

A Developing Story

Self Reflections of a
Progress-Guided
Consultancy

Accountability
Workbook

Executive Summary

For 12 years, SYLVAIN has prided itself on being a progress-guided consultancy that leverages the might of corporations to benefit the greater good. But like many institutions, we left 2020 with an unshakeable sense that we—and our industry—needed to do more, to infuse and operationalize a progress-oriented mindset throughout our organization.

That's why we created *A Developing Story*.

This report is our first attempt to formalize what has always been a gut instinct at SYLVAIN: to narrow the gap between delivering for our clients and serving the public.

If you've downloaded this workbook, we hope you've read and enjoyed the [report itself](#). And whether you're a client, friend, or fellow consultant, we're happy to share the tools that have gotten us to this point.

We hope these might serve as an inspiration to begin instilling these traits in your own organization. Of course, we're not perfect. Feel free to break and remake these to fit your needs.

[See SYLVAIN's 2020-2021 Accountability Framework](#)

After you've completed the following worksheets, fill in your own Accountability Framework [here](#).

Introduction

Consultancies are quick to show off their products and services related to social progress, and they have certainly reaped the financial benefits. But while brands and organizations have ESG and other established guidelines to hold themselves accountable, no such framework currently exists for consultancies. Why aren't we held to the same standard?

These worksheets are designed to help your organization craft a bespoke approach to operating as progress-guided—and to hold yourself accountable to it.

Worksheet At A Glance

Part I

Accountability
Framework

1 Character Traits

We believe that truly progress-guided consultancies possesses five character traits: They are just, open, compassionate, discerning, and consistent. The accountability framework worksheet includes a definition for each trait.

2 Evaluation Questions

Character traits are ultimately the sum of behaviors; each trait is further defined by a set of key questions that can be used to determine whether an organization actively practices the character traits.

Part II

Company
Performance

3 Internal Assessment

The first step to assessing company performance is to respond to each evaluation question with a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

4 Qualitative Evaluation

While step 03 asks for 'yes' or 'no' answers, we understand that 'maybe' and 'sometimes' are often more fitting responses. Use this section to expand on your answers and to explain what made you check the box you did.

Part III

Progress Plan

5 Progress Gaps

Questions for which you checked 'no' represent your Progress Gaps, or key areas for internal improvement. Use this space to list your mandates for the year(s) ahead (e.g., 'We need to get better at...').

6 Next Steps

Once you have outlined and prioritized key areas for improvement, you can match those areas with tangible actions, commitments, and targets.

5 Traits For Progress-Guided Consultancies

Just

Adherence to a set of standards, applied equally throughout the organization, that guarantees equity, inclusion, and opportunity for all employees and stakeholders

Open

A commitment to transparency, honest communication, and a work environment that is responsive to employee needs.

Compassionate

Radical consideration of all people, communities, and ecosystems impacted by the company's operations.

Discerning

Thorough and formalized deliberation of every brief's potential for societal harm or benefit, and alignment with company values.

Consistent

Systemized processes, workflows, and measurements around progress across all facets of the business.

How To Use It

- + Answer each question of the evaluation open and honestly.
 - + Don't be afraid to expand in the spaces provided with context, processes, tools, or services you have in place.
 - + In completing the worksheet, you'll be able to identify areas in which your organization excels as progress-guided and where it needs to improve.
 - + These 'Progress Gaps' should serve as the impetus for action—where your organization should focus its energy on improving.
 - + Once all the questions are answered, create your own Accountability Framework in the template provided. While the overarching character traits will remain the same, targets, proof points, and plans for the next reporting period will be different than ours.
 - + The completed framework should serve as a measurement tool to be used by consultancies to report on (internally or externally) year on year.
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Accountability Worksheet: Character Trait One

01 THE ULTIMATE PROGRESS-GUIDED CONSULTANCY IS...

Just

Adherence to a set of standards, applied equally throughout the organization, that guarantees equity, inclusion, and opportunity for all employees and stakeholders.

02 EVALUATION

Questions to ask.

1. Do we have equitable representation?

 Yes / No

2. Do we show respect to our employees?

 Yes / No

3. Do we provide opportunities for substantive employee growth?

 Yes / No

4. Do our employees have meaningful and consistent access to our leadership team?

 Yes / No

5. Do we provide rightful compensation to our employees?

 Yes / No

6. Do we work to nurture connection between all employees?

04 QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

How so? What made you check the box you did?

05 PROGRESS GAPS

Based on our 'no' answers above, we need to get better at...

06 NEXT STEPS

What actions, commitments or targets can we set to close our Progress Gaps?

Accountability Worksheet: Character Trait Two

01 THE ULTIMATE PROGRESS-GUIDED CONSULTANCY IS...

Open

A commitment to transparency, honest communication and a work environment that is responsive to employee needs

02 EVALUATION

Questions to ask.

1. Do we have an unbounded IP?

Yes / No

2. Do we ensure diversified input to all of our projects?

Yes / No

3. Do we constantly iterate on our approaches and processes?

Yes / No

4. Do we prioritize outside-in exchange with our partners, clients, and others in our industry?

Yes / No

5. Do we prioritize flexibility in the name of the best productivity for our employees?

Yes / No

6. Do we practice honest, company-wide communication?

04 QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

How so? What made you check the box you did?

[Empty text box for qualitative evaluation]

[Empty text box for qualitative evaluation]

[Empty text box for qualitative evaluation]

[Empty text box for qualitative evaluation]

[Empty text box for qualitative evaluation]

[Empty text box for qualitative evaluation]

05 PROGRESS GAPS

Based on our 'no' answers above, we need to get better at...

06 NEXT STEPS

What actions, commitments or targets can we set to close our Progress Gaps?

Compassionate

Radical consideration of all people, communities, and ecosystems impacted by the company's operations

02 EVALUATION

Questions to ask.

1. Are our employees fulfilled?

Yes / No

2. Do we engage our partners in a fair and honest way?

Yes / No

3. Do we capture the feedback of our clients and effectively work that into consulting practices?

Yes / No

4. Do we contribute to our community in a meaningful way?

Yes / No

5. Do we unendingly consider the end consumer in our work?

Yes / No

6. Do we consider the societal impact of our work?

04 QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

How so? What made you check the box you did?

05 PROGRESS GAPS

Based on our 'no' answers above, we need to get better at...

06 NEXT STEPS

What actions, commitments or targets can we set to close our Progress Gaps?

Accountability Worksheet: Character Trait Four

01 THE ULTIMATE PROGRESS-GUIDED CONSULTANCY IS...

Discerning

Thorough and formalized deliberation of every brief's potential for societal harm or benefit, and alignment with company values

02 EVALUATION

Questions to ask.

1. Is our project work largely compatible with our values?

Yes / No

2. Do we consider the progress potential in all of our project briefs?

Yes / No

3. Do we consider the harm potential in all of our project briefs?

Yes / No

4. Do we consider the financial potential of our project briefs as secondary?

Yes / No

5. Do we consider the overall societal of local importance of our briefs?

Yes / No

6. Do we use the influence of our clients for the better?

04 QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

How so? What made you check the box you did?

[Empty text box for qualitative evaluation]

[Empty text box for qualitative evaluation]

[Empty text box for qualitative evaluation]

[Empty text box for qualitative evaluation]

[Empty text box for qualitative evaluation]

[Empty text box for qualitative evaluation]

05 PROGRESS GAPS

Based on our 'no' answers above, we need to get better at...

06 NEXT STEPS

What actions, commitments or targets can we set to close our Progress Gaps?

Accountability Worksheet: Character Trait Five

01 THE ULTIMATE PROGRESS-GUIDED CONSULTANCY IS...

Consistent

Systemized processes, workflows and measurements around progress across all facets of the business

02 EVALUATION

Questions to ask.

1. Is 'progress' integrated into most aspects of our business?

2. Are we committed to progress in a formalized way across the entire business?

Yes / No

3. Do we actively track progress metrics across the entire business?

Yes / No

4. Do we consider the tangible consequences of our work?

Yes / No

5. Do we consider social and environmental factors as consequences of the work we do?

Yes / No

6. Is the nature of our products/services in alignment with our values and beliefs?

Yes / No

04 QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

How so? What made you check the box you did?

05 PROGRESS GAPS

Based on our 'no' answers above, we need to get better at...

06 NEXT STEPS

What actions, commitments or targets can we set to close our Progress Gaps?