Tolerance and Accountability

Whether it is a startup or a seasoned business tolerance and accountability are key to viability, success, and sustainability. This is true in any business sector, and it has nothing to do with a balance of the two. There must be far more accountability than tolerance, but the majority of businesses that fail or are in a toxic workplace culture owe it to the complete absence or lacking accountability.

Steven Covey said it best, "lack of accountability shows no responsibility."

Accountability is kind of like having a baby (best analogy I could think of), there is never a good time. If you are a start-up, you hire quick and fire quicker. Performance is everything. Too many MBA's start a business and think the degree equals skill set to do this (definitely not true). It requires something the MBA doesn't teach: thick skin, accountability, continuous performance/culture assessment. I have heard from many a person it is all about timing. While this is true to an extent, it is mainly a mechanism to buy time on what should have been done six months ago (the inevitable). Again there is never a good time.

We are at a time in business, whether established or new, where performance is key/vital. The C-Suite and business owners are often far too soft on the "learning curve" or spending money on a title. Accountability is just another smokescreen word like "quality." As a side note productivity is NOT accountability either.

Why has this gotten so bad? Several reasons. We are at a time in business that we have never seen before. Technology has raised the bar. People want results, food, data, care….now and they want it faster and cheaper. In the startup world, you live and die by being first to market. If you are an established business, it is about being fresh, innovative and relevant. Yes, this applies to healthcare too, it is no different.

The biggest issue is self-preservation. People do not want to make the hard decision. They are too worried about their appearance, title, equity, position. The "good ole boy" network is still alive and well, corruption often prevails. Many simply have "their" agenda and not the company or organizations agenda at heart. Thinking outside the box becomes a threat rather than embraced in an established service line as "that is not the way we have done it" permeates the culture. The appearance of good leadership occurs by people setting goals and objectives, and not following through. I have discussed low, mid and high performers before...coach up or coach out. The hiring process has become a joke as everyone "looks good" on paper. Different rules are often applied to different people and positions. This is where tolerance creeps in and will begin to destroy a company or organization. You can't hide this behind a spreadsheet. Your high performers see this and start to wonder why they are trying so hard and doing so much. They wonder where in the hell the accountability is.

The millennials understand there is no loyalty in any business, so as a leader, owner, C-suiter (not sure if that's a word), you can't play that card. Once you have allowed tolerance, there is only one way to correct the cycle. It starts with you stepping down or you being fired. This is the reason it often doesn't

change. Instead, we settle for complacency, while we drive the business or organization into the ground.

This epidemic is wide spread but is very beneficial to the one's that have figured it out as they are taking your best employees. After reading this take a moment to evaluate where you are. If you are at a place that is fueled by tolerance, you must learn to tolerate it or leave. If you are at a place with accountability, it may seem tough or unfair, but these are the companies that will make over the long haul.

How do you spot a person who is driven by tolerance and not accountability? Easy. Ask them how they are doing several times throughout the week. If they tell you "fine."…tolerance driven. "Fine" is an easy answer to give, so you don't have to explain or be transparent. Mel Robbins does a great piece on this.

#zerotoleranceyeahrigh, #smokeupyourass, #immovingon