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CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS GUIDE TO THE

Accountability Partner Process

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How to use this workbook

Building a creative business can be an isolating experience.

Not having a boss definitely has its advantages – but it always helps to have somebody to brainstorm, discuss and commit to our plans with. And to share our wins with, as well as things that don't go so well.

That's what this process is all about!

You'll partner up with someone, and become one another's "accountability partner", meeting regularly (the frequency is up to you) to discuss your progress, make plans, and, most importantly, tracking if you actually did the things you said you would, last time you met.

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

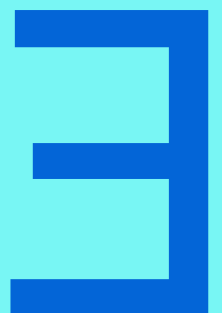
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Step One

Getting set up



Getting set up

After you have registered for an accountability partner, we'll match you with another one of our community members who looks most compatible with you, and then introduce you.

To get started, one of you should make a copy of this document and then share it with the other - this is where you'll keep your notes.

Two 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 different accountability partners on different schedules.



How will you connect?

Zoom, Google Meet, or something else?

To help you schedule and plan your catch-ups

We have created a Meeting Schedule Template, you can [download it here](#)

COMPLETED?

ACTION...

Add your contact info and meeting schedule to the document.



COMPLETED?

ACTION...

Create a calendar event for your scheduled meetings, and make sure you're both invited.



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

Make attending a priority.

You can always adjust the schedule. It's much better to meet fortnightly and always be there versus planing on meeting weekly and only showing up half the time.

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Meeting 1

Getting to know each other

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Meeting 1: Getting to know each other

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 (or plan for a future one!) 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 what your day-to-day looks like



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

Set some overarching goals over the next few months.

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

That way, as you make smaller commitments, you can see how well they connect to your overall goals. Is what you're planning on doing really helping you get to where you want to be?

Set goals for the next meeting

ACTION...

To get you in the swing for your future meetings: identify 3 things you think you can achieve before your next meeting. (In future, you'll always do this!)

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Meeting 2-2,000:

Recurring agenda tips

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Meeting 2-2,000: recurring agenda tips

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 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 obstacles or disappointments? What have you learned? Are your goals or strategies still the same?



Next steps:

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



Tip: put your 'next steps' somewhere you can see them every day, like 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 it good manners towards your partner, it 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'll 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 us 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 your 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>

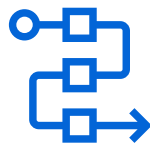
FOCUS ON IMPACT, NOT BUSYWORK	GIVE IT TIME
<p>The accountability process is most powerful when you identify ‘next steps’ that meaningfully push your business forward.</p> <p>“Catch up on all my emails” or “send out my latest orders” are day-to-day to-dos that are not usually worth the focus.</p> <p>That 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>This process is likely the first time you’ve done something like this, so 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 works-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 (e.g: 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 partners' projects with some different agenda items from time to time.

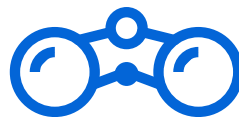
Six ideas to get you started...

RECURRING SNAGS	NETWORK CONNECTIONS	IDOLS AND RIVALS
 <p>Are there certain things that repeatedly take you ages to accomplish? What is it 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 has a great brand? Who are your competitors? What business would you like to be when it 'grows up'? How did they do it? 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 brand new, what could it be? Could you find a way to test or validate this idea quickly?</p>	 <p>There are lots of great frameworks for thinking about and planning your business – strategy templates, brand pyramids, SWOT tables. Take time ahead of the meeting to work through one.</p>



Wrapping things up:

The structured ‘accountability’ framework might have served its purpose by a certain point, for either you or your partner. We hope you’ll stay part of each other’s network, but if either of you needs to take a break from the process, then 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 useful to jot down thoughts, chronicle your journey, and most importantly of all, capture those crucial action points! Ideally, create a shared document that you can both edit simultaneously. We've shared a **Google Doc** for you to copy, but other tools are available. One alternative is **Dropbox Paper** (which is free) lets you create fancier pages with real, clickable to-do list items.

USEFUL TOOL NO.3



Calendar (duh)

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 out - 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 practice 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 using. 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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