

Leadership Day #4
Accountability without Authority
Tuesday, March 23rd, 2021, 2:00-3:30 PM (EST)
Participants: 68

In this session, you will learn about, leading and participating in a committee or workgroup to get things done, the dysfunction of accountability without authority and ways to manage it and being a force for effective communication and a healthier volunteer environment. This session will be led by WEF Staff, Lisa Ruane.

Dianne Crilley: Housekeeping items (Please Mute, keep cameras on and Use the chat box). Thank you to Craig Kelman & Associates for sponsoring the Leadership Series and for their support to MA Programs.

Welcome Comments by **Jamie Eichenberger**, WEF President-Elect: Thank you again for joining us today. I am glad to sit in on these webinars so far. I am excited for today's topic. I have struggled how to motivate volunteers. I have heard from volunteers, "Work got in the way" or "I didn't think it was important" or "The event isn't until next week." But the most common excuse I hear is, "I forgot".

My top five to make things easy for the volunteers:

- Lead by Example.
- Clarity is Kindness.
- Having conversations and setting expectations beforehand.
- Explaining how "something" influences others.
- Check-In.

WEF Items Update:

- WEF is planning for an in-person WEFTEC in mid-October.
- Wastewater fundamentals II (book) is available and ready for shipment at the end of March 2021.
- Maile Lono-Batura has been hired as WEF's new Director of Sustainable Biosolids.
- The Board of Trustees is updating the 2018 strategic plan.

Lisa Ruane (Session Leader): Lisa provided professional background of herself. Context for today – Volunteering. Everyone one is working toward a common purpose. The Committee chairperson perspective is another angle from which we will be working. The final part to this is the staff. They are your partner. Bear in mind, networking is different from volunteering. It is important and serves as a *share & learn* activity. "Volunteering is *raising your hand*. It's a bit more than networking." Below is what we are trying to accomplish:

- Differentiate the meanings of to be responsible, accountable and to have authority.
- Describe the actions to get something done with a volunteer group.
- Recognize the dysfunction of accountability without authority; ways to manage it.
- Describe and practice behaviors that create a positive volunteer culture.

What do you want to get from this session? Lisa asked participants to write this down in "Chat".

- Like to motivate others to volunteer.
- Ideas & Tips
- Communicate my passion & leadership skills.
- Systems to allow for faster decision-making.

Define the following:

- To be Responsible:
- To be Accountable:
- To have Authority:

Breakout Rooms (Introduce yourself, define share examples of each word from the perspective of a committee chair, capture the examples – 20 mins)

You cannot be accountable without authority. Delegate responsibility but never authority. The hot potato lands in your lap if you are the leader/chairperson.

Brian Arntsen: We did not find it so hard. Nice discussion

Greg Hill: The definitions were hard.

Key Word Definitions:

- **Responsible** - State or fact of having a duty or task.
Joshua Muskopf, "There is a level of trust needed to be present."
Brian Arntsen "Putting in the time."
- **Accountable** – The fact or condition of accepting responsibility for actions.
Jamie Eichenberger "Do what you say you are going to do."
Ken Vogt "Make a commitment to deliver."
Ulrike Lashley "I hold myself accountable to others."
Samantha Weidenbenner "You need to communicate where you're at or what the status is; communicate the status."
Mike Dirks: Group 6 summary, "Emphasize that there is a choice for leaders on their perspective to be of authority rather than "to have" authority by guiding teams with resources to empower their actions. We saw there is a struggle in teams for those that are often most responsible and accountable to have the most passion for their professional role."
- **Authority** – The power or right to give orders, make decisions. See Mike's Dirks's comments above. Mike Dirks added, "There is a sentiment that being of authority is more palatable for collaboration rather than having the authority and making an executive decision on behalf of the team. How do we bring in others into the buy-in to reach a goal?"
Jack Kooyoomjian stated, "The volunteers bring their best talent to develop something. They bring the best talent/principles to create something while looking at the bigger picture to create a product/vision with is applicable in a broader picture."
Raj Bhattarai added, "Discussed being a servant leader."

MA Awards Selection (Media-Slide): Specifically, the Committee Chair, The Board has ultimate responsibility for the organization but in this case, the Board gives responsibility with a committee and committee chair. We will give them some authority and provide guidelines.

Ulrike Lashley (Question): "In the case of Chairs or temporary teams, who assigns that authority of the leader?"

Lisa Ruane, "How does this authority come to be? In some cases, it is in the by-laws or in policy provided by the organization. If the leader is going to emerge from the group, you need permission/conversation to allow that person to be the leader."

Takeaways:

- Authority & Accountability go together.
- Responsibility can be shared; authority cannot.
- Clarifying boundaries to ease work effort.

Ellen Frketic: "It's very challenging because sometimes committees don't know their function and they need the boundaries to be clarified. They need to know what is expected of them."

Lisa Ruane "The board has the decision to give or not to give."

"What does it feel like to have responsibility and not be empowered to make decisions?"**Replies via chat:**

From Casey Gish: Between a rock and hard place

From Fred Smith: frustrating

From Jamie Eichenberger: Like It is not worth my time

From Ken Vogt: Like walking the gang plank.

From Janet Cann: being set up to fail

What does it feel like when you have responsibility and are empowered to make decisions?**Replies via chat:**

From Greg Williams: Motivating

From Laurie Frieders: Feel efficient and calm.

From Jamie Eichenberger: I second "Motivating."

From Tara Washington: Efficient

From Greg Hill: That is what we signed up for. Let's run!

From Mike Dirks: It sounds like you have some goals and can define how to meet the goals. If positioned in a framework of teams or collaborating, it can feel empowering to help others succeed.

From Kachig Jack Kooyoomjian: Empowerment is motivating for volunteers. To seek consensus among a group of professionals is empowering.

What are the Boundaries?

- Project/task Scope, Outcomes, Timeframes, Checkpoints, Budget/Pricing, Use of assets besides money.

Indra Maharjan "How does empowerment change due to the virtual setting instead of in-person?"

Lisa Ruane, "It all comes down to communication." Communication of those boundaries is key to manage the dysfunction.

To manage dysfunction:

- Relationship build/Maintain.
- Clarify boundaries – up front and along the way.
- Ask for what you need.
- Get comfortable with "no".
- Communicate with the right person.
- Stop asking for permission.

- Reflect on your motivations and behaviors.

Lisa Ruane, “We all want positive and functional groups. What can/do we do to create/energize those on the committee?”

Replies via chat:

From Fred Smith: Lead with passion

From Casey Gish: Build personal relationships!

From Greg Williams: Recognition

From Ulrike Lashley: Be honest and open about available time and energy and tailor tasks and goals to that available time.

From Janet Cann: a lot is on the shoulder of the chair, that person needs to be motivated, committed, present and forward looking.

From Kachig Jack Kooyoomjian: Be realistic on the available time that you have for the task as volunteers.

From Ulrike Lashley: Use teaming to prevent burnout and to help and support each other.

From Mike Dirks: Find out “What’s in it for you?” How can I help you get there? Give choice. Create small ways to experience success.

From Leanne Scott: Add new members and get their input - not just the same vocal members.

From Barbara Scapardine: take advantages of opportunities to engage others.

From Raj Bhattarai: Openness and honesty in Committee, Committee Chair is the key to inspire members.

From Ulrike Lashley: Provide very clear tasks and let people know what their tasks is a part of what it works toward, the bigger picture they are contributing to.

Breakout Session (10 Minutes)

Discuss what a Committee chair can DO to energize those on the committee

Comments from Breakout Rooms

Phillip Sexton, “We have many engaged members of the symposium. How do we get them to the table? We laid out expectations and tell us if you have conflicts. We will work with you. We were honest and open and shared our expectations.”

Jack Kooyoomjian, “Identify people who have certain strengths to bring to the table. Know their backgrounds and their specific specialty areas. You can team up your committee into subgroups to get things done. We get the best out of people when we respect those with whom we’re working.”

Tara Washington, “You have to be careful to not burn out the most passionate volunteers.

Jamie Eichenberger, “Provide clear tasks. Like putting together a puzzle. Good to see the whole picture. How do you share your passion? Let them know what they are building toward.”

What did you want to get out of this session?

Replies via chat:

From Tara Washington: Provide better guidance documents.

From Greg Hill: giving responsibility vs authority

From Jamie Eichenberger: Share my passion! More one on one time with committee members

From Raj Bhattarai : Openness and honesty in Committee, Committee Chair is the key to inspire members.

From Ulrike Lashley: Provide very clear tasks and let people know what their tasks is a part of what it works toward, the bigger picture they are contributing to.

From Tara Washington: Provide better guidance documents.

From Greg Hill: giving responsibility vs authority

From Jamie Eichenberger: Share my passion! More one on one time with committee members

From Tara Washington: Have open discussions.

From Kachig Jack Kooyoomjian: Set realistic goals and boundaries and tasks.

From Ulrike Lashley: Identify team members with strength that would play to a certain task and assign tasks accordingly (while also using teaming).

From Laurie Frieders: Continue to push for cooperation in mapping all committee processes for review and realigning if necessary.

From Ellen Frketic: Yes, Laurie!!!

From Indra Maharjan: great session

From Laurie Frieders: If you cannot list the tasks...how can you recruit a volunteer for it?

Closing Remarks provided by Jamie Eichenberger

“Let the volunteers do the right thing, get the blocks out of their way. Reach out to your MA’s and share your experiences to assist others with any issues they may have. I appreciate the time to communicate and do not be afraid to share your vulnerabilities. That person-to-person communication is important.”