

# A=R

## Balance Accountability With Responsibility

The logo for 'hyphen' is located in the top right corner. It consists of the word 'hyphen' in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are colored: 'h' is blue, 'y' is orange, 'p' is green, 'h' is blue, 'e' is orange, and 'n' is green. The logo is set against a dark grey rounded rectangular background.

It seems that every church and business have a man made oasis. They are usually situated in a vestibule or break room that double as a place for refreshment and the nexus for the unofficial business meeting whose agenda is to discuss the current frustration with leadership. Unfortunately, it is up to leadership to identify what frustrates these people most. When faced with this reality leaders can either become suspicious about people and motives, or identify what will make us as leaders more effective. The latter suggestion is the only solution for godly leaders. The purpose for this article is to equip the leader with a balanced approach to unifying a team while fulfilling a vision.

Since no one has created coffee makers and water coolers that come equipped with built-in recording devices, the first task to creating a cohesive team is to identify some possible frustrations with leadership. Some might be:

- The leader doesn't trust people to finish a task.
- Leaders just "pawns" off work because they do not want to do it.
- The only true communication comes when we do something wrong.
- Therefore, there is no open communication.
- Finally, the leader talks a good game, but doesn't follow through.

**There is no need for extensive research to know these concerns, just identify what frustrates us when we are working under others. Frustrations arise because either there is a problem with accountability and/or responsibility.**

The only solution is to balance accountability with responsibility. A simple formula to input to any process is A=R or the amount of responsibility given must be given an equal amount of accountability. *i* Responsibility is the task that is given (for example, starting a new ministry). Accountability is defined as being liable to being required to give an account.

**Some leaders define delegation as giving a task to a person or team then forgetting about it or stepping in when there are problems. In reality, this is giving all responsibility with no accountability. Other leaders micromanage a project and do not allow for the team to grow and creatively finish the task. This is all accountability with no responsibility.**

The unfortunate result of this kind of delegation is that it leaves the team thinking one or all of these thoughts:

- The leader doesn't care holistically about the team, only getting the task done. This could be seen as manipulative.
- The leader will only come and talk to the team when something is wrong, which kills morale.
- Worse of all, people may view the leader as trying to get out of work.

These issues can be addressed through a simple process of A=R. Here are some practical steps to accomplish this.

- Only start something new if you have the proper staffing to finish the task.
- The bigger the task or responsibility, the more structure the accountability should be. This could be done through a set meeting time or a casual "tag-in" coffee meeting.

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- Identify if the skills needed for the task, match the skills of the team.

This will save time and keep morale high.

When the team is then given the responsibility or task, immediately set up a system of accountability between leadership and team members

This is not a one way street; both sides are accountable to each other. The team is accountable to finish the task and the leader is accountable to provide the tools and direction. This will also open the communication lines.

Follow through

- Make sure that the meetings set up happen.
- When tempted to take over, resist and equip your team to do better.
- Applaud when good happens and correct what needs to be corrected in private.
- Finally, Celebrate and Debrief

No task is complete until the team gets together and parties about the successes and identifies what to do better next time.

**While leading people where they have never gone is difficult, it is easier if they know that they are apart of the process. For this is truly what it means to be a member of the body of Christ. ★**

— **Nathaniel Binion**  
Hyphen Director

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i David Bernard, Church Growth Principles Class, Urshan Graduate School of Theology, January, 2002