

Procrastination and accountability

Synopsis

Accountability is an assurance that an individual or organization is evaluated on its performance or behavior related to something for which it is responsible.

Procrastination is the act of delaying or postponing a task or set of tasks. So, whether you refer to it as procrastination or akrasia or something else, it is the force that prevents you from following through on what you set out to do.

➤ **Accountability in the Workplace**

For companies to be successful, employees must conduct themselves with accountability.

There are soft skill aspects of accountability. Accountability includes showing up to work when expected and showing up to work prepared for the tasks for the day.

Accountability extends to every department and every employee, as it starts with being present, honest, and engaged in everyday tasks outside of one's job.



There are a few ways a company builds, manages, and sustains accountable practices, such as:

- Making employees verbally commit to completing certain tasks and ensuring they follow through with these tasks.
- Having upper management set expectations on the duties to be completed and the associated deadlines.
- Creating a safe environment where taking risks is rewarded and learning occurs in a natural, non-threatening way.
- Defining ownership of tasks, projects, or other aspects of work. Should there be a problem, the owner of that task or project must be held accountable.

➤ Procrastination at Work: What It Looks Like

For many of us, procrastination is the bane of our professional world. As companies have adopted more remote and hybrid working methods, it seems like distractions are limitless, from noisy apartment neighbors to our beloved furry friends. And while procrastination can show up in everyday life, it's especially common in the workplace.

These distractions constantly pull our attention away from the tasks at hand. We now have lots of things to balance while at work. Without realizing it, several minutes and even hours go by without doing our work responsibilities.

Believe it or not, this is a form of procrastination

➤ Why Do You Procrastinate?

We often come up with a number of excuses or rationalizations to justify our behavior, there are 15 key reasons why people say they procrastinate.

- ▶ Not knowing what needs to be done
- ▶ Not knowing how to do something
- ▶ Not wanting to do something
- ▶ Not caring if it gets done or not
- ▶ Not caring when something gets done
- ▶ Not feeling in the mood to do it
- ▶ Being in the habit of waiting until the last minute
- ▶ Believing that you work better under pressure
- ▶ Thinking that you can finish it at the last minute
- ▶ Lacking the initiative to get started
- ▶ Forgetting
- ▶ Blaming sickness or poor health
- ▶ Waiting for the right moment
- ▶ Needing time to think about the task
- ▶ Delaying one task in favor of working on another



The Negative Impact of Procrastination

Unfortunately, this procrastination can have a serious impact on a number of life areas, including a person's mental health and social, professional, and financial well-being.

- ▶ Higher levels of stress and illness
- ▶ Increased burden placed on social relationships
- ▶ Resentment from friends, family, co-workers, and fellow students
- ▶ Consequences of delinquent bills and income tax returns
- ▶ How to Overcome Procrastination
You might find yourself wondering



➤ How can I stop procrastinating?

- ▶ **Make a to-do list:** To help keep you on track, consider placing a due date next to each item.
- ▶ **Take baby steps:** Break down the items on your list into small, manageable steps so that your tasks don't seem so overwhelming.
- ▶ **Recognize the warning signs:** Pay attention to any thoughts of procrastination and do your best to resist the urge. If you begin to think about procrastinating, force yourself to spend a few minutes working on your task.
- ▶ **Eliminate distraction:** Ask yourself what pulls your attention away the most—whether it's Instagram, Facebook updates, or the local news—and turn off those sources of distraction.
- ▶ **Pat yourself on the back:** When you finish an item on your to-do list on time, congratulate yourself and reward yourself by indulging in something you find fun.

➤ Dangers of procrastination

Procrastination is associated with various potential issues, including missed opportunities, worse academic performance, worse employment and financial status, increased interpersonal conflicts, worse emotional wellbeing, worse mental health, worse physical health, and a tendency to postpone getting treatment for one's problems.

Accountability

Accountability is an acceptance of responsibility for honest and ethical conduct towards others.



➤ Benefits of Accountability

Accountability promotes operational excellence. This is especially true when employees are rewarded for strong accountability with raises, promotions, and public recognition.

Accountability safeguards company resources. Accountability is not limited to just doing your job; it is the practice of being honest and responsible for your actions in all situations.

Accountability yields more accurate results. Companies with a standard of accountability will have boundaries of acceptable deviation. For example, a company may allow for a certain dollar threshold of financial misstatement due to immateriality. If a company holds itself accountable to a low threshold of materiality, it will not accept larger errors, unexplainable variances, or delays in reporting.

Accountability builds external investor trust. An investor's confidence in a company is only driven so far based off of the prospect of financial success.