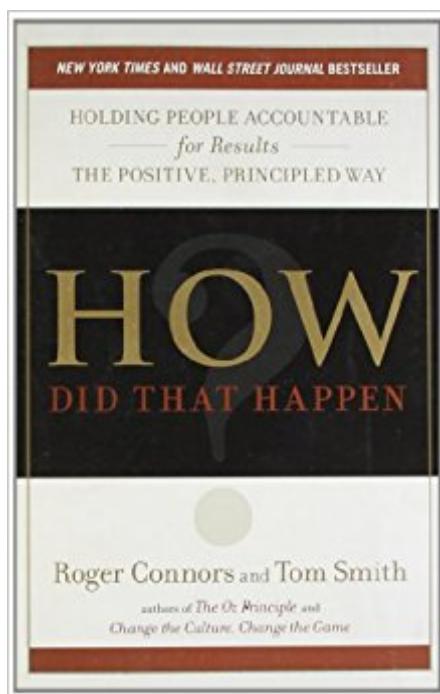


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# How Did That Happen?: Holding People Accountable For Results The Positive, Principled Way



## **Synopsis**

The New York Times bestseller that provides a simple, proven approach to improve accountability and the bottom line. The economy crashes, the government misfires, businesses fail, leaders don't lead, managers don't manage, and people don't follow through, leaving us asking, "How did that happen?" Surprises caused by a lack of personal accountability plague almost every organization today, from the political arena to large and small businesses. *How Did That Happen?* offers a proven way to eliminate these nasty surprises, gain an unbeatable competitive edge, and enhance performance by holding others accountable the positive, principled way. As the experts on workplace accountability and the authors of *The Oz Principle*, Roger Connors and Tom Smith tackle the next crucial step everyone can take, whether working as a manager, supervisor, CEO, or individual performer: creating greater accountability in all the people on whom you depend.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Definitely the 'go-to' book for teaching organizational accountability that works- without the backlash." -Stephen R. Covey, author, *The 7 habits of Highly Effective People* "Packed with practical tools and insights, this is the book that can help you turn accountability from concept into reality." -Jim Mazzo, president, Abbott Medical Optics "Connors and Smith have done it again! . . . This book will provide a competitive advantage at a time when 'accountability' is more important than ever before!" -David Brandon, chairman and CEO, Domino's Pizza, Inc. "This is the right approach for getting results in today's global environment." -Gregory J. Newell, former U.S.

ambassador and assistant secretary of state "How Did That Happen? clearly outlines the path to accountability. . . . We will place a copy of this book in the hands of all leaders throughout our organization." -Michael Lippert, chief operating officer, Arby's Restaurant Group, Inc. "Creating greater accountability in a way that captures people's hearts and minds is harder than it looks. . . . How Did That Happen? delivers specific and practical advice to do just that." -Ginger Graham, former CEO, Amylin Pharmaceuticals, Inc. "Connors and Smith offer an insightful view into the underpinnings of accountability that translate into spectacular and sustainable results." -Michael Kneidinger, vice president of worldwide operations, Hard Rock CafT International "How Did That Happen? peels back the onion on achieving sustained accountability." -Jeff Brundage, senior vice president of human resources, American Airlines

Roger Connors and Tom Smith are cofounders of Partners in Leadership, an international management consulting firm with hundreds of clients in almost all major industries. They are also the coauthors of Journey to the Emerald City, a sequel toThe Oz Principle.Tom Smith and Roger Connors are cofounders of Partners in Leadership, an international management consulting firm with hundreds of clients in almost all major industries. They are also the coauthors of Journey to the Emerald City, a sequel toThe Oz Principle.

How Did That Happen provides a framework for setting expectations and then holding people accountable. The first half focuses on four stages of goal setting:- FORM goals (Frame them, make them Obtainable, make them easy to Repeat, and make them Measurable)- Communicate (explain the Why behind the goals to win the hearts and minds, not just the hands and feet)- Align (getting agreement with stakeholders)- Inspect (check in by Listening, Observing, measuring Objectively, and therefore Know how things are going)The second half looks at breakdowns and helps people explore why a commitment has not been met. Four causes include:- Motivation issues- Skills- Corporate culture- Personal accountabilityFor new managers or others new to the topic, this would be a an accessible introduction and framework. If you've ready any other book on a related topic, such as Crucial Confrontations or even The One Minute Manager among others, or you've been exposed to SMART goals, I don't think you'll find much that is very knew other than some insightful stories, and acronyms that provide mnemonic keys to help with the process.There simply is no magic to accountability. Clearly established expectations, realistic plans for action, and then honest assessments with positive and negative consequences are the backbone for any process of accountability.If you've never read a book on the topic before, start with this one. If you have, then

you'll maybe pick up a few tips, but I don't think this will revolutionize the way you work.

The book makes a persuasive case for why accountability is important in the opening chapters. It then proceeds to focus on four stages of managing expectations: (1) Forming expectations: Frame them, make them obtainable, repeatable and measurable; (2) Communicate expectations: Communicating what is expected and why it is important - win their hearts and minds; (3) Align expectations: reach agreements with everyone involved, (4) Inspect expectations: Assess how closely key expectations are being met and provide support. The second half of the book looks at reasons for Accountability fails and they include: 1) Lack of Skills/Training, 2) Poor Motivation, 3) Lack of Personal Accountability and 4) Ineffective Corporate culture. The authors outline a comprehensive model of accountability that will enable you to hold others accountable in a positive way - a model that motivates and produces better and more consistent results.\* This book is the best I've read on the subject of Accountability.\* I do concur with their statement that "no other attribute of individual or organizational life contributes more to the success of individuals, teams, and organizations." Therefore this book would be a benefit to new managers as they develop their basic skills sets and help move seasoned managers to a Mastery level.\* The opening chapters do a terrific job in suggesting that the "command and control" style is ineffective and that one should re-frame their thinking after failure from "how did that happen" to "how did I let it happen" - the manager taking personal accountability for the failure rather than blaming the employee(s) or other factors\* A seasoned manager might find that there isn't much revolutionary that is presented here - clearly established and communicated expectations followed by real-time assessments of performance of expectations - with consequences to follow - form the core for any performance management system. However, we don't often execute in a consistent, scalable and positive manner using a disciplined end-to-end methodology and this is certainly the major draw card here with the suggested model. I did find myself doing mental loops throughout the book to assess whether I've properly set, communicated and inspected expectations.\* Authors offer considerable first-hand experience and credibility in the "Accountability Training" space. They have spent 20 years studying and teaching accountability. They share solid research. Authors use insightful examples to support their recommendations.\* The book includes valuable accountability self assessments (How Often I get Surprised; How Well you Form Expectations; Accountability "Style")\* The last 1/3 of the book get a bit long in the tooth (Training, Assessments, Culture) and I found myself wading through these chapters to finish.\* This is a good reference book which is better read in hard copy than on the Kindle - especially to fully leverage the assessment documents.\* My

favorite passages in the book that summarize the authors key message are:"Exactly how do we prevent the surprises that so often blindside us, despite all our best efforts to make things happen the way we expect them to happen? How can we improve our follow-up so that we get the results we want? And how do we do it without making people feel resentful, resistant, manipulated, and controlled?""True accountability is not about punishment. It is not about taking revenge against someone who has failed to meet your expectations. So, exactly what is it?...For some, accountability is a way to "act," a behavior you display only when threatened with punishment for poor performance. To others, accountability is an "attitude," a way of looking at your circumstances, good or bad, and taking the view that only you are responsible for what you do next and that blaming anyone else for what happens will simply waste time and energy. To us, accountability, in its truest and most authentic form, is a personal "attribute" that exemplifies who you are. It is "a way of being" that empowers you, each individual on your team and every single person in your organization, to meet and even surpass your highest expectations."

For my tastes, this book goes into too many models and layers. There is great content in the book, but I found I had to boil it down and simplify it further to make it something I could remember and use in my leadership work and team work. In my view the book comes across like a detailed textbook to accompany a multi-day workshop, and reading it felt like a lot of work. In the end, I got great value from it but think I could have gotten that value more easily if the authors or the editors had taken another pass. I do recommend the book if you are the sort who is able and willing to distill the most valuable essence from the mass of models and principles.

While well written, I kept finding many ideas that were limited and missed opportunities to expand peoples growth potential. An example was a series of questions that determined if you were dictatorial or overly supportive of people. If you answered the majority of odd questions yes you were dictatorial. Answering the even questions yes, then you were overly supportive. I answered no to all questions. If you were a teacher, then by nature, you would answer most questions no. It missed the entire concept of Business person as a mentor and teacher. There were many more instances like this.

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