

SUPERCOMPETENT KEY #5: ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability recognizes that "the buck stops here."

SuperCompetent people mean what they say and say what they mean. They're authentic, and other people know this and appreciate them for it – and also for their refusal to blame others when unforeseen circumstances trip them up. Their intense focus on their values is borne out in their demeanor and their sense of personal responsibility.

Accountability involves your commitment to yourself and others. It's about the promises we make to the people who rely on us – and to ourselves. It's about consistently hitting goals, meeting deadlines, fulfilling promises, and committing to teamwork.

The truly Accountable understand that in almost every circumstance, they're responsible for who they are and where they are.

A high level of self discipline and Accountability can be achieved by consistently practicing the following precepts:

1. **Take personal responsibility for handling your time and productivity.** Never lay the blame on anyone else. Unless you live in a totalitarian state or are an indentured servant (unlikely), then when it comes to productivity, it's all up to you. If something or someone gets in your way, it's your duty to go around.
2. **When a process seems unusually long and inefficient, do what you can to make it easier for everyone.** Just because something's been done a certain way for a long time doesn't mean it's the best way to do it *now*. If you find a problem, step forward and fix it if you can – or offer a solution if you can't.
3. **Rather than waste even small amounts of productive time, get right to work.** Breaks are necessary, but don't overindulge in them. Self-discipline is important in any field of endeavor. Without it, deadlines get missed, you feel guilty – and guilt sucks the energy right out of you. Or you get fired. Or both.
4. **When you have all the information you need to proceed, make decisions immediately.** You have to make critical decisions quickly whenever it's necessary and you're empowered to do so. Don't let worry or social inertia slow you down, because motion beats meditation every time if you have all the data you need.



5. **Understand the difference between being busy and being productive.** Don't let little tasks keep you from getting things done. Most of us spend too much time tending to minor issues that other people can handle more cheaply and efficiently, and never have enough time to do all the really important tasks.

Accountability boils down to personal responsibility. The SuperCompetent take charge of their own productivity because, ultimately, they realize that it all comes down to them. They accept the blame when it's due, not just the credit.

They also do all they can to make things work better for themselves and others, and make every effort to become comfortable with making decisions, without letting the possible negative consequences paralyze them.

Personal responsibility is easy to observe in people who have it. Wouldn't you like people to observe it in you?

© 2010 Laura Stack. Laura Stack is a personal productivity expert, author, and professional speaker whose mission is to build high-performance productivity cultures in organizations by creating Maximum Results in Minimum Time®. She is the president of The Productivity Pro®, Inc., a time management training firm specializing in productivity improvement in high-stress organizations and the 2011-2012 President of the National Speakers Association. Since 1992, Laura has presented keynotes and seminars on improving output, lowering stress, and saving time in today's workplaces. She is the bestselling author of four books: *SUPERCOMPETENT*; *The Exhaustion Cure*; *Find More Time*; and *Leave the Office Earlier*. Laura has been a spokesperson for Microsoft, 3M, Xerox, and Office Depot. She is the creator of The Productivity Pro® planner by Day-Timer and has been featured on the CBS Early Show, CNN, and the *New York Times*. Her clients include Starbucks, Cisco Systems, Wal-Mart, and Bank of America. To have Laura speak at your next event, call 303-471-7401 or visit www.TheProductivityPro.com to sign up for her free monthly productivity newsletter.