

The Blame Game

How would you assess your culture at work? Answer Yes or No

1. Do people refer to “they” or “them” when talking about management or other departments? (“They won’t let us ...” “They keep us in the dark...” “They spend all the money, but we do all the work,” etc)
2. Are people often worried about “covering their backsides” (“CYA”) with documentation, approvals, etc?
3. Do employees feel like victims of management? Do they talk and act like they’re helpless and have no control?
4. Do some individuals take all the credit for other people’s ideas or group accomplishments?
5. Are people quick to point out how they’re not at fault when something goes wrong?
6. Do you frequently hear people whining and complaining about all the many reasons why they can’t do what needs to be done?
7. Do you hear people say, “That’s not my job”?
8. Do supervisors and managers often express frustration that “employees don’t take initiative”?
9. Are people pointing out and complaining about problems all the time but rarely proposing solutions?
10. Do people hide behind policies and procedures, job descriptions, employee handbooks, etc., when justifying why they can’t do certain things?

Scoring

Lowest Score: No to all 10

Congratulations! You work in an organization with a high level of personal accountability. Managers and employees alike take responsibility for initiating ideas and resolving problems when they occur.

Low Score: Yes to 3 or fewer

Your organization is in pretty good shape. In general most people feel accountable and take responsibility for improving the organizations performance. Only occasionally does the blame game occur.

Moderate Score: Yes to 4 to 6

Employees are quick to point fingers of blame and slow to accept responsibility for finding solutions. There is probably a fairly high level of fear present, and people are punished for taking initiatives outside their job descriptions or for bending the rules. Some people really feel like “victims”.

High Score: Yes to 7 or more

Your organization has reached the major leagues of playing the blame game! Employees feel like victims of management; management feel like victims because employee “won’t take initiative”; and everyone is expending a great deal of energy blaming everyone else. Your organization has some serious work ahead if it wants to establish a culture of accountability.