Individual and Team Accountability

by Sophia

In this lesson, we'll discuss how the individual and team accountability on a project is critical to a project's success. It's the project manager's responsibility to obtain agreements on accountability from project team members and the project team as a whole. This tutorial will focus on:

1. Individual Accountability

Clear communication is an important aspect of good leadership. This includes communicating about expectations, rewards for success, and the consequences for work that doesn't succeed. In other words, each team member should understand what is expected of them.

One method to do this is through **individual accountability**. This can occur through verbal or written agreements with the project manager.

Accountabilities are often shared with team members in a kickoff meeting. It's important that each member knows the tasks they're required to complete, along with the time and resources available to complete the work. This should occur for every activity and task in the schedule. Whether verbal or written, the roles and responsibilities of each team member must be agreed upon.

If the project manager chooses to write accountability agreements, then they should be written like project objectives and follow the SMART method. SMART is an acronym that means:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**ction-oriented
- **R**ealistic
- **T**ime-phased

IN CONTEXT
A well-written task description using the SMART method is needed for a mobile email product.

Activity/Task	Resource	Estimate	Commitment	Quality
Test Mobile Email	Ron Jones	20 hours	100%	High Quality Standard - Fewer than 5 bugs after release

Test Email Creation	Ron Jones	5 hours	100%	High Quality Standard
Test Email Send	Ron Jones	5 hours	100%	High Quality Standard
Test Email Receipt	Ron Jones	5 hours	100%	High Quality Standard
Test Email Reply	Ron Jones	5 hours	100%	High Quality Standard

You can see that the total commitment to the project is specified and how much time is estimated for each task assigned to the team member. In this case, the team member is spending 100% of his time on the project.

The quality of deliverables is also specified. Note that it references a quality standard, which can be common in some organizations.

The team member then verifies that they agree to task ownership by signing off on the document.

📄 TERM TO KNOW

Individual Accountabilities
Clear performance criteria for each team member in relation to specific tasks.

2. Team Accountability

Team accountabilities occur with an entire project team and help ensure project success. As a whole, teams are accountable for:

- *Communicating about project issues*. This means open communication about any problems or issues that impact the project. Solutions can often come from unexpected places.
- *Cooperating to solve problems*. One person's problem is the project's problem, so everyone is impacted in some way. Team members need to know that they must assist others, in addition to working on their own problems.
- *Sharing information freely*. Just as open communication is critical for project management, so it is critical for a team's success.
- *Documenting progress*. Filling out project tracking sheets is not the most enjoyable task of the day, but this information helps a project manager gain the support of the project sponsor and key stakeholders by keeping them aware of the current project status.
- *Attending and participating in team meetings*. Since team meetings are one of the few times when information can be passed to all team members, it's important for everyone to attend and participate in the meeting.
- *Assisting in identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks*. Few project managers can identify all risks that a

project faces on their own. Each team member must contribute their expertise to the task of finding and mitigating risks.

TERM TO KNOW

> **Team Accountabilities**
> The framework for team members to contribute and collaborate throughout a project.

SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that individuals and teams as a whole must be accountable to a project's success. When documenting **individual accountabilities**, it's important to communicate SMART goals and when assigning **team accountabilities**, it's important to cooperate and solve issues together.

Source: this work is adapted by sophia author jeff carroll.

TERMS TO KNOW

> **Individual Accountabilities**
> Clear performance criteria for each team member in relation to specific tasks.

> **Team Accountabilities**
> The framework for team members to contribute and collaborate throughout a project.