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CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS – CONNECTING

# Accountability Partner Guide

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## How to get the most from your partnership

Building a creative business on your own can be an isolating experience.

It's so helpful to have someone to brainstorm, discuss and commit to your plans with. And to share your wins with, as well as your setbacks.

That's what this process is all about.

You'll partner up with a fellow entrepreneur and become each other's "accountability partner". You'll meet regularly (the frequency is up to you) to discuss your progress, make plans, and, most importantly, track if you actually did the things you said you would the last time you met.

After you've registered for an accountability partner, we'll match you with another member of our community who seems most compatible with you – and then introduce you.

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**The American Society of Training and Development (ASTD) did a study on accountability, and found that you have a 65% chance of completing a goal if you commit to someone. And if you have a specific accountability appointment with a person you've committed to, you will increase your chance of success by up to 95%.**

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## Meeting 1

Getting to know each other

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## Meeting 1: Getting to know each other

To help you schedule and plan your meetings, please download your [Accountability Partner Meeting Planner](#).

### Important things to agree on



#### How often do you want to connect?

The most common frequency to meet is every two weeks but some people choose to meet weekly, monthly or even quarterly (you can also have other accountability partners on different schedules).



#### How will you connect?

Zoom, Google Meet, or something else?



#### It's really crucial that you stick to what you've agreed

It's much better to meet fortnightly and always be there, versus planning to meet weekly and only showing up half the time.

## Now for the fun bit

You and your partner might have pretty similar businesses — or they might be wildly different. Either way, it's always fascinating seeing what other people are up to and it can open up a whole new world of ideas and inspiration. Here are a few things you might want to discuss in your inaugural chat...

### THINGS TO DISCUSS



Your business and what stage you're at



A bit about your industry and how it works



What tools, systems and marketplaces you're using — you can even share your screen and give your partner a peek into your world



What 'success' looks like to you and what you're trying to achieve

**Now you can start jotting down notes under the following headings in your shared Meeting Planner...**

### **Set some major short-term goals**

Maybe that's getting your business plan together, launching a certain service, growing your revenue, getting more customers or diversifying your product line.

### **Set some long-term and blue-sky goals**

Where do you hope to be a few years from now? And what if there were no barriers to your wildest dreams?

### **Now list your action points**

List five practical steps you can take between now and your next meeting to help you work towards your goals.

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# Future meetings

Recurring agenda tips

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## Future meetings

For your regular meetings, you'll always want to cover the following:



### Accountability check

Review your action points from the last meeting and see if you did them. If not, how come? Either move your incomplete items to the following meeting's notes, or cancel them if no longer relevant.



### Progress catchup

To-do list aside, how else have things been going? Any wins or successes? Any new opportunities spotted? Any obstacles or disappointments? What have you learned? Are your goals or strategies still the same?



### Action points

Based on the above, what are the five most important things you'll do between now and your next meeting? These 'action points' then form the basis for your next meeting's accountability check.



**Tip: display your 'action points' where you can see them every day, like on a post-it note, so you don't forget about them.**





## Top tips

ALWAYS SHOW UP	ASK: "OK, SO WHAT'S NEXT?"
<p>It's really important you stick to the rhythm of your meetings and make them a priority, rather than something that gets shifted around.</p> <p>Not only is this good manners towards your partner, it also helps you get into the routine and take the process seriously. (And of course, it means not avoiding meetings when you've been having an unproductive time.)</p>	<p>Discussing problems, sharing issues and blowing off steam is great – even necessary.</p> <p>But whatever's holding you back, make sure each discussion ends with some action points on how you plan to move forward next.</p>
BE EMPATHETIC AND NON-JUDGEMENTAL	COMMIT TO TASKS, NOT OUTCOMES
<p>Accountability is not about telling someone off if they've missed one of their key goals – it's a judgement-free process to help us grow, notice the things we're avoiding, and refocus on our priorities. But of course, it's fine to gently nudge people back on the course they set out for themselves.</p>	<p>It's easier to be accountable for something specific like "contact 20 potential new clients" than "get 5 new clients". You can always connect your tasks back to the overall goals you decided on previously. If too many of your tasks don't relate to your goals, either re-evaluate your goals or your tasks.</p>

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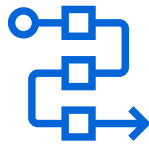
FOCUS ON IMPACT, NOT BUSYWORK	GIVE IT TIME
<p>The accountability process is most powerful when you identify 'next steps' to meaningfully push your business forward.</p> <p>“Catch up on all my emails” or “Send out my latest orders” are daily to-dos that are not usually worth the focus.</p> <p>That said, if you and your partner opt for quick daily-ish check-ins, these can still work.</p> <p>And if you're suffering from serious overwhelm or procrastination blues, there's no harm in concentrating on 'getting the basics right' for a while.</p>	<p>If this process is the first time you've done something like this, give it a few meetings to find your groove.</p> <p>Adapt and tailor the process to you and your partner's needs. Just be supportive, motivate each other and cheer on one another's success. You'll do great.</p>

## A few ideas...



### Show your work

It's usually pretty interesting to see 'behind-the-scenes' stuff, so, don't be shy about sharing work-in-progress, dashboards, planning docs, or anything else that brings your work to life. Screen sharing is there for a reason.



### Long-range planning

You can make certain meetings a little longer and take a longer-range view of your work. For example, once a quarter you could review your progress at a higher level (to look at revenue, customers, projects delivered, etc) and set new goals for the quarter ahead.



### Deep dives

Mix things up and get a new perspective on you and your partner's projects, with some different agenda items from time to time.

## Six ideas to get you started...

RECURRING SNAGS	NETWORK CONNECTIONS	IDOLS AND RIVALS
 <p>Are there certain things that repeatedly take you ages to accomplish? What is this costing you? Can you change the way you work to get rid of this?</p>	 <p>What expertise are you missing? Who would it be helpful to know? Can your partner connect you with anyone relevant? If not, how could you find them yourself?</p>	 <p>Who are your competitors? Who has a great brand? How did they do it? What would your business like to be when it 'grows up'? How might you get there?</p>
80/20	A NEW DIRECTION	THE SPEED PREZ
 <p>They say 80% of our results come from 20% of our work. What's your most powerful '20%'? What if you focused only on doing more stuff like that? What would you have to 'give up' doing?</p>	 <p>If you or your business were going to do something completely new, what might it be? Could you find a way to test or validate this idea quickly?</p>	 <p>There are some great frameworks to help you plan your business: strategy templates, brand pyramids, SWOT tables. Before your next meeting, take time to work through one of them.</p>



## Wrapping things up

You and your partner may feel you want to carry on indefinitely, which is fantastic. Or you may reach a stage where you feel the structured ‘accountability’ framework might have served its purpose. If so, we hope you’ll stay part of each other’s network. And if either of you needs to take a break, let there be no hard feelings.



## Finding new (or multiple) accountability partners

We provide a new ‘pairing up’ opportunity at the beginning of each calendar month and you’re welcome to participate in any of them. You can even have multiple partners, if you like, to get differing perspectives or insights.

For instance, you might meet with someone quite frequently about tactical issues, and catch up with someone else monthly to look at the ‘bigger stuff.’

## Some useful tools

### USEFUL TOOL NO.1



#### Video calls

The big three here are [Google Meet](#), [Microsoft Teams](#) and [Zoom](#). Thanks to current events, you're probably familiar with at least one of them.

### USEFUL TOOL NO.2



#### Note taking

It's important to jot down your thoughts, chronicle your journey and capture those crucial action points. Remember to use your shareable [Accountability Partner Meeting Planner](#) to do this.

### USEFUL TOOL NO.3



#### Calendar

Don't miss a meeting. Be sure to turn all your sessions into calendar events you're both invited to, along with a relevant link to meet, so you don't forget to turn up.

If you meet less frequently, you might want to set a reminder a few days ahead — a last chance to review your action points from the last meeting and try to get them done in time.

USEFUL TOOL NO.4



## Brainstorming and planning

Ah - the smell of a dry-erase marker, the pleasing adhesiveness of a Post-it note. Two popular tools for online brainstorming and planning sessions are [Mural](#) and [Miro](#), and for basic use, the free plan should be fine. For diagrams, [LucidChart](#) leads the way.

USEFUL TOOL NO.5



## Presenting

If you want to practise your pitch or walk your partner through a project, you might want to present a few slides. [Google Slides](#) is a go-to, of course, but we particularly love [WeTransfer's Paste](#), which makes it super-easy to embed images, links, social media posts and other visual content, so you can create a cleanly-laid-out deck in a few minutes.

USEFUL TOOL NO.6



## Something else?

[Product Hunt](#) is always full of fun new tools to try. And some teams have even taken to meeting up in Red Dead Redemption 2. (Just don't spend more time mucking about with fun new widgets than doing what you said you were going to.)

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**Born to create?  
Learn to do business.**

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