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## Focus

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### Adult Day Care

Are you running a business or an Adult Day Care center? You have company if you were tempted to choose the second option. Many business owners and managers are frustrated by employees' immature behavior. You thought you hired a responsible adult! Then some of these grown-ups fail to carry out basic tasks (*Do your homework!*), make literal messes (*Clean up your room!*), and take advantage of - or brazenly violate - policies (*No snacks before supper!*)

What's a Boss to do? **Demand accountability.**

The certainty of facing consequences, whether pleasant or punitive, of one's actions solves a host of performance and behavioral problems. Unfortunately, accountability is absent in many workplaces. Some bosses ignore employee transgressions, preferring to avoid confrontation. Others "blow up" with much sound and fury, but then fail to take meaningful action.

**Lack of accountability is like a cancer.** Unchecked, it spreads throughout an organization, sapping morale and diminishing productivity. The full costs of poor behavior by one employee extend beyond that person, but these hidden costs are often difficult to recognize.

The best performers resent the fact that slackers "get away with it." Worse, these dedicated people often see little advantage to doing a great job because rewards and recognition are absent. I hear variations on this theme frequently during confidential employee interviews.

The standards a leader defines and demands set the workplace tone. Actions **do** speak louder than words. Employees look around to see what behaviors are allowed, or demanded. What they see is far more powerful than written company policies or lofty mission statements.

What do your employees know is tolerated, or expected? Be honest. If you do not like the answer, begin setting and communicating crystalline-clear expectations. Then follow up (*check their homework*) and respond appropriately.

Demanding accountability is not complicated, but it does require backbone. You cannot be wimpy about it. Be constant and consistent. Your ~~kids~~ employees will be better off for your efforts.

*Tom Wagner*

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