

ELEVATING EXCELLENCE

The Leadership Accountability Workbook

A self-coaching guide for closing the distance between how you intend to lead and how your team actually experiences it

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How to Use This Workbook

You don't need to work through all five themes at once, and trying to would probably guarantee you finish none of them. Start with your one or two lowest-scoring themes from your assessment results.

For each theme you choose, spend roughly two weeks on it. Read the framing once. Check the box next to any statement that's honestly true right now, not the one you'd like to be true. Then look at the three practices for that theme and pick whichever one or two actually fit where you are. You don't need to do all three.

It's small on purpose. Small and repeated beats ambitious and abandoned.

A note on where this comes from: every theme in this workbook is drawn from a qualitative study of thirteen leaders inside a real organization navigating hyper-growth, not a generic leadership framework. The specific behaviors described here are the ones that showed up, and measurably mattered, in that research.

Before You Begin

This works best right after taking the Leadership Accountability Self-Assessment, while your results are fresh. Write them down here so you know where to start.

Haven't taken it yet? It's a free, 3-minute self-assessment: elevatingexcellence.us/leadership-accountability-assessment/. Come back to this page once you have your results.

MY STRONGEST THEME:

MY SECOND STRENGTH:

MY CLEAREST CHALLENGE:

Start with the theme you identified as your clearest challenge. Come back to the other four themes as you have time and need.

1 Explain the Why

Explaining what's changing without explaining why gets compliance, not commitment, and compliance evaporates the moment you're not watching. This is about connecting change to something real: the reasons behind it, and where it's actually taking the organization.

Where Are You Right Now? Check What's True.

- ☐ I explain the 'why' behind a change, not just the 'what.'
- ☐ My team could tell you our top 1-3 priorities right now, without checking with me first.
- ☐ I connect change to our new objectives, and explain how it closes the gap between where we are and where we're headed.

Before You Move On

What's your honest read on where you just landed? Write down what stands out, whether it confirms what you expected or catches you off guard.

Turn the page for three practical exercises, one for each statement above, so you can start working on whichever area matters most right now.

Pick Whichever Fits. You Don't Need to Do All Three.

OPTION 1

Before your next team update, write down the one sentence explaining why this matters, not just what's changing. Say that sentence out loud before you say anything else.

OPTION 2

Ask two people on your team, separately, what they think your top 1-3 priorities are right now. Compare their answers to each other, and to what you actually believe.

OPTION 3

Pick one initiative you've already announced. Write one sentence connecting it to a specific new objective, and one sentence naming the gap it's meant to close.

Reflect

Think about whichever of these you actually tried. What did you notice about how people responded once the why was actually on the table?

2 Cultural Alignment

When your own behavior doesn't match what the organization says it values, that gives people room to resist rather than commit. This is about whether your day-to-day decisions actually hold up against what you claim matters.

Where Are You Right Now? Check What's True.

- ☐ When I make a hard decision, I stick with it under pressure rather than quietly reversing course.
- ☐ My team's actual execution reflects my stated priorities, not just my stated words.
- ☐ My day-to-day decisions reflect the organization's stated values, not just what's convenient in the moment.

Before You Move On

What's your honest read on where you just landed? Write down what stands out, whether it confirms what you expected or catches you off guard.

Turn the page for three practical exercises, one for each statement above, so you can start working on whichever area matters most right now.

Pick Whichever Fits. You Don't Need to Do All Three.

OPTION 1

Before your next hard call, write down the standard you're applying, in one sentence, before you decide. Afterward, check the decision against what you wrote.

OPTION 2

Look back at your calendar from the last two weeks. Circle the time that actually went to your stated top priority. Compare that to how much you'd expect, based on how you talk about it.

OPTION 3

Pick one decision you made this week under real pressure. Write down what value or priority it actually reflected, then check whether that's the one you'd have named out loud beforehand.

Reflect

From what you tried here, where's the real gap between what you say matters and what your calendar or your decisions actually show?

3 Build Frameworks, Then Reframe

Without a consistent story and language for change, there's nothing left standing when you're not in the room, and people drift toward the easiest path instead of the right one. This is about whether you give people something to hold onto, and a reason it's actually good for them.

Where Are You Right Now? Check What's True.

- ☐ When I introduce a change, I give people a story or frame for it, not just an announcement of what's different.
- ☐ When someone pushes back on a change, I can usually help them see how it benefits them specifically, not just the organization.
- ☐ I use consistent language and examples people can repeat back, not a different explanation every time the change comes up.

Before You Move On

What's your honest read on where you just landed? Write down what stands out, whether it confirms what you expected or catches you off guard.

Turn the page for three practical exercises, one for each statement above, so you can start working on whichever area matters most right now.

Pick Whichever Fits. You Don't Need to Do All Three.

OPTION 1

Take a change you've already announced. Write the one-sentence story or frame you gave people for it. If you can't remember giving one, that's the answer.

OPTION 2

Pick someone who pushed back on a recent change. Write one sentence explaining how it specifically benefits them, not the company. Would that sentence have changed the conversation?

OPTION 3

Ask two people who've heard you explain the same change separately whether they'd describe it the same way. If their answers differ, that's your consistent-language gap.

Reflect

Based on what you tried, what's one specific thing you'd say differently the next time you introduce a change?

4 Self-Awareness Before Authority

Without the habit of catching and correcting yourself in real time, it's hard to know whether your own approach is actually landing, or just feels like it is from where you're standing. This is the one theme that makes the other four possible.

Where Are You Right Now? Check What's True.

- ☐ I actively ask for feedback on my own leadership behavior, not just my team's performance.
- ☐ When change stalls in my organization, my first instinct is to examine my own behavior, not just the plan or the team.
- ☐ I make time to reflect on past decisions: what worked, what I'd do differently.

Before You Move On

What's your honest read on where you just landed? Write down what stands out, whether it confirms what you expected or catches you off guard.

Turn the page for three practical exercises, one for each statement above, so you can start working on whichever area matters most right now.

Pick Whichever Fits. You Don't Need to Do All Three.

OPTION 1

This week, ask one person who reports to you for one piece of direct feedback on your own leadership behavior, not their performance. Write down what they said, even if it stings.

OPTION 2

The next time something stalls, before looking at the plan or the team, write down one way your own behavior might have contributed.

OPTION 3

At the end of this week, before reviewing anyone else's performance, write down one thing your own behavior did to help or hurt what you were trying to accomplish.

Reflect

Whatever you tried above, what's one thing about your own behavior you hadn't clearly seen until now?

5 Set the Goal, Then Track It

A team can trust your judgment completely and still drift in execution, because it's what gets defined and inspected that actually gets done. This is about whether direction turns into something specific enough to actually check.

Where Are You Right Now? Check What's True.

- ☐ I set specific, measurable goals with the people I lead, rather than leaving them to interpret general direction on their own.
- ☐ I have a regular rhythm for holding people accountable that isn't just an annual review.
- ☐ I can name the last time I held someone accountable for a commitment without taking over their process.

Before You Move On

What's your honest read on where you just landed? Write down what stands out, whether it confirms what you expected or catches you off guard.

Turn the page for three practical exercises, one for each statement above, so you can start working on whichever area matters most right now.

Pick Whichever Fits. You Don't Need to Do All Three.

OPTION 1

Pick one goal you've given someone verbally in the last month. Write it down as a specific, measurable version.

OPTION 2

Write down your actual rhythm for checking in on commitments. If the honest answer is 'the annual review,' that's the gap.

OPTION 3

Think of the last time you held someone accountable. Write down whether you asked about the outcome, or took over the process. Be honest.

Reflect

Looking at what you tried, what's the one specific change you'll make to how you set or track a goal this month?

Tying It Together

Look back at what you wrote on 'Before You Begin.'

MY STRONGEST THEME WAS:

MY CLEAREST CHALLENGE WAS:

Does your weakest area help explain why your strength hasn't fully translated into the results you'd expect? Be specific about the mechanism, not just the pattern.

What Comes Next

Working through a theme or two on your own is real progress, and it's worth doing regardless of what you decide next. But self-coaching has a real limit: you're both the person setting the standard and the person judging whether you met it, and that's a harder position to see clearly from than it looks.

Schedule a one-on-one (45-minute) online Leadership Diagnostic session.

45-MINUTE LEADERSHIP DIAGNOSTIC

We'll go through your assessment results and whatever you worked through in this workbook together, and leave with a short, specific list of what to actually focus on first. Not a sales conversation. A working session.

\$95. Normally \$285. Book directly, no code needed.

[Book the Leadership Diagnostic →](#)

If that conversation surfaces something worth going deeper on, ongoing coaching is where that happens.

Ready for an ongoing coaching conversation?

[Schedule a Coaching Conversation →](#)

Have additional questions? Don't hesitate to reach out via email.

support@elevatingexcellence.us

FILL THE GAP™ BUSINESS GAME PLAN

Is Your Team Actually Executing, or Just Busy?

A few honest tells, whether this is your own business or a business unit inside a larger company:

- ☐ The plan lives in one person's head, not on paper anyone else could reference without asking.
- ☐ Nobody on the team could name the #1 priority right now without checking first.
- ☐ Meetings happen, but nothing from three meetings ago ever actually got checked on.

Find out for certain, in 2 minutes: [Take the Business Health Check →](#)

The Fill the Gap™ Business Game Plan

A six-phase system built around a single one-page plan: the Scouting Report, the Game Plan itself, the Roster, the Playbook, Game Day, and Halftime Adjustments. Delivered as a series of facilitated working sessions, not a document you're handed and left to interpret alone.

This isn't only for small business owners. Any business unit inside a larger company can run this same system. I ran a business unit at Federal Signal that grew from \$20 million to \$45 million, and a system like this one would have made a real difference in how deliberately we scaled, not just how fast.

\$1,980 covers a team of up to six people across six 90-minute working sessions (\$20 per additional participant per session). Most sessions run online, with up to two typically held on-site around Chicago, Bourbonnais, Northwest Indiana, Lafayette, South Bend, and the areas between, at no added travel cost.

The best window to build next year's plan is before next year starts, not scrambled together in January after the pressure's already on. October through February is when this actually gets built.

Ready to talk through what this would look like for your team?

[Schedule a Conversation →](#)