

At Priority Leadership Group, we collaborate with leaders to identify the root causes of turnover and productivity problems and to improve their ability to Attract, Develop and Retain Top Performers.

Are You Finding It Difficult to Attract and Retain Top Performers? We work with business leaders who are hindered from achieving their goals because they don't have the right mix of talent. You Can Stop The Revolving Door Syndrome and Build a Sustainable, Highly Productive Workforce!

Top Performer Hiring: Hire the Best Person the First Time. Companies that utilize hiring models that identify top performers and predict the right person for the job are making the right decisions the first time and not wasting time and money trying to make a mismatch work.

Compare Talent to Needs: Planning Today for Tomorrow. Using models that identify future staffing needs and assess current employee potential, have helped organizations to be prepared by knowing what competencies to train, what competencies to recruit, and what competencies they have.

Retaining The Best: Investing In Your Assets. Coaching and professional development tied to succession plans have given organizations the bench of high potential performers they need when the expected and the unexpected happen.

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Resolving Team Conflicts

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Clever: Leading Your Smartest, Most Creative

The Accountability Secret: Roger Connors Interview



In this issue we caught up with Roger Connors, co-author (with Tom Smith) of *The Oz Principle: Getting Results through Individual and Organizational Accountability* (Portfolio Hardcover, 2004). They are also the authors of *Journey to the Emerald City: Achieve a Competitive Edge by Creating a Culture of Accountability* (Prentice Hall Press, 2002) and the recently released, *How Did That Happen?: Holding People Accountable for Results, the Positive, Principled Way* (Portfolio Hardcover, 2009).

Over the past 20 years, Roger Connors and his partner Tom Smith have gained extensive experience in working with over 100 senior executive teams, as well as with thousands of managers and leaders in a variety of environments in many different industries. Roger and Tom have personally assisted scores of management teams in successfully accelerating the cultural transition in their organizations to a culture of accountability.

Roger holds a BA in Accounting and an MBA, both from Brigham Young University.

Tell me about the inspiration for your new book.

Actually, we had a large backyard landscaping project that required work by various trades. It was rather complex, and seemed like it might never come together. Yet, we found ourselves one afternoon, leaning on our shovels, asking ourselves, "How did that happen?" The yard looked great, and it had all come together in spite of the challenges and the complexity.

We started reflecting on this, and how people ask themselves this question several times a day, in a negative context. The surprises we get by others we hold accountable can be detrimental. Yet they still happen. Why is that? The reason is that we haven't fostered a culture of positive accountability. Developing that culture is the thrust of this new book.

We have worked with accountability for 20 years now. As we focused on it, we oriented people toward personal accountability for circumstance. That is, taking responsibility for one's own circumstances. What we found is that there is an accountability paradox. As we work with leaders, the harder they would try to create accountability, the less it worked. Why was that happening? Because of the manner in which accountability is handled. This book really addresses how to create accountability, get employees to embrace it and follow through.

Can you give us an example of a missed opportunity, due to lack of accountability?

Sure. Here is a story shared by the CEO of a large publishing company. Within one year, the organization had acquired two new publishing companies. Every month they were hitting their numbers, and the whole acquisition was looking consistently positive for the company's bottom line.

Still, she was approached by the CFO and told that a onetime write off that was a result of the acquisitions would put all of the profitability behind. The organization had to freeze hiring and bonuses. The CEO was stunned. She asked herself, "How did that happen?"

Another way for her to look at this situation is, "How did I let that happen?" This is a situation that took place between two top executives with many years of business experience. Sure, the CFO let her down, but what extra steps could she have taken to ensure that she was getting the desired results in this situation? One could ask, "Do you want to ensure or hope you are getting those results?"

The book is densely written and is packed with useful models for accountability. Can you walk us through one of the core concepts?

One of the core concepts is enrolling people in a cause. Most people want to be involved in a cause, not just coming in and doing a job every day. For example, the communicate step is very critical here.

We still tend to use the "what-when" communication model. It is expedient and doesn't take much time. But we should use the "why-what-when" model. This makes a huge difference for people to enroll with their hearts and minds: people become sure that this is the right course of action.

When you get people wanting to show up and make a difference in today's economy, that can show amazing results.

There is so much more we could talk about here. What take-away wisdom would you like to give our readers?

Here is a phrase that encapsulates our message:

People

They aren't necessarily the employees with the highest IQs. They have no desire to lead, and they most certainly don't want to be led. They can be difficult, burdensome, frustrating... and they can create an incredibly disproportionate amount of positive value for your organization. Ladies and Gentlemen, we give you the "Clevers".

Authors Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones have penned a book that uncovers a class of employee that had yet to be properly identified. We have leaders, managers, entry level employees and others that neatly tuck into the corporate hierarchy. However, this book seeks to identify a hidden layer woven into the organizational tapestry.

Clever (Harvard Business Press, 2009) is the product of years of field research that digs in to the generative sources of cleverness in some of the most productive companies in the world. What the authors found is that these clever people exist not just at the top of organizations, but they throughout the ranks. These are the employees who crave the biggest most important problems, and can consistently be counted on for solutions.

An entertaining read of *Clevers* isn't sociological fluff. It is a nuts-and-bolts guide of what to do, and not do, to ensure maximum results from your best people. Sections include how to identify the Clevers in your own organization, boost those results to new heights by creating clever teams – and shifting your culture toward developing clever organizations, complete with real world examples that highlight highly respectable companies.

Use this: What you create accountability for is what you get. What you are getting is what you created accountability for.

That is a great note to end on. Thank you so much for your time, Roger. When he is not working on his consultancy or writing books, you can find Roger spending time with his wife and five children in Alpine, Utah.

The Situation Room



Clarifying Training ROI

You are the training manager of a large hospital. In the past few years, your organization has moved from an in-house training staff to an outsourcing model. You have partnered with two consulting companies to take care of the organization's training needs, including management development, soft skills training and seminars specific to the health care industry.

Both training companies have consistently fulfilled their contracts; their trainers are professional, their curriculum is on target and the quality of materials and handouts is above average. You feel that these are great long term partners for your organization.

However, until now, there has not been a return on investment (ROI) measurement. The hospital's executive board has told you that it needs proof of ROI in order to continue these contracts. Even more importantly to you, the entire staff development and training program is at stake.

When you approach the two companies about the possibility of pre- and post-program assessments or other options for proof of ROI, you were told that it would cost more to embed assessment into their programs. Still, the board did not give you a bigger budget. From your perspective, you are doing your training partners a favor by giving them an opportunity to prove themselves. Where do you go from here? [Send in your solution!](#)

This Month's Hottest Deals

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