

BASED ON NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER  
THE LEADERSHIP CONTRACT

VINCE MOLINARO

THE  
LEADERSHIP  
CONTRACT

FIELD GUIDE

THE PERSONAL ROADMAP TO BECOMING  
A TRULY ACCOUNTABLE LEADER



Signature

WILEY



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**VINCE MOLINARO**

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*This book is dedicated to my clients and colleagues. It has been an honor  
and a privilege to work with so many of you over my career.  
You have inspired me, challenged me, and taught me so much.  
Thank you!*



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## ***Introduction: Let's Get Started***

**W**elcome. This field guide is a companion to my book *The Leadership Contract* (third edition). The two books work hand in hand; the first provides you with the key concepts and ideas, while this field guide presents a set of practical and thought-provoking activities to help you take your leadership to a higher level of effectiveness. As you work through this field guide, you will find yourself stepping up in significant ways in your leadership role. You will become the truly accountable leader that your organization needs.

Before you can become a truly accountable leader and redefine how you lead, I believe every leader needs to pause and reflect on the questions that follow.



### ***Activity I.1: Pause and Reflect on Your Current Leadership Role***



**20 to 30 minutes to complete**

Find a pen or pencil. Write your answers in the space provided for each of the following questions. I will ask you to come back to these questions in the last chapter of this field guide.

1. What does it mean for you to be a leader today?

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2. What has shaped you to be the leader you are today?

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3. What is your primary obligation as a leader?

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4. How is your success as a leader being impeded because you are avoiding some difficult things that you know you must do (for example, managing a poor performer or having a tough conversation with a colleague), but haven't done? Be honest with yourself.

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5. To what extent do you have trusting and mutually supportive relationships with peers and colleagues at work? How accountable have you been to maintain these relationships?

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## Reflections

How was that opening activity for you? For most of the leaders I've worked with, their typical response is, "This was hard" or "I've never really thought about these questions before."

I believe some leaders struggle with these questions mainly because they don't find enough time in their day-to-day roles to meaningfully pause and reflect on their leadership. Most of us in leadership roles are so consumed by our to-do lists, our projects, or hitting quarterly business results that we can lose touch with what it really means to be a truly accountable leader.

I have learned that if you want to be a truly accountable leader, then you have to start spending some time reflecting on what this means for you. That's what this field guide is all about: It is your personal road map to becoming a truly accountable leader.

## The Purpose of This Field Guide

In *The Leadership Contract*, I shared a great quote from John W. Gardner—former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare under President Lyndon Johnson. He wrote extensively about leadership. In his book *On Leadership* (The Free Press, 1990), he said, "Accountability is as important as the concept of leadership. Those who are granted power must be held accountable."

I completely agree with Gardner's idea and believe that accountability is the bedrock of truly great leadership, so we will explore in this field guide what leadership accountability means and how you must bring it about in yourself. Every leader must do his or her part to step up and lead in a more accountable manner. At an individual level, this field guide will help you to:

- Understand the context in which you lead and identify the implications for how you must show up as an accountable leader.
- Explore ways to be a more deliberate, decisive, and purposeful leader.
- Identify your primary obligations as a truly accountable leader and be prepared to step up to meet these obligations.
- Resolve to tackle the hard work of leadership in a way that propels you, your team, and your organization forward.
- Build a stronger set of relationships and a real sense of community with your colleagues and fellow leaders so you can collectively lead your company into the future.
- Gain practical ways of sustaining your learning.

My sincere hope and wish for you is that by the end of our work together, you will come away with a clear sense of what you must do to be a truly accountable leader.

### **Leadership Accountability: The Critical Business Issue**

Over the past five years, I've had the privilege to speak with leaders around the world about the ideas from *The Leadership Contract*. When the book first came out in 2013, I found that the core ideas immediately resonated with leaders. Leaders at all levels—from the front line to the C-suite—found meaning and practical value from the ideas. Then in January of 2016, the second edition of the book was released. I spent the next eighteen months traveling the world speaking with business leaders like you about leadership accountability.

It was clear to me, based on the hundreds of discussions, customer events, speeches, and presentations, that leadership accountability was a critical business issue. It was understandable, given the degree of change that was happening all around us. During my travels, I found there were unexpected changes of power in five of the world's top countries. Incumbent governments were ousted. What was particularly fascinating (or disturbing) was that no one saw it coming—especially not the political pollsters.

At the same time, many companies faced unprecedented disruption and uncertainty. Many leaders have been unable to adapt quickly enough to the change and ambiguity in their business environments.

I also learned through my travels that far too many political and corporate leaders continue to be embroiled in scandal and corruption. Every day, people are starting to express their frustration and disgust with ineffective leadership. They are demanding that corporate and political leaders be held to account.

Maybe this is why the ideas in *The Leadership Contract* are resonating so much. It is clear to me that we are at a point in our history when we desperately need real leadership accountability in our world, now more than ever. Unfortunately, it is also clear to me that there is a leadership accountability gap in many companies; our research has confirmed this (see Chapter 3 in *The Leadership Contract*).

This gap is even more significant because many organizations are at an inflection point—a period of change brought on by the need to develop a new business strategy, turn around chronic poor performance, or integrate different leadership cultures after a merger or acquisition. I have learned that at each of these inflection points, the expectations of leaders change—sometimes in dramatic ways. In every case, one fundamental theme is present: *Organizations need their leaders to step up and be truly accountable.*

The ideas in *The Leadership Contract* are the foundation for many companies looking to transform their leadership cultures. At the same time, many leaders have used the ideas to transform their own leadership at a personal level. These leaders have described the book to me as a “mindset” book—one that helps them really understand what it means to be a leader in today’s world, and how to think more deeply about their leadership roles.

While the ideas in my book are helpful to many, the common feedback I receive is that my readers want more; they want to learn how to better apply the ideas at a personal and organizational level. That’s why this field guide has been written.

## **A Description of This Field Guide**

This field guide presents a road map to becoming a truly accountable leader. The book is organized into four sections as represented in the following image.



# THE LEADERSHIP CONTRACT FIELD GUIDE

The Roadmap to Becoming a Truly Accountable Leader

**SECTION ONE**  
The Core Ideas

**SECTION TWO**  
The Foundational  
Practices for Living the  
Leadership Contract

**SECTION THREE**  
The Regular Practices  
for Living the  
Leadership Contract

**SECTION FOUR**  
The Turning Points  
of Leadership

- ① What Is Leadership Accountability?
- ② What Is the Leadership Contract?
- ③ Leadership Accountability in Action

- ④ The World in Which You Lead
- ⑤ Leadership Is a Decision — Make It
- ⑥ Leadership Is an Obligation — Step Up
- ⑦ Leadership Is Hard Work — Get Tough
- ⑧ Leadership Is a Community — Connect

- ⑨ Regular Practices for Living the Leadership Contract

- ⑩ Use the Turning Points of Leadership to Make Better Career Decisions

## ***Section One: The Core Ideas***

The chapters in this section summarize the key concepts from *The Leadership Contract* in an interactive manner. You will reflect on your own thoughts and ideas about leadership. Chapter 1 will explore leadership accountability. Chapter 2 will examine the four terms of the Leadership Contract. Chapter 3 will help you apply the ideas from Chapters 1 and 2 to a case example.

## ***Section Two: The Foundational Practices for Living the Leadership Contract***

The chapters in this section present what I refer to as foundational activities required to help you become a truly accountable leader. Leaders around the world have completed these activities as part of The Leadership Contract™ seminars and workshops. They have resonated well with leaders, and I'm sure you will gain valuable insights from completing them. I strongly encourage you to complete each of the activities in this section (this is why I call them “foundational”); they will help you realize positive benefits in your leadership role. Chapter 4 will show you how to better understand the context in which you lead and appreciate the expectations you will face as a leader. Chapters 5 to 8 are each devoted to exploring the foundational practices aligned to each of the four terms of the Leadership Contract.

### ***Section Three: The Regular Practices for Living the Leadership Contract***

Chapter 9 in this section presents what I refer to as the “regular” practices, which will help you translate and transfer the four terms into your leadership role. Activities are presented that you can complete on a daily, weekly, quarterly, and annual basis. You can review them all, and then pick the activities that will be most meaningful to you.

### ***Section Four: The Turning Points of Leadership***

This section concludes by revisiting the concepts of the turning points of leadership, which I first presented in *The Leadership Contract* book. It will provide insights and advice depending on whether you are new to leadership, in a front-line or mid-level role, or entering the executive ranks.

### **How to Use the Field Guide**

As you glance through this field guide, you will find many valuable activities for you to complete and gain deeper insights into your own leadership accountability. It’s important that you read about and know all of the core ideas from *The Leadership Contract*. I encourage you to read that book first. I will also ask you to refer back to that book as you complete the many activities in this field guide.

I would suggest you work through this field guide over time—meaning you will tackle a chapter, work through a few of the activities, and then come back to it after a period of time. The distance between your sessions will deepen your reflection and application of the many activities into your current leadership role.

You will find many varied activities in this field guide. Some you will do on your own. For others, I will ask you to reach out to others you work with. Some activities will take you anywhere from five to ten minutes to complete, while others will require sixty to ninety minutes. Each activity will have a suggested time required to complete it so you can gauge how much time you will need to set aside. To make it easier for you to follow along, the field guide includes a series of icons so you know what type of activity I will ask you to work on.



This icon is used when you are asked to read a section from *The Leadership Contract*.



This icon is used when you are asked to complete an activity. This could involve providing your answers to a series of questions, completing a self-assessment survey or checklist, or reaching out to your peers and/or direct reports to receive feedback on your leadership.



This icon is used after each activity, where I share additional reflections that I've gained when other leaders completed the same activity in our seminars, workshops, and leadership programs.



This icon will provide additional suggestions for applying or using some of the activities from the chapter in other ways.



This icon will indicate how much time the activity should take to complete.

## Who Will Benefit from This Field Guide

This field guide has been written to appeal to many different people in a variety of leadership roles. This book will benefit anyone in a leadership role (at any level) who is keenly interested in becoming more accountable, or who wants to create a higher degree of leadership accountability in the organization. The activities will help leaders develop the mindset needed to be successful in their current or future leadership roles.

Let's look at how this book will be of value for leaders in different kinds of roles:

- **Individual Contributors.** More and more people who are not in formal leadership roles are being called upon to be leaders. You do not need direct reports to define yourself as a leader. The ideas in this field guide will help you gain the perspective to see yourself as more than an individual contributor and step up in more meaningful ways in your role.
- **Emerging Leaders.** If you are seen as an emerging leader in your organization, this field guide will help give you the insights you need to make the decision to start your leadership journey.
- **Front-Line Leaders.** If you are a new leader, or if this is your first time in a front-line team lead role, the ideas in this book will help you fast track and accelerate your growth and confidence as a leader.

- **Mid-Level Leaders.** If you are in a mid-level leadership role, this book will equip you with ideas and practical tools to help you drive change in your organization and manage the complexity of your role.
- **Executive-Level Leaders.** Finally, if you are in the executive ranks, the ideas in this book will help you become a more deliberate leader. This will help you set the right tone of accountability and be an example to the rest of the leaders in your organization.

In practice, we have also found the ideas in this field guide to be of benefit to the following additional audiences:

- Senior executives who need to transform their organizations and develop a new set of leadership expectations for their leaders. This field guide provides a way of thinking and an approach that we've successfully implemented with many clients.
- Human resources and talent management professionals—internal and external to an organization—interested in driving stronger leadership accountability at all levels.
- Leadership development and learning professionals looking for powerful ideas to embed in existing programs to help leaders become more accountable.
- Organization development and change management professionals looking for specific strategies to transform the leadership culture in their organizations.
- Members of the academic community interested in a practical text to teach their students about the changing role of leadership, and a complementary learning guide to an existing leadership curriculum or course.
- Students in MBA, organizational psychology, and human resources development programs interested in books that will support their understanding of how to be a more accountable leader.
- Management consultants seeking ideas and guidelines to provide advice to organizations on how to transform leadership to drive results.
- Executive coaches looking for proven activities to help their coaching clients gain greater insight into their leadership roles and develop the mindset needed to become more accountable day-to-day.

## **A Word of Warning**

Now before you move ahead to the first chapter, I believe it's important for you to understand that the ideas and activities in this field guide are going to ask a lot of you.

As in *The Leadership Contract* book, there may be times when you feel overwhelmed by the ideas and activities in this field guide. You may feel they are completely unrealistic and possibly not worth doing.

You may not realize it but, at those moments, your own leadership accountability will be tested. You will know whether you have what it takes to be a truly accountable leader.

You will need to think hard about whether you are ready to commit to accepting the four terms of the Leadership Contract. If you come to realize that you are *not* ready to challenge yourself and hold yourself to account, you might want to put *The Leadership Contract* and this field guide back on the shelf for a while.

However, if you are ready to be all in and fully committed to becoming a truly accountable leader—one that your organization desperately needs you to be—then buckle down and get to work. I hope you will find this field guide a valuable tool to support your growth and development as a leader.

I encourage you to reach out at [www.theleadershipcontract.com](http://www.theleadershipcontract.com) to share your story. There you'll also find my Gut Check for Leaders blogs, as well as additional insights and tools that will assist you in continuing your learning and growth. Good luck!



## Section One

# The Core Ideas

This section of the book has three chapters that will summarize the key concepts of *The Leadership Contract*. You will explore these ideas in an interactive manner to help you personalize them for your own current leadership role.

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The Roadmap to Becoming a Truly Accountable Leader

**SECTION ONE**  
The Core Ideas

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The Foundational  
Practices for Living the  
Leadership Contract

**SECTION THREE**  
The Regular Practices  
for Living the  
Leadership Contract

**SECTION FOUR**  
The Turning Points  
of Leadership

- ① **What Is Leadership Accountability?**  
Learn what it takes to be a truly accountable leader
- ② **What Is the Leadership Contract?**  
Explore the four terms of The Leadership Contract
- ③ **Leadership Accountability in Action**  
Understand how accountable leaders show up

### **Chapter 1: What Is Leadership Accountability?**

This chapter will help you understand what leadership accountability is and how you are currently demonstrating it in your role.

### **Chapter 2: What Is the Leadership Contract?**

This chapter provides a summary of *The Leadership Contract* and its four terms. You will also complete a Leadership Contract Self-Assessment.

### **Chapter 3: Leadership Accountability in Action**

This chapter will help you deepen your learning regarding the ideas of leadership accountability and the four terms of the Leadership Contract. You will do this by reading the stories of two leaders who work in the same company. Your job will be to recommend one of them as a high-potential candidate for an executive development program.



*Chapter 1*

# **What Is Leadership Accountability?**

