Being FIRST
ACHIEVE BREAKTHROUGH

Clarifying
Shared Accountability
Partnership Agreements

Tool

CLARIFYING SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

Introduction

Undoubtedly in your change effort, key executives must work effectively together to maximize success. If these key relationships break down, so do your chances of success. This tool is designed to help key players and teams build strong, sustainable relationships that will foster achievement and learning – simultaneously.

In order to implement this tool, the partnering parties (individuals or teams) must be willing. They must see the value in consciously building their relationship. Not all will. Many executives would rather just "press ahead" with the work rather than work the "soft stuff" like relationship building, even though they desperately need it. Consequently, be smart about how you introduce your key executives to this partnership-building idea. Be sure to demonstrate to them how strong, effective relationships, especially between organizational leaders and change leaders, will improve the outcomes of your change.

In some cases, you may need to wait until a relationship is broken before the parties will greet your attempts to help them improve it positively. Whatever you do, do NOT force this tool and partnering process on unwilling players. Give people the choice to engage or not.

Key relationships where Shared Accountability Partnership Agreements can provide great benefit include:

- Sponsor – change process leader
- Executive team – change leadership team
- Change process leader – change consultant
- Between expected "winners" and "losers" in the change
- Between key supporters of and resistors to the change

Instructions

Step 1   Review the Info Sheets on Pages 3-9: *WIN-Win-Win Model* and *Shared Accountability Model*. Use these models to help you in completing these worksheets when deciding levels of accountability for major change results.

Step 2   Identify all change leaders and executives (individuals or teams) who need to clarify their working relationships on behalf of the change. List these various "partnerships" on Worksheet 1.

Step 3   Invite the selected partnerships to engage in this partnering process, as needed or desired. Ensure that the participants understand the reasons and value for consciously and overtly creating this partnership.

Step 4   Schedule, at a minimum, a ninety-minute session with each set of partners (individuals or teams) to formalize their partnership. Provide them with the Info Sheets: *WIN-Win-Win Model* and *Shared Accountability Model* in advance, and the contract form (Worksheet 2) to do the work.

Step 5   Facilitate creating the partnership agreement if needed or desired. Use the contract form to discuss and agree on what each partnership wants to accomplish, how they will work together, how they will learn together, and how they will support each other's success and the success of the overall change project.

Step 6   Create a group meeting or other vehicle for the various partnerships to share their insights and commitments, as appropriate, with their change leader peers.

Info Sheet

WIN-WIN-WIN MODEL

Introduction

Billions of dollars are spent annually attempting to answer the simple question, "How can we maximize the success of our change efforts and our organization's performance?" The key to maximum success in both is transforming leadership and organizational mindset. This is especially true when your change effort is transformational in nature.

Why is mindset so important? Because mindset is causative. It determines what you perceive, how you interpret information, the decisions you make, the behaviors you model, your level of performance, the emotional reactions you have, and ultimately, the quality of your results. The seeds of both your successes and your failures are sown in your mindset.

In organizations, mindset gets collectively expressed as culture. Culture determines how organizations do things, just as mindset determines how individuals do things.

Is there an ideal mindset? No. Mindset evolves over time as circumstances change. But there is a mindset that unleashes great change leadership results—and individual and organizational performance. Discovering this mindset and how to catalyze it in yourself and your people is your primary task as a conscious change leader.

Most people operate with a win-lose mindset. Others strive toward a win-win mindset. Very few, however, embrace the concept of WIN-Win-Win, and fewer still reap the rewards. Let's explore this powerful mindset.

Orientation to the Whole – the Big Win

By WIN-Win-Win, we mean that all three components win—you, me, and the larger system(s) of which we are a part. In this mindset, there is a slight priority placed on the needs of larger systems, i.e., the team, the division, the enterprise, the community, society, the planet. I get what I need, you get what you need, and of greatest importance, the larger systems get what they need to succeed.

The "Big Win" refers to these larger systems, while the "smaller" wins—you and me—refer to us individually, or it can refer to distinct groups. For example, the Big Win might refer to the whole enterprise succeeding, with the two small wins referring to management and the union. Or, the Big Win might refer to the enterprise's needs, with the two small wins referring to the needs of the North American business unit and the Asian business unit.

In a WIN-Win-Win mindset, you first orient up to the needs of the greater whole(s), rather than down to your own self-interests.

Why is this important? Because when individuals or groups commit first and foremost to the needs of the larger systems, they become team mates pursuing common goals, partners in a common interest rather than adversaries fighting for their own self-interest. Furthermore, the Big Win is best achieved when each side is supported by others rather than in conflict with them. This mindset of WIN-Win-Win changes the whole game, and calls for a new way of being, working, and relating. We call this new way, "Co-Creating."

The Co-Creative Approach

Co-creating refers to individuals or teams working together across boundaries to do whatever is necessary to achieve WIN-Win-Win objectives. Co-creating enables greater human potential to be directed toward the common objective, the Big Win, as people support each other across old boundaries to collectively contribute to the larger enterprise goal. For example, in a win-lost mindset, the different departments or regions in your organization would fight for budget. In a WIN-Win-Win mindset, they would each focus first on what resources are needed for the enterprise's highest success, and then, in partnership, figure out what that means for their own individual budget allocations. Any one department or region might get more or less in any given quarter or year, depending on what is right for the enterprise's success. This does not mean that individuals or groups automatically need to sacrifice for the sake of the larger system. It simply means that each puts the needs of the larger enterprise first. Sometimes you get "the short end of the stick;" other times, the long end. But either way, what you get best supports enterprise needs—and that is the priority of co-creating.

In WIN-Win-Win, if one of us is not getting our needs met, then the others engage co-creatively with us to find a new, more innovative solution where all three wins could be achieved. You might ask, "Why would we want to support the other person's needs rather than compete for our own?" Because we realize that: (1) the larger system must succeed for each of us to survive over time, so orienting to it is key, (2) we are stronger as teammates, mutually supporting each other, and (3) the larger system will succeed only to the degree that each of us successfully contributes to it. You (or your group) must succeed, and I (or my group) must succeed, for the enterprise to succeed fully. Furthermore, each of us will need the other's support at some time. So, while I may be supporting you now and giving you some of my budget, I will likely be receiving your support later.

In a co-creative organization, if we cannot find a solution where all three "systems" win and a sacrifice must occur, then we share in it as much as possible. Such cases occur infrequently because our collective creativity and collaboration usually generates a WIN-Win-Win solution where all objectives are met. When necessary, however, each party must be willing to sacrifice if the top priority, the Big Win, is best served by doing so.

Understanding the WIN-Win-Win Principle

	Core Motivation	Assumptions	Benefits	Limitations
Win-Lose (Competing)	Self-preservation and aggrandizement	Zero sum game; there's not enough for everyone; I must win to survive; me against you; "power over and control of" people and circumstances is paramount	Can produce superb individual performance; sometimes you win and reap the rewards	Someone loses; parties remain separate, often adversarial; no sharing of resources or learnings; reinforces loss and threat, fear and distrust
Win-Win (Cooperating)	Either self-preservation, mutual support and benefit, or a combination of the two	Compromise and cooperation can benefit me; common ground exists between us; we are connected; sharing is better for me than getting hurt competing	Can build partnership and trust; both can feel valued and respected; both can gain	Often a strategy to individually succeed rather than build partnership; can lead to unnecessary compromise or acceptance of less than what is possible; doesn't focus attention on the large whole
WIN-Win-Win (Co-Creating)	Contribution to the whole (self-preservation and mutual support motivations are also served)	Serving the whole can lead to success for all the subsystems; there is a larger win that can satisfy everyone; we are here to serve something larger than ourselves	Ensures both survival and "thrival" of all parties; promotes long-term viability of whole system; causes alignment, builds relationships and solidifies teams; adversaries become partners with common goals	Someone may need to sacrifice for the good of the whole; requires the choice and effort to make a fundamental shift of worldview to a higher, more holistic and inclusive state of mind

Why Win-Win and Win-Lose Offer Marginal Success

When people operate from a win-lost mindset, self-interest and self-preservation drive their thinking and behavior. This causes them to seek "power over and control of" others, and to pursue what they think is best for their group at the expense of what the other group(s) might need or want. This is often a limitation of the command and control leadership style. When the stakes, passions, or egos are high, the win-lose mindset leads to adversarial relationships that waste energy and productivity. It escalates competition, politics, aggression, and defensiveness—none of which support the good of the enterprise.

Win-win is often a disguise for win-lose, where the parties realize that all-out war will leave them bruised and hurt, so they compromise under the guise of "collaboration" to avoid significant pain or loss. But really, they are seeking to get as much of their individual needs met as possible. Win-Win is simply their chosen strategy for doing so.

Win-win works only if both parties live by "I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine." It falls apart when one person stops scratching and becomes too concerned with their own itch.

While Win-Win is less disruptive and damaging than Win-Lose can be, it is a far cry from the real transformation to WIN-Win-Win, where self-interest gets replaced by support of the whole. WIN-Win-Win is a fundamental transformation of the individual's ego-driven self-preservation needs and leads to maximum success for all.

WIN-Win-Win Requires Both Personal and Organizational Transformation

The WIN-Win-Win mindset and co-creative behavior pattern is clearly uncommon. Mastering it requires personal transformation for most people. Consequently, Being First's major transformational consulting interventions include "Breakthrough" training for the leaders and ideally, the bulk of management and employees. Being First's Leadership Breakthrough Program: Walking the Talk of Change introduces people to WIN-Win-Win thinking. This new thinking leads to new behaviors which promote the quality of relationships and work practices required to reap the organizational benefits of WIN-Win-Win.

Info Sheet

SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY MODEL

Introduction

Numerous strategies, processes, and tools contribute to building co-creative, high performing cultures. The Shared Accountability Model is one of the most powerful, yet simple tools. Begin by employing this model throughout your change leadership ranks, then slowly allow it to permeate to your other stakeholders, then throughout your organization.

You will be amazed at the positive affect this simple model will have on your culture over time. You will see increased awareness, responsibility and learning. You will notice people working better together across boundaries with greater trust and understanding, and less blame.

Responsibility vs. Personal Responsibility

The words "responsibility," "personal responsibility," and "accountability" are often used interchangeably. They are related, but different.

Responsibility is simply fulfilling the requirements of your role.

Personal responsibility comes from knowing that you are the source of your thoughts, feelings, behaviors, decisions, actions, and ultimately, results. Personal responsibility is a by-product of living from the belief that you catalyze your life experience from "the inside out," rather than assuming that you are a victim of external forces that "make" you and your life as it is. Operating as a victim of external circumstances is the opposite of personal responsibility.

The core of personal responsibility is realizing that your mindset minimally creates your reactions to external circumstances and contributes to your ability to fulfill the requirements of your role. In other words, personal responsibility refers to an inner state of being, while responsibility refers to external actions and results.

Personal responsibility is the foundation of self-mastery and individual high achievement and excellence. It unleashes full human potential. Without it, individuals always under-perform and contribute less than they could have. People with inner personal responsibility achieve greater success at meeting their external "responsibilities." Likewise, teams and organizations comprised of "responsible" individuals always out-perform teams of victims.

Being personally responsible is a challenge. It requires courage, emotional intelligence and a commitment to introspection and personal growth that most people simply do not have. Blaming, finger pointing and denying are far easier and more common.

However, even the best of people oscillates between being personally responsible and feeling victimized. The key, of course, is catching yourself when you begin to operate as a victim and quickly altering your mindset and behavior to become more personally responsible for your inner reaction and state.

Key Principle:
"Everyone is accountable; no one is to blame"

Definition of Responsibility:
Fulfilling the requirements of your role

Definition of Personal Responsibility:
Realizing that your are the principal source of your thoughts feelings, behaviors, actions and results

Definition of Accountability:
Taking ownership for the results of activities in which you have a role and responsibilities.

Accountability

Accountability is taking ownership for the results of activities in which you have a role. In order to co-create and learn together to achieve their full collective potential, people must be both responsible and accountable. Denying how you contribute to a problem or mistake and blaming others guarantees conflict. This divides people, triggers defensiveness and aggression in others, and diminishes possible learning and growth.

In the Shared Accountability Model, everyone has a role, and therefore, a level of accountability. The levels of accountability will be different among people based on their specific role and its subsequent responsibilities.

Three Distinct Roles; Three Levels of Accountability

Three roles exist in the Shared Accountability Model: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Each carries a corresponding level of accountability.

The primary person is the doer. Doers are accountable for delivering a specific end result, such as getting a million dollar return on investment from your change effort, identifying the design of your new call center, or ensuring that employees get their implementation input delivered to the executives in a timely fashion. How the primary people go about pursuing their results is of no consequence to this model. People become "primary" because they have a result they are accountable for, and can achieve the result in any way agreed to by them and the others involved.

The secondary person is in the supporter role. Secondary people are accountable for providing the primary person with specifically negotiated support needed for success. This support can come in any form mutually agreed to, such as tangible resources, coaching, or emotional hand-holding. Often, the primary person will negotiate with different "secondary" people to provide various support needs.

The tertiary person is the information scout. These people are accountable for actively supporting the overall achievement process by providing the primary or secondary persons with any relevant information they discover in the course of their daily activities. They do not have a specific tangible responsibility other than to be constantly on the lookout for whatever the more "active" parties may need. In other words, tertiary people are vehicles for greater awareness. They provide more "eyes on the ball," and therefore, increase the chance of success. Anyone who is aware of a primary or secondary person's pursuits automatically has a tertiary role and a responsibility to be on the lookout for valuable information and to share it immediately. There can be literally hundreds of tertiary people supporting a primary or secondary person's success.

How Does the Shared Accountability Model Work?

The basic assumption in this model is that the parties are choosing to operate co-creatively and pursue WIN-Win-Win outcomes (see Info Sheet: *WIN-Win-Win Model.*) This means they are intentionally and overtly operating as partners on a unified team pursuing common "enterprise-wide" goals. This team may be formal, or a "team" in principle only.

When planning activities and using this model, people in a primary role should ask for the support they need from those who can provide it, and, the people who can provide support should volunteer it to those primary people who may need it. Both parties, primary and secondary, become responsible for ensuring a path to success. Anyone who is aware of these primary and secondary roles being formed and who understands this model automatically acquires a tertiary role whether overtly negotiated or not.

Once the tasks and the levels of accountability are clear, the doers, supporters, and scouts get busy doing what is required to succeed. The doers and supporters meet as negotiated to give and receive support, and the tertiary people work on their other activities, providing valuable information as they discover it.

When the doer succeeds, the secondary and tertiary people get to share in that success to the level of accountability they had in it. They get to be acknowledged for their contributions and to reflect on and improve how they might perform a similar role next time.

If the doer fails, then all parties share in that as well, to the level of accountability they each had. Rather than blame others or deny their lack of contribution to the failure, all parties, even the tertiary people, ask themselves, "How was I accountable?" "What did I miss?" "Given my role, what did I not contribute that was needed for success, and how could I have provided it?"

The primary person asks those questions regarding his or her failed achievement process. The secondary people ask the questions regarding the support they delivered or did not deliver. And the tertiary people ask the questions regarding whether they kept their eyes open wide enough and their voices strong enough. This reflective, "we are all accountable" mindset puts everyone in a co-creative learning orientation. It builds relationships, trust, and a solid foundation for future success. It unleashes all involved to achieve their collective best.

Summary

The motto of the Shared Accountability Model is, "Everyone is accountable; no one is to blame." Blaming carries no benefit. It is a downward spiral that readies you and your organization for more failure. Anytime people blame, they are not owning their contribution to a problem. Blame is the single largest drain of human potential in organizations. But you can reduce it!

Using the Shared Accountability Model will reduce blame and increase personal responsibility in your organization. Overtly identifying levels of accountability will create a cultural norm and collective behavior pattern of personal responsibility, which will catalyze collective learning and increased trust, and fuel an upward spiral to exceptional performance.

The Three Roles and Their Responsibilities

Primary Roles: The Doers	Responsible for delivering a specific result:
	➢ Doing the work ➢ Communicating desired results ➢ Getting the action plan or change process designed and implemented ➢ Communicating boundaries and parameters for: Budgeting and resource allocation Quality standards Authority and decision-making Time frames Style and tone
Secondary Role: The Supporters	**Responsible for providing a negotiated need:**
	➢ Resources ➢ Monitoring progress ➢ Coaching/mentoring ➢ Celebrating ➢ Emotional support
Tertiary Role: Scouts	**Responsible for scanning the environment for pertinent information:**
	➢ Staying alert and observant about the needs of the project ➢ Identifying and sharing relevant ideas or information with primary and secondary people

Worksheet 1

KEY PARTNERSHIPS TO ESTABLISH

Name	Name

Contract

SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERSHIP

Partner A: **Partner B:**

Date:

What We Want to Accomplish Together

Clarify your WIN-Win-Win outcomes: First, identify the Big Wins, the large, global achievements that unite the two of you because you both support achieving them. Then, identify your individual objectives, the desired outcomes you are each pursuing on your own. Make all these "wins" as measurable as possible.

The Big Wins:

Partner A Wins (Desired Outcomes):

Partner B Wins (Desired Outcomes):

How We Want to Work Together to Produce these Outcomes

Shared Accountability: Decide your primary, secondary and tertiary roles, using the Shared Accountability Model. Given your agreed upon WIN-Win-Win outcomes, each of you identify your areas of primary accountability for achieving those outcomes. For each primary role you have, list any secondary or tertiary support your partner agrees to provide.

Partner A:

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

Partner B:

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

Guiding Principles / Groundrules: Identify the principles / ground rules that will guide your desired personal and interactive behavior. Write these as positive statements that affirm the behaviors you want in your relationship.

Example: "We give each other full, honest, and accurate information as soon as we receive it." "We listen to each other before making judgments." "We ask each other about our intent rather than make assumptions about the other."

Guiding Principles / Groundrules

What and How We Will Learn Together to Produce the Best Possible Outcome

Learning Objectives: List your learning objectives for the mindsets, behaviors and skills you want to develop through your partnership, on behalf of co-creating your Big Win. Write each learning objective as a positive affirmation (e.g., for mindset, "I am comfortable with uncertainty;" for behavior, "I give my complete attention when someone is speaking to me;" for skill, "I facilitate the team to consider employee concerns.") Describe the specific mindset, behavior, or skill you choose to learn, not the deficiency you currently have.

Mindset Objectives	
Partner A:	**Partner B:**

Behavioral Objectives	
Partner A:	**Partner B:**

Skill Objectives	
Partner A:	**Partner B:**

How We Will Support Each Other

Support Needs: List specific ways each partner will provide support to the other.

Support Needs	
Partner A's Support to B:	**Partner B's Support to A:**

Agreements for Carrying Out Your Partnership

List any overt agreements that will help your partnership operate more consciously and successfully.

Time-out signal you will use to request a "center-to-center" (meaningful, heart-to-heart) conversation:

Agreements about your two-way coaching process, style, and needs:

Agreements about how you will give/receive feedback:

Agreements about how you will resolve conflict and differences:

How you will celebrate your successes:

When and how often you will meet to discuss your partnership (specify dates/time if possible):

Signatures	
Partner A Print Name:	Partner B Print Name:
Date:	Date: