Accountability and Authority

*"A proper & clear hierarchy is a powerful
determinant of organizational success."*

- Elliot Jaques

The following article is based upon "In Praise of Hierarchy" (Elliot Jaques, <u>Harvard Business Review,</u> January-February 1990); "Managerial Accountability" (Elliot Jaques, <u>Journal of Quality & Participation</u>, March 1992); <u>Executive Leadership</u> (Elliot Jaques & Stephen D. Clement, Carson Hall & Co., 1995).

Leadership is that process in which one person sets the purpose and gets others to move along together in that direction with competence and full commitment. The true meaning of leadership should create a mental image of people moving along together in synchrony, not one behind the other. Unfortunately, the managerial hierarchy can have a negative impact on allowing people to work together co-operatively, sensibly and enjoyably. But, it is not true that hierarchical authority <u>must</u> mean oppression.

Psychological Conditions of Leadership:
- Competence
- Trust

Competence: If we cannot discharge all the functions of our role we cannot exercise leadership of others because they will not have confidence in us.

Trust: Trust and respect must be earned. They are a result of the sensible and consistent application of requisite practices. One needs to value one's own work (including leadership) and value the work of others.

Critical Leader Accountabilities:

1. Adding value to the work of subordinates
2. Maintaining a team
3. Setting direction & having willing followers

A leader is someone that carries three accountabilities. The first is for the work of subordinates and adding value to it. The second is for maintaining a team that can produce the

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required outputs. And the third is for setting direction and getting the team to follow willingly and enthusiastically.

Minimal Authority:

- Team membership
- Work assignments
- Give pay raises

A person cannot be held accountable unless he or she has the necessary and appropriate authority. There are basic minimum authorities that are essential if leaders are to be held accountable. One is the right to determine who is and who is not on the team. Another is the power to make work assignments. Finally, there is the power to carry out performance appraisals and to make decisions, not just recommendations, about raises and merit rewards.

Team leaders should be held accountable but this is only possible if they have the requisite authority to do the job.

Collaboration

One of the key characteristics of high performing organizations is that the members routinely collaborate. Building and sustaining collaboration is a prime managerial leadership accountability.

Communication

Task-assigning relationships must involve two-way communications. Managers, supervisors and project leaders can't simply issue orders and just expect their subordinates to do what they are told in an unquestioning manner. They must be able to rely on their team members to raise questions, volunteer advice, and debate issues as appropriate. The central issue is the quality of the relationship. Does it stifle or release effective interactions? Relationships are always either improving or worsening. An improving relationship fosters collaboration.

Managers must not only inform subordinates about their tasks but also the context within which those tasks fit.

Subordinates, on their side, must keep managers informed not just about their on-going progress but also about their

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ideas, insights, and advice regarding ways that the manager might wish to go about his/her own work more efficiently.

BPI can help!

BPI's **Critical Thinking for Leaders** workshop improves leader thinking competence and the ability to communicate thinking to others. Assessing the current reality is a page out of our Concern Analysis process for clarifying known facts. When the leader is ready to "set the direction," **BPI**'s **Decision Making** process will make their thinking visible to others. This will demonstrate their own competence and facilitate "building trust" in gaining the team's "willing commitment" to the goal.

The leader accountability of "adding value to the work of subordinates" is obtained by coaching. Knowledge of critical thinking principles enhances any leader's ability to coach the thinking of others, asking key questions to draw out relevant information and facilitate a proper analysis of even the most complex issues.

BPI's **Critical Thinking** workshop is targeted at team members, technical experts and anyone who would benefit from a systematic approach to **solving problems** and making decisions. The leader accountability of "maintaining a team that is capable of producing required outputs" would include making sure team members can think individually and collaboratively.

BPI's **Systematic Project Management** workshop gives special emphasis to the project hand-offs to subordinates with a comprehensive Agree Phase between the project sponsor and team leader. The planning process in the Think Through Phase provides team members with a means to implement their project and "adds value to their work."

Conclusion

If your organization could benefit from enhancing leaders' competence, including: setting team direction; clear communication; and effective collaboration **contact** **BPI**. We have the necessary training, consulting and coaching skills to define and tailor a program to directly accomplish your goals.