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TESTIMONIAL

"With McGhee's approach to work/life balance and productivity, I've freed myself from the constant bombardment of e-mail and distractions. The methods have made me a better leader and increased my team's effectiveness."

**CIO,
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Institution**

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In this issue of *Insider's Link to Productivity*, we ask you to review your organization's culture by taking a two-minute quiz to determine if your culture is reasonable or accountable. If constant finger-pointing and justifications are commonplace in your culture, it may be time to find a solution.

- Laurie Oswald, McGhee Sales & Marketing Director

To learn more about McGhee's products and services, please [click here](#).

Is Your Culture Reasonable or Accountable?

Systems and processes are important and necessary components of any successful business, but it's the human element -- rife with emotions, view points, opinions, and beliefs that can have the greatest impact in an organization. How do we leverage these individual personalities and strengths to create desired results? It starts with developing a culture of accountability.

Take this quiz to see if your organization is reasonable or accountable.

- 1.) Is your team proactive and engaged in *causing and creating* to make their objectives happen? **Accountable**
- 2.) Does your team *tell you the reasons why* they did not or cannot meet their objectives? **Reasonable**
- 3.) Do you or other team members avoid taking responsibility and *blame* circumstances for diminished results? **Reasonable**
- 4.) Does your team respond to circumstances by *creating* empowering solutions for the good of the organization? **Accountable**
- 5.) Is your staff passive, constantly waiting for others to tell them what to do? **Reasonable**

SPECIAL OFFER

If you missed the complimentary webcast last month "Managing for Accountability," it's not too late. The recorded version is now available.

[Click here to view](#)

TIPS & TRICKS

Having trouble staying focused on your objectives? Here are three actions you can take:

- 1) Keep a list of your objectives in front of you where you can see them.
- 2) Review your objectives weekly for progress and new actions.
- 3) When processing e-mail and voice mail, always ask the question, "Does this relate to one of my objectives?"

6.) Does your team recognize when they are off-track, and do they proactively course correct to get back on-track?

Accountable

7.) Are key members of your team disengaged, constantly out of communication, separating themselves from others?

Reasonable

If you received one or more "Reasonable" outcomes to these questions, you should speak to a McGhee consultant to learn which programs and offerings are available to help you create a culture of accountability within your organization. To connect with a qualified consultant, e-mail: info@mcgheepro.com.

Think Twice; Send Once

We all receive unclear, confusing e-mail messages that leave us feeling frustrated. Though we can rarely change other people's habits, we can change our own by making sure our e-mail responses are well thought out, contain all the necessary information, and convey an appropriate tone.

When we demonstrate these habits consistently, we end up setting a standard for those around us, which over time can reduce the total number of messages exchanged.

Here are a few pointers to help you construct meaningful e-mail responses:

Make sure you've thoughtfully considered the intent of the message before you respond. For example, take the time to understand the scope of a project and the actions it requires before handing it off through e-mail. Also, evaluate whether e-mail is the right medium or the best way to delegate the work. Would a phone call or face-to-face meeting be more appropriate?

Reread the original e-mail message before sending your response. Have you addressed all of the questions and/or action items that were requested of you?

Watch out for "flame mail." Read (and reread) e-mail responses to identify and remove emotion before you hit "Send." Your impatience or irritation can affect the tone of the message. Note: It's OK to write a "flame e-mail" as long as you don't send a "flame email," e.g. write and then delete! This can be a useful strategy when you follow it with a phone call or in-person conversation -- see next point.

Work out disagreements one-to-one, either in-person or by phone. Using e-mail to handle emotionally charged

situations or to communicate a strong difference of opinion can often escalate the conflict. When in doubt, pick up the phone or schedule an in-person discussion.

Stop runaway e-mail threads. Once an e-mail thread reaches four iterations, consider the benefits of ending the thread and instead scheduling a meeting. If you initiated the thread, you can easily stop it. For closure, you may choose to provide a summary of the discussion or solution. If you didn't initiate the communication, consider contacting the party responsible to request a different approach.

Leave useful out-of-office messages. Whether you're off-site or on vacation, it's important that out-of-office messages provide emergency contact and/or coverage information; this will support others in making decisions during your absence.

E-Mail responses that are well written and thought out will help to ensure a professional, focused, and successful communication. When used routinely, the benefit is often a reduction in the amount of e-mail you send and receive, which, in the long run, benefits both you and those around you.

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McGhee Productivity Solutions, Inc. (McGhee) provides consulting services, tools and education to increase productivity and work/life balance. Based in Denver, CO, McGhee integrates its proven methods and protocols with Microsoft technology to deliver innovative action-management strategies to individuals and organizations worldwide. From the boardroom to the knowledge worker, the McGhee approach maximizes technology investments, improves job satisfaction and drives sustainable productivity throughout an organization. Sally McGhee, CEO, is the author of the popular book series Take Back Your Life! Using Microsoft Outlook to Get Organized and Stay Organized.

McGhee is in the process of becoming a Certified Woman-Owned Business