Don’t Count Us Out

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Objective

The goal of this study is to investigate how the public defines accountability and determine whether leadership efforts to increase accountability in key sectors are meeting the public’s expectations.

Methods

The researchers gathered their results by organizing focus groups in six cities around the United States and performing one-on-one interviews with experts and leaders who have examined accountability issues.

Results

- Americans are frustrated about the “lack of accountability” and are afraid that the selfishness of Americans has inhibited the balance between “rights” and “responsibilities”
- Focus group participants brought an alternative definition of accountability centered on a better balance between rights and responsibilities and on individuals behaving more honorably
- Focus group participants were also concerned about a lack of fairness, as some individuals have greatly prospered by circumventing rules while honest Americans have been hit hard by the financial downturn

- Americans desire the ability to reach someone who listens to them and treats their ideas and questions respectfully

Conclusion

Americans believe that a return to accountability is everyone's responsibility, not just that of leaders. The public believes that because of the breadth of moral and ethical lapses, this is not a quick-fix problem and leaders must move forward with goodwill and must listen to the broader public's concern.

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