Invisible Work Ownership Snapshot

Make the work behind one responsibility visible and identify what needs agreeing.

Save a working copy. Open it in a PDF app that supports forms, fill it in, save, then reopen to check your answers. Use short phrases that fit the visible boxes; shorten an entry if a box is full.

1 Trace one responsibility as it works now

Allow about 10-15 minutes for a first pass. Choose one small area at home, in care, at work or in a shared project. Think of its most recent cycle. Write who does each part and one concrete action. Mark uncertainty with a question mark; do not guess motives.

My area and its limits

For example: this month's team meeting, from scheduling to follow-up.

Fictional examples

Home: Lee books a repair; Jo admits the plumber. Lee still finds the problem, compares options and checks completion. Work: Noor runs a meeting; Pat still schedules it and chases actions. Doing one task does not automatically mean owning the whole process.

1 Notice the need

Who spots what is needed, and when?

2 Plan

Who finds options and works out the steps?

3 Decide

Who chooses and has authority to approve?

4 Coordinate

Who contacts people and arranges timing?

5 Carry it out

Who does the practical task?

6 Follow up

Who checks completion and handles loose ends?

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2 Separate a wish from an agreement

Read the chain. Where is responsibility unclear, concentrated or unsupported? Your notes describe your view of current practice. Check it with the people involved before treating it as shared fact.

One gap or unclear responsibility I notice

Describe the stage and what actually happened. Avoid diagnosing why someone did it.

What I would like to change

A proposal only: stage, person or arrangement.

What is already explicitly agreed

Who agreed to which stages, and when? Write not agreed if needed.

What would make a change workable

Note authority, time, access, information, money or support needed.

A name in a box is not an accepted handover. Agreement needs a clear scope, enough capacity and the authority or support to carry it out. You are not automatically responsible for fixing every gap you notice.

Fictional example continued

Pat wants Noor to own scheduling as well as running the next meeting. That is not yet agreed. Noor would need calendar access and time; the manager may need to change other priorities first.

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3 Ask one practical question

Choose the gap that most needs clarification. Ask about a defined part of the work and the conditions it needs. This starts a conversation; it does not assign responsibility on someone else's behalf.

My clarification question

Try: Who will own [stages] for [area], and what time, authority or support is needed?

Who needs to be involved

Include anyone whose approval or capacity matters.

When I will raise it

Choose a suitable setting or a safer route if needed.

How any agreement will be recorded and reviewed

For example: shared note of scope and owner; review after the next cycle.

- [ ] I have mapped planning and follow-up as well as doing.
- [ ] Current practice, wishes and agreements are distinct.
- [ ] The question includes capacity, authority or support where needed.

Next: use your question in the chosen conversation. Record only what people actually agree. If no agreement is reached, keep the point marked unresolved and identify who can help clarify it.

When more than one area needs attention

This snapshot can make one responsibility and its open questions visible. Several areas may need a more coordinated arrangement. The Invisible Work Reset is the related toolkit for looking at a wider distribution of responsibility. If useful, look for The Invisible Work Reset at www.directionbychoice.com.