

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO | John Sobieski



In our theme of Building Relationships, we've talked about developing trust as a key component of building strong, long-term relationships, both inside and outside the company, professionally and personally. Last month we talked about specific things that we can do to support these efforts including connecting with others on a personal level, being open & honest in all things, taking the blame & sharing the credit, and growing your own abilities in your profession.

This time I'd like to talk about something very important to me: Personal Accountability. There are times (usually during periods of high stress) when it seems like we're surrounded by a world of finger pointers where personal accountability is a thing of the past and long gone are the days of "The Buck Stops Here." The Buck Stops Here is derived from the slang term to "pass the buck" or pass along responsibility to the next person, originally the dealer in a game of poker, but more commonly these days to avoid taking responsibility for one's own actions or lack of action. It's become far easier to deny, deny, deny, or to point the finger at someone else rather than to accept ownership of a problem that we may have had a hand in creating.

According to Larry & Michael Cole, Ph.D. authors, it's important to frequently consider this question: "Do you have the necessary courage to exhibit personal accountability?" As you know, Courage is one of our 3 Values: Integrity, Family, Courage: "Everyone who is part of Sobieski has the Courage to always make the right decision, choosing the harder right over the easier wrong."

The Coles say that Accountability means you are Responsible to somebody or for something. Being Responsible means that you cause something to happen. Exhibiting Personal Accountability looks like the following:

- Accepting complete responsibility for your actions/behavior. – No more excuses. No more finger pointing. Accepting responsibility is being fully aware of exerting control of your behavior through your choices. Additionally, you accept the consequences of the choices you make, taking the good with the bad.
- Meeting/exceeding expectations. – Another Sobieski tie-in – Exceeding your expectations every day is labeled on our company vehicles to communicate our ideals to our customers! Exceeding someone's expectations is a measure of quality – the more you exceed someone's expectations the higher they perceive your quality. Do you exceed your team member's expectations or are you perceived as a weak link in the chain? Have the courage to accept the facts and if their perception is lower than yours then work to change their perception by delivering more than what is expected – exceed expectations in your word, your work, your efforts. Your character will grow, and you will feel better about yourself and your participation on the team. Other's trust in you will also grow which opens a lot of doors for your future.

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- Admitting mistakes. – Your courage will be tested. We all make mistakes, but we must take ownership of why we made a mistake. Bear Bryant, the famous football coach, said “When you make a mistake there are only three things you should ever do about it: admit it, learn from it, and don’t repeat it.” Admitting mistakes takes courage, but it demonstrates Personal Accountability, and you will earn other’s respect for being big enough to take ownership of your actions.

To me, building relationships is the key to success in life. Personal Accountability in your daily routine will help you to develop the trust that is needed as the foundation of your personal and professional relationships both inside and outside of Sobieski. I wish you well and look forward to seeing stronger, long-term relationships developing with each other.

*–John Sobieski*

