



Leaders Need to Set the Stage for **ACCOUNTABILITY**

BY MITCHELL LEVY

Accountability is a critical component of any
high-performance organization.

The ability to establish and maintain a culture of accountability within an organization is a crucial factor in driving success.

Unfortunately, too many leaders make the mistake of trying to set up an accountability system without first establishing themselves as credible. As a result, their efforts often fall flat because their employees don't fully follow them and don't fully take ownership of their actions.

Leaders who set the stage for accountability create a more efficient work environment. This type of environment also fosters greater commitment and increased employee happiness.

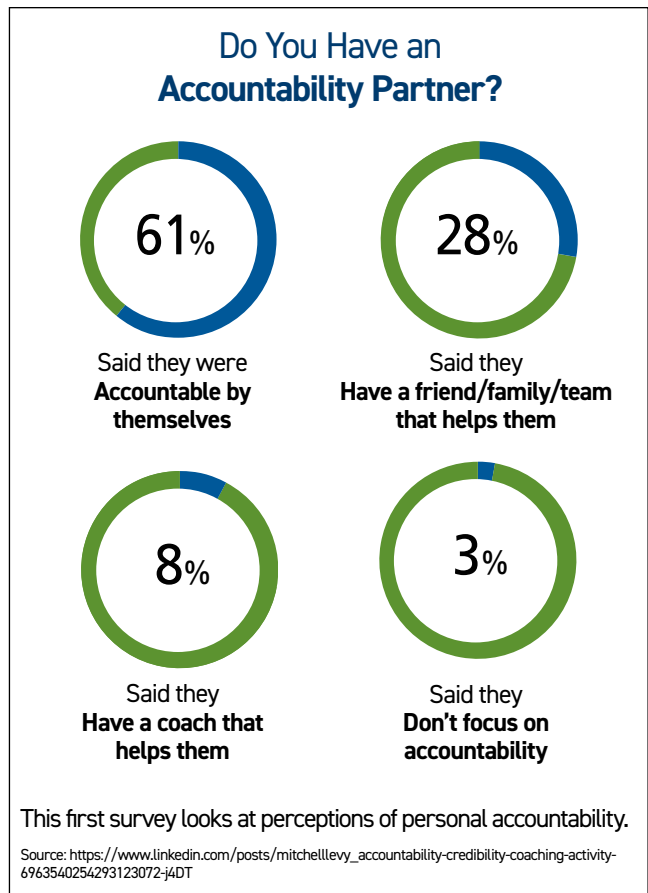
MOST PEOPLE THINK THEY'RE ACCOUNTABLE, BUT THEY'RE NOT

On LinkedIn, I conducted two surveys that produced results that made me wonder. While 61% of the survey respondents said they were accountable by themselves, only 10% said that those they work with are accountable all the time.

In the first survey, 61% of respondents said that they're accountable by themselves. This means they don't rely on anybody else to keep them accountable. Meanwhile, 36% have an accountability partner that keeps them in check. The other 3% don't focus on accountability, which is mind-boggling.

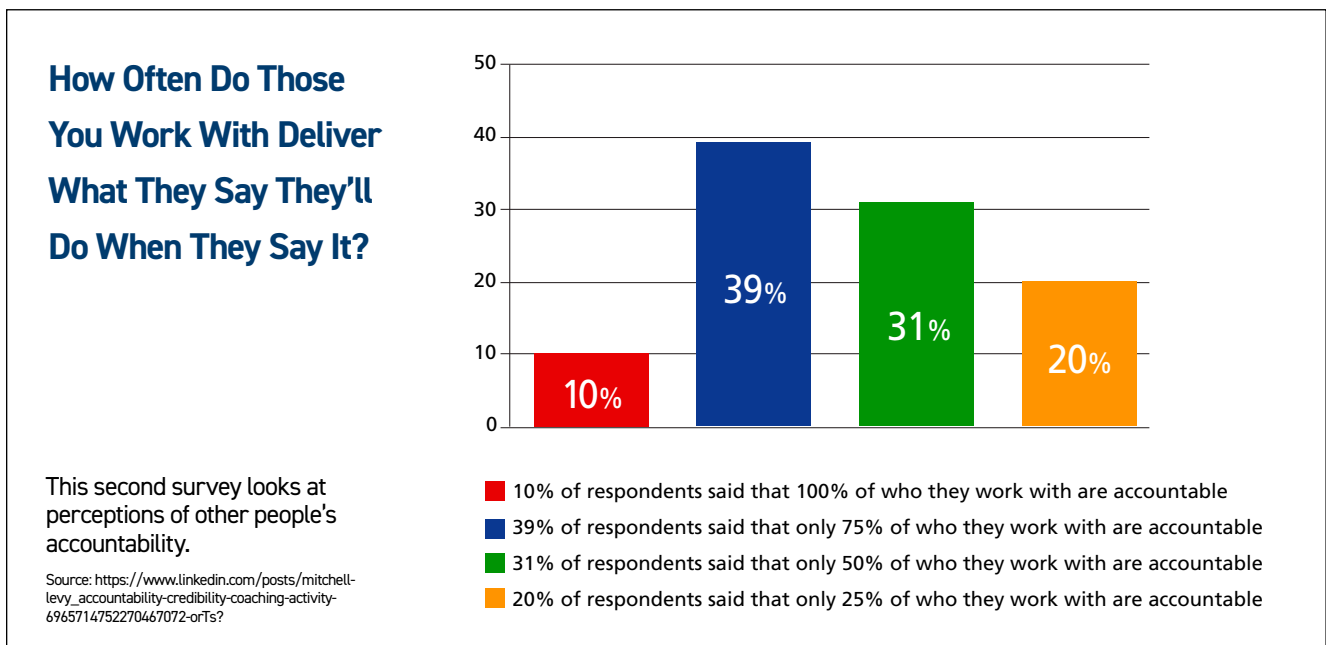
Looking closely at the second survey, only 10% of survey respondents said their colleagues are always accountable for their actions. That is a meager number. It doesn't matter whether someone is a leader or an employee. The lack of accountability can seriously impact everyone's performance and the company's success.

When you look at these two surveys together, it's shocking to see that there's a huge disconnect between how people



perceive their accountability and their actual accountability. This is a problem!

Lack of accountability can lead to several problems for businesses, including but not limited to customer distrust, low client retention, and a bad business reputation. It can negatively



impact a company's bottom line as it can lead to lost revenues due to employee turnover and low employee morale.

It's essential that leaders set the stage for accountability. First, let's establish a common language by defining *accountability*.

WHAT IS ACCOUNTABILITY?

Accountability is a measure of how well an organization, or individual, meets responsibilities. It is the ability to account for one's actions and accept responsibility for them.

Accountability is the foundation of good governance. It ensures that decision makers are answerable for their choices and that resources are used effectively and efficiently.

Leaders must empower accountability by creating a credible culture of transparency and ethical values. They should establish clear employee expectations and hold employees accountable to meet those expectations.

WHY DO EMPLOYEES NEED ACCOUNTABILITY?

Accountability is one of the most important values in any organization. It is essential that all employees feel responsible for their actions and are held accountable for meeting deadlines, goals, and objectives.

Without accountability, employees have no incentive to work hard or meet expectations because there's no oversight to ensure they deliver what they promised.

One of the most important aspects of being an effective leader is ensuring that employees are held accountable and feel responsible for their actions. Teams perform better when they understand that their work is important and appreciated.

Leaders who are accountable and lead with credibility values instill accountability in their people.

REINFORCE YOUR CREDIBILITY AS A LEADER

"The leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way."

—John C. Maxwell, *Life Wisdom: Quotes from John Maxwell: Insights on Leadership*

A great leader possesses the ability not only to empower their team but also to take accountability for their actions. To do so, they need to be credible. Their employees must trust that the leader acts with integrity and follows through on commitments. When leaders lack credibility, it creates an environment of distrust and finger-pointing. Employee satisfaction dramatically suffers in that kind of environment.

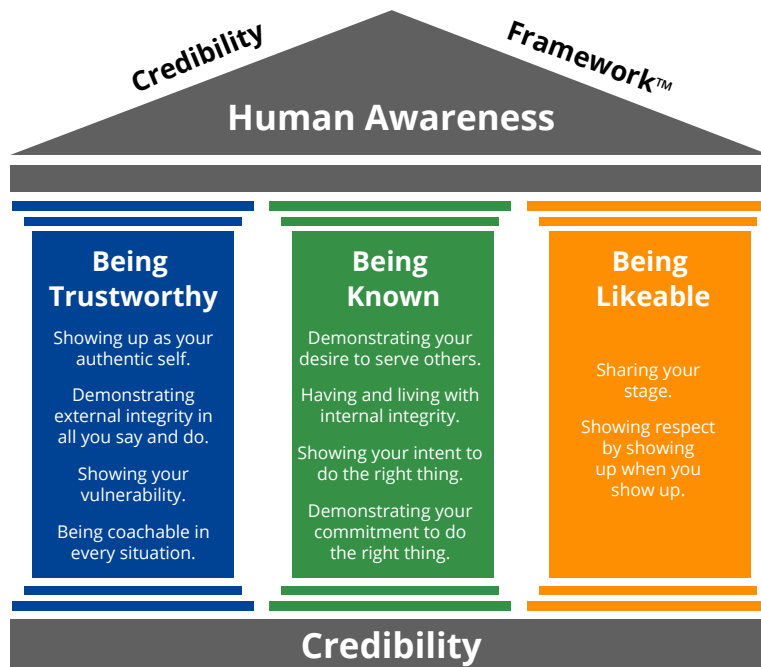
So, how can you become a credible leader?

The definition of credibility in the dictionary needs to be enhanced. The dictionary says that credibility is the quality that a person is trusted. In today's world, trust is not the only element that determines credibility.

After my organization interviewed more than 500 thought leaders on credibility, an enhanced definition emerged from the research. Credibility is the quality of **being trusted, being known, and being liked**.

Leaders must be trusted, known, and liked to be successful.

- *Being trusted* means that the leader is respected and believed in. If the leader is not trustworthy, then employees will not have confidence in them and will not fully follow them.



Copyright 2022 Mitchell Levy. All Rights Reserved

- *Being known* means that people know what the leader stands for. Knowing who the leader truly is, including their core principles, makes it easier for employees to understand what the leader is like as a person.
- *Being liked* is precisely like it sounds. Leaders who are liked by their employees get better results, as the employees will be more willing to put in the extra effort.

In the workplace, leaders who are trusted, known, and liked by those they lead are more effective at guiding them toward their desired outcomes. Employees are happier and more willing to be led by leaders who they think are trustworthy, are known to be servant leaders and do the right thing, and are generally liked by others in the organization.

Let's dive into detail on how leaders can gain credibility.

CREDIBLE LEADERS NEED TO BE TRUSTED

Being trustworthy is one of the essential qualities of a leader. It allows leaders to lead more effectively because employees can trust the leader to do what is best for them and for the organization as a whole.

As seen in the first Pillar of Credibility, "Being Trustworthy," a leader needs to be authentic, demonstrate external integrity, show vulnerability, and be coachable.



Show up as your authentic self. Authentic leaders are true and genuine in how they approach and mingle with their team and organization. It inspires employees to want to follow and support the leader.

Demonstrate external integrity in all you say and do. External integrity is what leaders show other people. Do they walk their talk? Do they do the things they said they would do? If a leader told a group of people they would follow up with a difficult employee or customer situation and then actually did it, the group will trust that leader in future situations. However, if they

don't do what they said they would do, employees will doubt that leader in future situations and, eventually, might stop trusting the leader completely.

Show vulnerability. Vulnerability is often seen as a weakness, but it is one of the greatest strengths a leader can possess. Leaders who admit they don't have all the answers show that they're humble and willing to learn from others. Being vulnerable also allows leaders to be open and honest with their team, creating a positive and productive working environment.

Be coachable. Great leaders are coachable and are always willing to learn from their mistakes. They realize that they cannot do everything on their own and that they need the help of others to be successful. This attitude sets an excellent example for employees, as it inspires them to want to learn and grow.

CREDIBLE LEADERS NEED TO BE KNOWN

Leaders should understand that knowing of you is not knowing you! The employees they lead need to know how they operate and whether they are a person of their word. Being known as a credible leader helps to manage business and relationships better. When people know that a leader is reliable and has the experience to get things done, they are more apt to trust and confide in the leader.

As seen in the second Pillar of Credibility, "Being Known," a leader needs to demonstrate the desire to serve others, have and live with internal integrity, show their intent, and demonstrate their commitment to do the right thing.



Demonstrate your desire to serve others. Leaders help guide and direct their team in the right direction while also setting an example. Leaders must demonstrate their desire to "serve others" throughout the organization. By focusing on the needs of their employees, and their customers, leaders can motivate and inspire those around them.

Have and live with internal integrity. One of the critical qualities

of credible leaders is internal integrity. It allows them to gain the trust and respect of those they lead. Internal integrity is about doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. It's also about living up to one's principles and values, even when it would be easier to do otherwise.

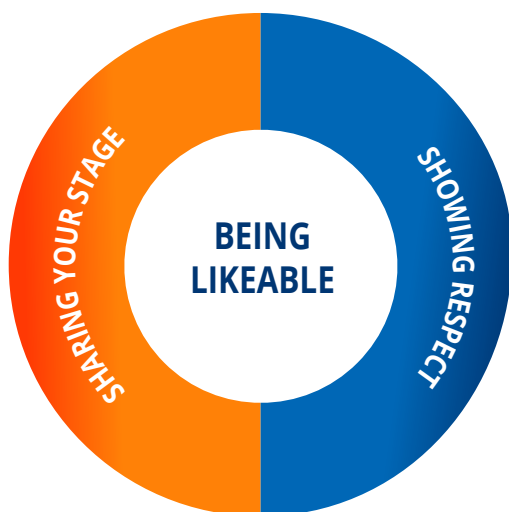
Show your intent to do the right thing. Communicating the intent to do the right thing is important in any leadership position. One's behavior as a leader has a direct impact on others in the workplace. This is why leaders should always show that they intend to do what is right and avoid engaging in behavior that compromises their integrity or undermines the trust that others have in them.

Demonstrate your commitment to do the right thing. There is no doubt that leaders are responsible for setting the tone and direction of their organizations. They must be people of character who can put their interests aside to do what is best for the organization and its employees. For this reason, leaders need to demonstrate their commitment to do the right thing at all times.

CREDIBLE LEADERS NEED TO BE LIKED

Being likeable may sound like an unnecessary effort to please people. That is not what's meant here. In today's post-COVID work environment, being likeable is vital in establishing credibility. Employees don't need to "love" their leader to work with them, but having likability as a leader can further enhance a leader-employee relationship and make work fun and easier for everyone.

As seen in the third Pillar of Credibility, "Being Likeable," a leader needs to share their stage and show respect by showing up when they show up.



Share your stage. We've been taught that we need to focus on promoting ourselves and not sharing the thoughts, actions, and ideas of others. Leaders who highlight their team and others' credibility bring credibility to themselves. I've coined a term for sharing your stage, "credust," which is the sparkle

that happens when one shares someone else's ideas, thoughts, or actions.

Show respect by showing up when you show up. Showing up when you show up means coming early, coming prepared, and coming with your heart. Leaders gain respect by demonstrating that they respect and value those they work with. When meeting with those they lead, they should come early, at least a couple of minutes before their scheduled meeting. Leaders need to have done their due diligence in preparing for the meeting.

Most important, leaders need to come with their hearts. This means showing that they're present and ready to be of service. By applying these skills in day-to-day operations, leaders can become more credible. When leaders are credible, they are more successful in setting the stage for accountability.

CREDIBLE LEADERS INSPIRE ACCOUNTABILITY IN THEIR PEOPLE

There is no question that accountability and leadership are intrinsically linked. Accountability is a cornerstone of good leadership, as it enables leaders to ensure that their teams are meeting agreed-upon objectives.

Creating a culture of accountability and instilling it in your employees isn't easy. Many leaders struggle to get their employees to take ownership of their work and deliver high-quality results.

Credible leaders lead by example and make sure their team is following suit. The best leaders are the ones who inspire accountability in their people and set an example by being accountable themselves.

One of the best ways leaders can set the stage for accountability is by modeling the behavior they want their team to emulate. If you want your team to be highly collaborative, you should be an excellent collaborator. If you want your team to value open and honest communication, you should encourage this in all your interactions.

Leaders must lead by example. If they promote the importance of accountability but fail to hold themselves accountable, it will have a detrimental effect on the rest of the team. That's why leaders must be as accountable as possible at all times.

Creating an accountability culture is accomplished by leaders who lead by example, practicing what they preach. They demonstrate a high level of integrity and reliability through their words and actions.

Setting the stage for accountability is done by being a credible leader. [CQ](#)

Global credibility expert and executive coach Mitchell Levy works with CEOs and C-suite executives to increase their ROI with operational credibility. Levy is a two-time TEDx speaker and international bestselling author of more than 60 books. Connect to him at MitchellLevy.com or Mitchell.Levy@CredibilityNation.com