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# Intentional Business Integrity

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Millard MacAdam

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Frustrated, saddened and angered by the growing integrity crisis and the negative impact it is having on your business, the economy and customer trust? Don't give up! As a proactive business leader you can help instill right thinking, talk and action in the hearts and minds of your staff and foster Intentional Business Integrity and mutual accountability within your company.

Replacing the present Conditional Integrity operating paradigm with the Intentional Integrity operating paradigm will be a person by person, organization by organization effort that will eventually make a moral and economic difference. The time for this paradigm shift is too long over due. Unless leaders of companies, government organizations, churches and educational organizations institutionalize Intentional Integrity and a meaningful mutual accountability process to support it, too many people's ethical standards of conduct will continue to falter. Without mutual accountability, the wrong thinking and actions we have seen in recent press and television reports will keep us in the present dysfunctional and downward cycle of distrust and economic instability.

Think about the positive power for good that you will create by taking your company's core governing operating values and making them the "stuff" of some Intentional Integrity Check Questions you and your staff regularly ask of one another at weekly team and department meetings.

Some of the governing operating values I've seen adopted by companies that have had a high payback in customer and employee trust and productivity are: honesty, collaboration, cooperation, customer service, compassion, family fidelity, patience, timeliness, diligence, thoroughness, responsibility, open communication, perseverance and loyalty. These represent but a few.

In my book, *Intentional Personal Integrity*, I urge readers to phrase their Intentional Integrity Check Questions in a positive, goal-like way. An example question for the governing operating value of Honesty might be, "During this last week have you told only the truth and taken only what was rightfully yours?" The "taken" in this question obviously applies to money, expense accounts and customer billings, but it can also be expanded to apply to inappropriate talk or actions that take such things as other's self esteem, other's valuable time, and other's personal sense of security.

By phrasing the Intentional Integrity Check Questions in positive, goal-like ways, colleagues can encourage and coach one another toward more stellar performance and help one another be actively in pursuit of manifesting the company's governing operating values at work and in the field with customers.

Intentional Integrity Check Questions can be added or deleted as they best relate to your

company's intended governing operating values. Department or work groups in any type or size company or organization can incorporate an Intentional Integrity Check Process as a short, powerful part of their regular meeting agendas. Also, a powerful customer trust-building strategy is to let your customers know in writing what your company's governing operating values are and ask them to provide feedback to help keep all members of your company team accountable to honoring them.

This Intentional Integrity Check process is part of the Personal Accountability and Commitment Team (PACT) process I encourage my clients to put in place to foster right thinking, talk and actions and deter wrong thinking, talk and actions. PACT groups are formed among all natural teams and work groups within the company to help everyone keep faith with the governing operating values of the company. These groups, using the Intentional Integrity Check Process as short part of their regular meeting agendas, help keep interpersonal trust and productivity high among one another and confidence among their customers. A description of the entire PACT process can be found at my web site.

Share the Intentional Business Integrity steps below with other leaders you know in the marketplace and in government, educational and church organizations and you will be part of a positive force in helping to turn around the awful integrity crisis we face in America and the world. These mutual accountability steps will help leaders and staff members get on course and express their highest character, competence and commitment to contributing to the achievement of their company's worthwhile vision, values, mission and goals. The steps are:

### **INITIATE AN ORGANIZATION-WIDE, 360 DEGREE MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

**PROGRAM** and expect it to be used by everyone throughout your company, from the top down. Make sure it includes an Intentional Integrity Check Process related to your company's core governing operating values.

**ASSESS YOUR PEOPLE'S, MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY SKILLS** and take the steps to strengthen them! Observation, giving affirmative and corrective feedback, receiving feedback, interpersonal communication, and peer coaching are some of the key ones.

**TRAIN EVERYONE IN THE SKILLS FOR BEING MUTUALLY ACCOUNTABLE.** Demonstrate the "how" of being accountable and don't assume people already know. The PACT process mentioned above is a great mutual accountability training tool.

**INFORM ONE ANOTHER CLEARLY AND DIRECTLY** when you observe that a colleague is not being accountable. Dialogue with them to find out why. Let them know that you want to help them get back on course in terms of their expression of character, competence and commitment related to the company's governing operating values.

**ASK YOUR COLLEAGUES HOW THEY PLAN TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE** and be assertive about getting from them a real, action-step solution rather than just promises.

**LAY OUT LOGICAL POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES**

so that you and your colleagues know exactly what will happen when what you have agreed to does or does not happen.

**HELP YOUR COLLEAGUES BECOME ACCOUNTABLE** by establishing check-in times to help them monitor and establish the expected behaviors. Early in the process help them positively reinforce their successes and then make the check-in times less and less frequent as their accountability improves.

**FIND OUT WHERE YOUR COLLEAGUE'S INTEGRITY IS SOFT AND WHY.** This is usually the source of waning accountability.

**HELP YOUR COLLEAGUES IDENTIFY AND REMOVE WHATEVER IS IN THE WAY** of them being accountable. Missing tools, lack of clear expectations, lack of clear directions and lack of a supportive, mutual accountability structure can be the problem.

**HELP YOUR COLLEAGUES GROW IN THE INTELLECTUAL AND EMOTIONAL UNDERSTANDING** that mutual accountability is a positive career-enhancing opportunity, not a should. Share the benefits of mutual accountability and how it can help everyone gain and maintain stellar lives and secure, long-term careers and company stability and longevity.

**HELP YOUR COLLEAGUES BE ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS AND COACHES** to one another, like you are being a coach and accountability partner to them.

**CAREFULLY EXAMINE TOGETHER THE INTEGRITY OF THE KEY FUNCTIONS IN YOUR ORGANIZATION** of leadership, management, marketing, sales and customer service to make sure all are fine-tuned and optimally contributing to the gaining and retaining of the loyal, satisfied and long-term customers who are the foundation for profitability, stability and longevity for any type or size company.

Intentional Business Integrity as a norm supported by mutual accountability is a win-win proposition! Establish it and nurture it and we will all be ahead in enjoying higher ethical conduct, trust, productivity, company stability and true profitability!

If you need help in mastering and implementing any of the skills and tactics mentioned, I'm here for you! Please visit the Call-A-Coach section of my web site for more information.

About the author:

Dr. Mac shares with business owners the practical knowledge and insights he gained as a small company CEO. He founded Sycamore Ranch, Inc. when 27 and as CEO led his partners and a staff of 100 for 16 years in developing and operating the 50 acre recreational facility. Years later, he integrated what he learned from his Doctoral program at USC with his practical business experiences and began consulting. For four decades Mac's coached business owners in mastering and applying "how to" leadership and managerial skills for: Hiring and retaining only the top ten percent producers; Optimally deploying and supervising staff to maximize their personal motivation; Developing high integrity leadership teams; Facilitating mutual performance accountability and peer coaching processes; and, Integrating his Intentional Business Integrity Process into their company operations. Mac has served leaders in manufacturing and high tech companies; accounting, banking and insurance enterprises; medical and health care organizations; service and retail oriented businesses; as well as educational, governmental and non profit organizations. Q&A ProActive Leadership 888-648-5552 or MacAdam@PALConsulting

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