

[DRIs: Directly-Responsible Individuals](#) (3 min)

"We have many projects and metrics that no one is directly responsible for ... and therefore, we get neither reporting nor action on them."

If you run your company with actions, projects, goals (OKRs), and decisions, you also need **DRI - Directly-Responsible Individuals**.

You likely already know this for actions. It's pretty clear that if something needs to get done, someone needs to do it. Stating: "One of you, please get this done." ... will result in no one doing the task. There clearly needs to be one named person, a due date, and a way to later check if that person actually completed the task, i.e., through an [Agreement-Tracker: why you need one](#) (3 min).

So, a DRI is needed for an action to get done and reported on.

In the same way, you need a DRI for every:

- Metric
- Goal
- Project
- Meeting
- Decision

This DRI is responsible for reporting status as well as pushing toward the goal line.

Every metric, OKR, and project in the company should be listed, along with the DRI and a reporting cadence (weekly, monthly, quarterly). All reporting should be written and attached to this tracking document. Those reports can also be given verbally at [Meetings: Reviews \(Pipeline, Project/Business Unit, Cross-Departments\)](#). But even if you present verbally, these reports should still be written and maintained in a public place for all to refer to at any time.

The pushback that I regularly hear:

1. "Yes, but who should the DRI be? If we make it someone junior, they don't have the authority to compel people to action. And the senior people are all already overloaded."

a. My answer:

- i. Someone as DRI is better than no one, even if that person doesn't have full authority to influence. If they cannot influence, they can [Clean Escalate](#) to the Apex Manager, who has full authority (i.e., they can fire/hire).

2. "DRIs will be laser-focused on gathering resources for their project, metric, goal, etc. They will over-optimize for their particular responsibility, and not think about what's best overall for the company, leading to a suboptimal result."

a. My answer:

- i. This is indeed a problem. But the much bigger problem is the apathy that comes along without DRIs.
 - ii. And you can address this problem through Clean Escalations from those who get needed resources pulled away.
- 3. "If we make a junior person the DRI, they will make decisions without enough context, and those decisions won't be good ones."

a. My answer:

- i. The DRI needs to report regularly in a review:
 - 1. What they did
 - 2. The current status
 - 3. What they plan to do
- ii. Their Manager is, therefore, the Decision-Maker on overall direction.
 - 1. This is akin to a Recruiter that you hire.
 - a. The Recruiter is the DRI responsible for finding great candidates and helping to close the one you like.
 - b. But you, as Hiring Manager, are the decision-maker who decides which candidate to make an offer to.

When it comes to Projects, please consider the following:

- Do not allocate resources until the project's intended impact is defined and a DRI assigned. This action will cause short-term pain (projects taking a few days longer to get started) but long-term joy (no orphans).
- Beware of a proliferation of projects that continue to live even when they should die. You will need to look at, and be ruthless about, projects regularly. Kill all the ones that no longer are high priority or are not succeeding.
- Pick a cadence for project reporting (likely monthly), as well as a cadence for the live/die decision (likely quarterly).

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