REQUISITE ORGANIZATION (RO)
THE ACCOUNTABLE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Accountable Management System (AMS) is a comprehensive and integrated set of principles and procedures that enables organizations and the people who work in them to be fully effective. The use of these common sense ideas results in an organization that is a good place for people to work and one that substantially increases its productivity and its profit.

The Accountable Management System enables an organization to:

- **Structure** appropriately to achieve its mission, goals and objectives
- **Staff** with employees fully capable of doing the work in their roles
- Establish accountable management *practices*

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The structure of an organization is provided by the roles that are established and the relationship of the roles to each other. An organization that uses Accountable Management principles can determine and establish the correct number of managerial levels, and place roles at the right level for the complexity of the work that needs to get done.

The relationships between roles is clearly spelled out both for the vertical relationship between manager and subordinate and for the lateral role relationships so essential for working across functions. Roles and role relationships that are clearly defined and understood provide the foundation for an effective organization.

When roles and their relationship to each other are confusing there is uncertainly, conflict and wasted effort. *Role clarity coupled with clear accountability builds personal confidence and generates trust between individuals and between individuals and the organization.*

STAFFING THE ORGANIZATION

Work and tasks given to different roles vary in complexity, and the ability of each individual to do work and tasks differs as well. Therefore, one of the challenges in building and maintaining an effective organization is to select the right person for each role.

The AMS provides procedures for selecting a person capable of handling the complexity of the work in a role and for ensuring that each employee has a manager who can work at one level of complexity higher. This provides everyone with a manager who can add value to, and set context for, the work to be done.

ACCOUNTABLE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

There are explicitly defined processes in the AMS that enable work to get done effectively including performance management, three-level management, cross-functional working relationships and talent pool development.
Performance Management
The AMS performance management process includes managerial planning, context setting, task assignment, feedback, coaching, appraisal and continual improvement.

Three-Level Management
The establishment of a working relationship between each manager and his/her subordinates and the manager's manager enables more effective communication. It also provides each employee with someone to assist him or her in consideration of long-range career opportunities.

Cross-Functional Working Relationships
People who must interact with each other but who are subordinates of different managers are frequently very unclear about what accountability and authority they have with regard to each other. In the AMS all the necessary work processes and work systems are integrated through the use of clearly-defined working relationships. What has previously appeared to be a clash of personalities disappears when working relationships are clearly specified between roles in different functions.

Talent Pool Development
In the AMS provision is made to regularly review the entire pool of talent in the organization to ensure that each employee is fairly considered for developmental and promotional opportunities and that employees are available with the necessary capability and knowledge to meet current and anticipated staffing needs.

MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP
Managers make decisions about how they want the work in their unit done. In order for that work to be done effectively, there are leadership practices managers must carry out. Leadership is grounded in the managerial role and the work of that role. These practices are:

- Managerial Work Planning
- Clear Task Assignments
- Giving Feedback
- Coaching
- Performance Reviews
- Team Meetings and Context Setting
MANAGERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Managers are held accountable for the output of their subordinates. This idea is central to the Accountable Management System. It is the manager who decides what each subordinate is to do, the resources they are to be provided and when assignments are to be completed. It is also the manager who revises plans and priorities if a task cannot be completed as originally specified.

All managers must exercise leadership. Managers are accountable for:

- Maintaining a team of qualified and capable subordinates
- Leading subordinates to agreed-upon goals
- The results of their subordinates' work
- Their own personal effectiveness

Managers do not delegate all of their work. They do some of their work themselves, they get assistance with their own work from subordinates, and they delegate some of their work.

MANAGERIAL AUTHORITY

In order for managers to be held accountable by their manager for the work of subordinates, they must have certain authority with regard to their subordinates. They must have the authority to judge how they will get the work of their unit done and to decide how effective any given subordinate is in doing his or her work. Managers are the ones who decide merit increases within company policy. Managers also need to be able to veto the selection of someone to be their subordinate, as well as to be able to initiate the removal of a subordinate from a role if they do not believe the individual is capable of doing the work.

SUBORDINATE ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUTHORITY

Subordinates are accountable for using their best efforts in working to achieve the tasks they are assigned. They are accountable and have the authority to discuss task assignment with their manager and review any problems they anticipate or that may develop. They are also accountable for providing their manager with ideas as to how processes might be improved.

When a task is in progress, a subordinate is accountable to inform his or her manager if what has been assigned cannot be completed as specified, in time for the manager to take adaptive action. This might, for example, happen because circumstances have changed or certain aspects of the task were not fully understood or anticipated initially.

When a task needs to be modified, the subordinate is expected to make useful suggestions as to what might be done about the situation. It is the manager, however, who adjusts the task, its priority and the resources available. Working in this way assures that there are no surprises and that everything is done on time as assigned.
The manager-subordinate relationship is a two-way working relationship between adults where the best ideas of each are applied, recognizing that the manager has a broader perspective and the final say if there is not complete agreement.

TEAMS
Teams are an essential component of organizational success. In order to be fully effective, each team must have a manager who is accountable for the work of the team. The manager may or may not choose to appoint someone else as team leader to direct the work of the team. Team members are accountable as individuals for their work as contributing participants.

BASIS OF ACCOUNTABLE MANAGEMENT
The principles and practices that make up the Accountable Management System are adapted from the work of Dr. Elliott Jaques. A full description of this work is found in Ms. Lee’s book, *The Practice of Managerial Leadership*, available from www.xlibris.com and Dr. Jaques’ book *Requisite Organization*. Dr. Jaques held an M.D. degree from Johns Hopkins Medical School and a Ph.D. in Social Relations from Harvard University. He studied effective organizations for more than 50 years and developed the comprehensive system that is called Requisite Organization. Ms. Lee has used Dr. Jaques' whole system, science-based approach as the basis for her consulting for more than two decades.