meeting, I told my management team about the system and explained why I thought we needed to implement it. I brought information about it for everyone to read. We talked about it and discussed why it would be good for the organization. A couple of people got really excited about it, but others questioned why we needed it.

We all agreed to attend a two-day boot camp in January to try to determine a better way to execute our business plans. The meeting really got us all connected. Each team member had to financially invest in this program themselves. I asked for their commitment and told them that if we succeeded in integrating it, I would reimburse them 100 percent.

We left that boot camp with a personal and professional development plan for each one of us.

We wanted to be fluent in the new system before we rolled it out to the whole agency.

A couple of people who initially weren't sold on this system now say that it's the best thing we've ever done. Now we have weekly accountability meetings, and smaller groups do "daily huddles" for less than five minutes to talk about what our intentions were yesterday and what they are today. It has helped us create peer-to-peer accountability.

From a team-building standpoint, it's a way for us to increase personal accountability for ourselves and for our firm's 65 associates. Our entire focus is on 90-day periods, as opposed to focusing on one annual year-end goal. So we have a more intense focus on productivity and results. It's still too early for us to brag about grandiose results, but we're already seeing much more intensity and an increase in production because we have a new period to focus on every 90 days, or 13 weeks.

One of our sales managers took the concept and ran with it. He quickly transferred his whole office to periodization, and he has had quantum growth. We just ended our first 13-week period, and he shattered his goal. He's a winner anyway, but he wouldn't have had that much success in this particular period if it weren't for the periodization concept.

This couldn't have happened without buy-in from our entire management team. The team got behind the idea first, and we brought it to our firm together. Adopting the new system has not only brought our management team closer, but our entire firm is more attuned to our goals, and we are already seeing results.

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