

(finger-pointing), confusion (tell me what to do), self-protection (cover your tail), and wait and see.

The table below, derived from a study by accountability training firm Partners in Leadership, cites many of the most typical and common below-the-line phrases in each of the six categories that are heard most by managers:

TABLE 1: BELOW-THE-LINE PHRASES

IGNORE DENY	NOT MY JOB
What number did you think we were trying to achieve?	I delegated that to my people.
From where we sit, we don't see a problem.	That's not what I'm paid to do.
That's not what my reports are telling me.	I'm not concerned about things outside my realm of responsibility.
DEFLECTION FINGER POINTING	CONFUSION TELL ME WHAT TO DO
It's the (fill in the blank) department's fault.	Did you want us to focus on quality or quantity?
Even though I told you (fill in the blank) it wasn't my fault.	Wait and see?
I've got everything in place to have an outstanding year next year.	
I warned you that this would happen. Here's a copy of the email I sent you.	Time will tell.
	We're just waiting for a decision.

We have all heard at least some of these phrases. Indeed, some of us may even have used them! These are great examples of behaviors that must not be adopted if a culture of accountability is desired.

“Above-the-line” thoughts, attitudes and behaviors, on the other hand, communicate positive attitudes when facing challenging situations. These are the ones that engender accountability.

If you wish to shape your personal and workplace environments, speed and augment growth within yourself and your company

