
CASE STUDY

How a Professional Services Firm Built a Real Culture of Accountability

Industry: Engineering & Consulting | **Revenue:** \$12 Million

The Situation

The leadership team at this engineering and consulting firm was full of smart, capable people — and their meetings reflected it. Lots of good ideas, lively discussion, real intelligence in the room. The problem was what happened afterward: very little of it turned into action.

Commitments were missed. Ownership was fuzzy — everyone assumed someone else had it. Departments worked in silos, and projects were chronically delayed. It's a frustrating pattern I see often in professional services firms, where talented people are busy and well-intentioned, but there's no system that connects good intentions to finished work.

What We Did

We built the connective tissue between deciding and doing — a clear, humane system of accountability that made ownership obvious and follow-through the norm.

Strategic scorecards So everyone could see what mattered most and how the firm was actually tracking against it.

A leadership accountability system Clear ownership of priorities and commitments — who owns what, by when — so nothing fell through the cracks.

Quarterly planning and weekly execution meetings A rhythm that set direction every quarter and drove it forward every week, turning talk into measurable progress.

Leadership coaching Ongoing support so leaders grew into the habits of accountability rather than simply being told to adopt them.

The Results

Within eight months, the firm's meetings — and its results — looked completely different.

- Project completion rates increased 37%.
- Employee engagement improved 24%.
- Completion of strategic initiatives doubled.
- Time spent in leadership meetings dropped 40% — they got shorter and far more productive.

"Our meetings went from talking about work to actually getting work done."

— Firm Leadership

The Takeaway

Accountability isn't about pressure or blame. At its best, it's simply clarity — a shared understanding of who owns what, by when, and a rhythm that keeps everyone moving together.

Give talented people that clarity, and you don't need to push them. They'll carry the work themselves, and they'll enjoy it more for finally seeing it finished.

Curious where your organization stands? Take the free Leadership Operating System™ assessment, or book a discovery call with Tom at northstarlc.com.