



ROLES & ACCOUNTABILITIES GALLERY WALK

Clarifying ownership, decision
rights, and team interdependence



Roles & Accountabilities

Healthy teams need more than capable people. They need clarity around who owns what, where decisions are made, and how team members depend on one another.

This exercise is designed to help a leadership team clarify individual roles, key accountabilities, and decision-making authority while creating space for the team to identify areas of overlap, uncertainty, or unnecessary escalation.

The goal is not to document every task someone performs. The goal is to create enough clarity that people understand:

- What they own
- What decisions they can make
- Where they need input
- Where responsibilities may overlap
- Where accountability may currently be unclear

The Core Question

What do I own, and where do I need input from others?

This exercise should stay at a relatively high level.

Focus on the responsibilities and decisions that matter most to the success of the team rather than trying to capture every activity in a job description.

Pay particular attention to areas where:

- Ownership is unclear
- Multiple people believe they own the same decision
- No one appears to own an important responsibility
- Decisions are routinely escalated unnecessarily
- Input is required from others, but the decision owner is unclear

Individual Exercise

Give each team member one large flip-chart page or oversized Post-it.

At the top of the page, write:

What I See as My Role & Accountabilities

Briefly describe the primary contribution you believe you are responsible for making to the team. Then divide the remainder of the page into two columns.

Decisions I Own and Can Make Unilaterally

List the decisions or areas where you have clear authority to move forward without additional approval.

Decisions I Own and Need Input

List the decisions or areas you are responsible for carrying, but where input, collaboration, or perspective from others is necessary before moving forward.

The word *own* is intentional.

You may need information, perspective, or support from others, but ownership means someone remains responsible for carrying the issue forward and ensuring a decision is ultimately made.

Roles & Accountabilities

What I see as my role & accountabilities

Decisions I own and I can make unilaterally	Decisions I own and I need input
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____

This is a starting point

Gallery Walk

Once everyone has completed their page, post the sheets around the room.

Team members then walk through the room and review one another's Roles & Accountabilities pages.

Use the following feedback system:

- ✓ — I agree
- + — I agree and have something to add
- — I see this differently or do not agree
- ? — I have a question or need clarification

Initial each mark so the owner of the page knows who to engage during the discussion.

The purpose is not simply to gain agreement. The purpose is to surface assumptions, identify grey areas, and create the conversations necessary for greater clarity.

Team Debrief

Beginning with the team leader, each person stands with their page and briefly explains what they have written.

Where another team member has added a +, -, or ?, invite that person to explain their feedback.

Use the discussion to clarify:

- individual responsibilities
- decision authority
- areas requiring collaboration
- overlaps or gaps
- expectations between team members

Seek understanding and alignment wherever possible. Where a decision cannot be resolved through discussion, the team leader retains final authority to clarify ownership or expectations.

Make It a Living Document

This exercise is a starting point, not a final organizational document.

Roles, responsibilities, and decision authority will continue to evolve as the business, project, or team changes.

After the session, each team member should document their agreed-upon role and accountabilities and share them with the team.

When meaningful adjustments occur, those changes should be communicated so everyone understands how responsibilities and decision-making have shifted.

The objective is not rigid structure. The objective is **clarity that enables stronger ownership, better collaboration, and more effective execution.**

A Note About Interdependence

It is normal for many important responsibilities to fall under: Decisions I Own and Need Input

Healthy teams are highly interdependent.

The goal is not to eliminate collaboration. It is to make sure collaboration does not obscure ownership.

Someone should still know: I carry the ball.

Closing Reflection

As you consider your role within the team, ask:

- Where is my ownership already clear?
- Where might the team have a different understanding of my role than I do?
- What decisions am I unnecessarily escalating?
- Where do I need greater input from others?
- Where might unclear responsibilities be slowing the team down?
- And finally:
- What would greater role clarity make possible for this team?