

Ownership in (temporary) organizations unraveled ^{1, 2}

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Abstract

Ownership is a concept that fascinates us but has always remained somewhat slippery and elusive. The authors therefore went in search of what research has to say about it, particularly about psychological ownership. From there they linked empirical research. Based on this, a model was developed that provides guidance for issues in which (developing) a sense of ownership plays a role. This model consists of three layers: (1) determining the core, (2) creating the conditions and (3) setting in motion. On these layers nine elements have been distinguished that help to shape ownership. In this article the authors share their insights, with suggestions how to apply these in practice, so that ownership in organizations can be further developed and the underlying dynamics can be understood.

Introduction

Ownership is not only a sensitive subject at critical moments in our private lives, but it also plays an important role in organizations. You hear more critical comments about it than appreciative ones: 'He just doesn't take ownership!', 'Who takes ownership for this?', or: 'Yeah right, this isn't mine?' Of course, there are also practices where this is hardly an issue; there you see people who know what they want, and where and how they want to add value. They stand firm in their work and make sure it runs smoothly. How can we shape ownership in organizations, in a way that contributes to good work: work that is good, does good and feels good?

Ownership is a concept that fascinates us but it has always remained somewhat slippery and elusive. So, we went looking for what research tells us about it, particularly about psychological ownership (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). We linked empirical research to that (Nelis, 2017). Based on that, we developed a model that provides guidance for issues involving (developing) people's ownership. In this article we share our insights and give several suggestions for application of the model in practice, in such a way that we hope ownership in organizations may grow and the underlying dynamics can be understood.

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Experiencing ownership

In the past, organizations talked about responsibility or commitment, but now you mostly hear about ownership. The term is also increasingly used in the names of roles, such as project owner, benefit owner or (when working agile) product owner. But what does that term actually mean and what do we mean when we say that (more) ownership must be taken? What influences someone's (sense of) ownership of something? And how do you shape it together?

Gallup research shows time and again that only about 15 percent of employees worldwide are actively engaged. The figures vary somewhat over time, but not by very much.

If you want to indicate what stimulates someone to take ownership, it helps to examine how this works for yourself. What do you feel ownership of when it comes to your work? Are there things that pop into your mind that make you think: "Yes, that's what makes me tick", "That's really my thing", or "This is what I stand for"? What makes you take ownership of something? And do you remember things for which you were supposed to take ownership, for example in a project, but where you felt resistance to do so? And what about the people you work with, to what extent do they show ownership?

The first steps in developing the concept of psychological ownership were taken in the 1990s. A friend asked Jon Pierce to monitor the psychological well-being of employees in his new company. With colleagues Susan Morgan and Stephen Rubinfeld, he put his findings on paper (1991). They concluded that ownership is not only a formal or legal phenomenon ("This is my property"), but also involves a psychological state of mind ("Of this I feel ownership"). The crux of their argument was that formal ownership only produces positive effects such as satisfaction, motivation, and performance if employees experience feelings of ownership. In other words, if you have formal ownership but do not experience psychological ownership, it will not lead to these positive effects. However, if you experience feelings of ownership without being a formal owner, then the benefits are there. Thus, psychological ownership outweighs formal ownership.

Aspects of psychological ownership

So, let's take a closer look at that psychological ownership. Central to thinking about psychological ownership is the "my" or "mine". It is interesting to listen for a while to moments when you yourself put 'my' in front of something or when you hear others say that word. Do you ever hear a teacher say 'my class' or a doctor say 'my patient'? And where do you use 'my' yourself, such as with a client or project? There is a good chance of ownership in such case.

Pierce describes psychological ownership as the "state in which individuals feel as though the target of ownership or a piece of that target is "theirs", i.e. "It is mine!" (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2001, 2003; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). The sense of ownership indicates that people feel 'true

owners' of, for example, a function or role, a project, assignment or theme, a team, department or even the organization as a whole. From this definition, Pierce et al (2001) developed a framework in which they distinguish three 'roots' that help to understand how psychological ownership arises and are the source from which it can grow. These roots are also recognized and described by other researchers and authors. We therefore include those other researchers and authors in the following overview.

- ***A feeling of belonging.*** This refers to the need for strong and stable relationships (Fiske, 2010), attachment to others, and the desire for interpersonal attachments. Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary (1995) see the sense of belonging as the foundation for human motivation and others see it as one of the most powerful and universal human drives (Fiske, 2010).
- ***Belief in one's own abilities.*** This involves the feeling of being competent to achieve a certain result or take on a certain task or responsibility. This feeling is inextricably linked to the innate need to be effective and efficient in what you do (Pierce et al., 2001, 2003). With belief in one's own abilities, confidence in oneself is paramount.
- ***Self-identity.*** This refers to the expression of who you are and how you define yourself (Pierce et al., 2001, 2003). In addition to this expression of our "self," we also have an individual social identity, derived from the social group to which we belong. Solomon Asch (1951) and Muzafer Sherif (1936) have shown that in this social context we are influenced by group members. Self-identity is thus not an isolated concept but is influenced by the social environment in which we find ourselves and to which we relate. Here we are talking about identification and separation, wanting to belong, and wanting to be different; the two components of identity.³

In short: when someone, for example in a certain task, has a feeling of belonging, has faith in their own abilities and experiences self-identity, this feeds feelings of ownership. And that in turn leads to positive changes in attitude and behavior toward the task to which that ownership relates (Han, Chiang, McConville & Chiang, 2015).

James Avey et al. (2009) and Chantal Olckers and Yvonne Du Plessis (2012a) built on Pierce's three roots and expanded them to seven. In their studies, psychological ownership emerges as being characterized by belief in one's own abilities, a sense of belonging, self-identity, autonomy, responsibility, accountability, and territory. The first three overlap with Pierce. We explain the other four in more detail here.

³ The term self-identity is a synonym for identity or personal identity. 'Self' is added to avoid confusion with social forms of identity (e.g. identities related to religion, nationality or culture).

- **Autonomy.** This refers to being allowed to determine your own behavior and actions. It involves the feeling of having a grip, despite outside influences (Deci & Ryan, 2002), and the space you experience and need to regulate yourself and take personal initiative.
- **Responsibility.** This stems from feelings of ownership (Pierce et al., 2001). You take responsibility for something more easily if you also feel ownership for it and it is clear what you are responsible for. The feeling of ownership is strengthened if your name is connected to what that responsibility is for.
- **Accountability.** This occurs when responsibility is accepted and it has to do with justifying and defending your beliefs, feelings, and actions to others, as well as holding others accountable (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999).
- **Territory.** This has to do with delineating that for which you feel ownership ("This is mine, not yours"), not allowing others into that territory ("Don't touch") and drawing boundaries ("This belongs to it and that doesn't") (Brown, Lawrence & Robinson, 2005).

Towards a practical model of psychological ownership

Ultimately, this brings us to seven aspects for psychological ownership that give the concept more breadth and depth and that can form the basis for a practical guide. Building on these aspects, we have developed our own model that provides tools to understand how psychological ownership forms and can be strengthened. To do this, we have made the aspects more interrelated and deepened them with other theory. We set out the model step by step (see also Figure 1).

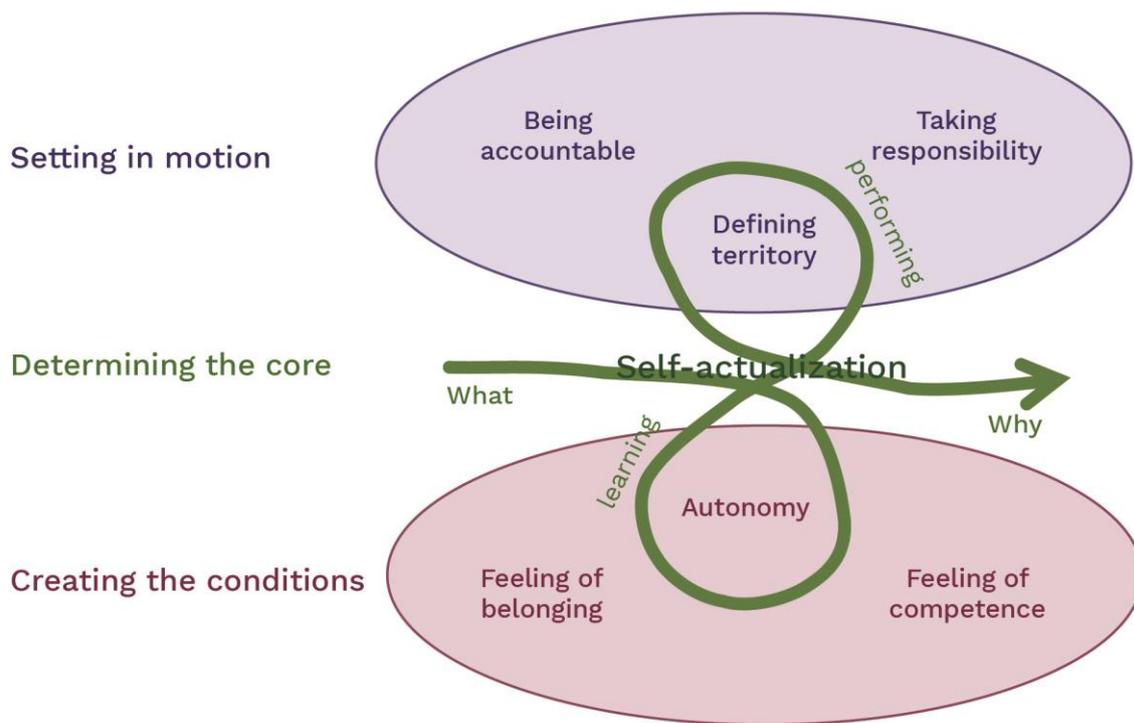


Figure 1. Practical model for psychological ownership

Ultimately, a model emerges that is composed of three layers: (1) determining the core, (2) creating the conditions, and (3) setting in motion. At each layer, different elements require attention. In summary, this looks as follows: first, ownership begins with what it is asked for (such as a task, subject, theme, or goal) and the extent to which it affects you in who you want to be and what you want to bring into the world (self-actualization). And ultimately you also want to achieve something with it for yourself: the why (such as your own goal, ambition, or personal interest). For us, this forms the heart of psychological ownership, which is why we have placed this layer in the middle: ‘determining the core’.

Next, three conditions are needed to develop feelings of ownership. One is a feeling of competence: to feel ownership, you need certain abilities (for example, you must be able to realize the task). In addition, the feeling of belonging helps to increase a person's psychological ownership; you feel part of a group and are not alone. And it is important to have sufficient room to act and decide, so you can do something with it and make your own choices (autonomy). We call this the layer of ‘creating the conditions’. From here, things can get in motion. If you feel ownership of something, then this manifests itself in the degree to which you actually take responsibility for it. When you experience ownership, you justify and defend your convictions, feelings, and actions to others, and you also call others to account. And you then also mark off

your territory, in relation to and in harmony with others. In this way you visualize what is yours, you take ownership and stand for it. We call this third layer in the model 'setting in motion'.

It goes without saying that ownership is not static, because it changes in the course of time. In a continuous process of learning and performing it becomes clearer how it makes you feel and take ownership of something, what you are able to contribute with it, how that enriches you as a person and as a professional and what more it asks of you and the context in which you operate.

Heart of psychological ownership: determining the core

Let's take a look at the three layers in more detail, starting again at the heart. Pierce, at one of his roots, spoke of self-identity. We think self-actualization is a more appropriate term than self-identity because self-identity is an awkward contraction that seeks to signify difference from social identity (Baumeister, 2011; Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2011; Ruijters et al., 2016) and because self-actualization gives more more grip on this "root". The latter term is reflected in the work of Carl Gustav Jung (1954), Carl Rogers (1947) and Abraham Maslow (1943), among others. Their work offers interesting insights into the development of psychological ownership.

For example, it is essential that you experience a connection with the subject, that it is an expression of who you are. That you can actualize yourself with it or what you consider meaningful from personal motives. The subjective experience and perception of reality is thereby leading in your thinking, feeling, and acting towards the subject to which the psychological ownership relates. After all, imposing something from the outside only gets you moving if it matches your self-image. Finally, from a psychological perspective, self-identity is partly motivated by consciousness, but unconscious processes play at least as important a role. This creates immediate complexity because the unconscious is less easily accessible.

Multiple aspects therefore require attention in order to develop feelings of ownership. In essence, it is about determining your core, knowing, or exploring what you are about and that you can express yourself in the subject matter at hand. This is not always easy because of the conscious and unconscious processes involved.

In our own research, self-actualization emerges as the core of ownership. It turns out to be the link between, on the one hand, the conditions for its development (a feeling of belonging, a feeling of competence and autonomy) and, on the other hand, what is expressed when feelings of ownership are present (taking responsibility, being accountable and defining territory). So: without self-actualization no ownership. Focusing on ownership without paying attention to self-actualization does not produce the desired result and can result in frustration and misunderstanding. People who know their identity well and organize and perform their work accordingly experience a great sense of ownership.

Foundations of psychological ownership: creating the conditions

The aspects of feeling of belonging, belief in one's own abilities, and autonomy connect one to one with the 'self-determination theory' (SDT) of Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (1985). They also touch on two of Pierce's three roots for psychological ownership. The SDT is a well-researched and widely supported theory in which three universal psychological needs (a feeling of belonging, a feeling of competence, and autonomy) facilitate the process of intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and psychological well-being. When these needs are met, they promote (intrinsic) motivation and mental health (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002). They form the basis for psychological ownership. We choose to replace the term 'belief in one's own ability' with 'feeling of competence', as this matches the description of Pierce's root and thus preserves the terminology of the SDT.

Expression of psychological ownership: setting in motion

Feelings of ownership are expressed in the last three aspects: taking responsibility, being accountable, and defining territory. You take responsibility for what you think is important and what you are motivated to do. This means, among other things, that you don't just think about something, but that you work on it, take care of it and don't just let it happen. You account for this or call others to account for it if you want to influence the situation. It does not feel like you are doing it for the other person or that it is imposed, but you have the natural tendency and need to have a dialogue about how things are going so you can make adjustments. With territorial behavior you visualize what you do take ownership for (and what not), how you demarcate and how high you build up the walls around it to protect it (around that for which ownership is taken, such as a task or an object): can others access it or is it yours alone? Are there conditions attached to participation ('You may participate provided that ...')? These three aspects can be seen as the layer of setting in motion: by expressing feelings of ownership, by being visible in what you find important, by standing up for something, in interaction with others.

This model provides a handle for looking at and discussing ownership. Is there visible behavior that shows a sense of ownership, such as taking responsibility? Does someone indicate that he or she experiences sufficient space to determine how to work on a task? Do people feel competent, do they have the idea that success is possible? Affirmative or negative answers to these questions give direction to interventions to stimulate (feelings of) ownership.

Working on your ownership

To make the above more practical, we have described several tools that can help you develop your ownership in practice.

Self-Examination of ownership

First, we have formulated a set of questions that may be useful for a first exploration of your ownership. You can use them, for example, if you want to explore where ownership around a

certain task stumbles or what is important to you when you feel more or less ownership. You can also see them as a starting point for a discussion with others about how you experience each other's ownership. Here we use the term 'assignment' as the object to which the ownership relates. You can also read a word like task, goal, or subject here (see table 1).

| Aspect | Question | Score (1-10) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| What | How clear is what you feel or are expected to take ownership of? (Describe this to yourself before moving on to the next questions). | |
| Self-actualization | To what extent does this assignment touch on what you really find important in your work and life? Does it give you enough opportunities to express yourself? | |
| Why | How clear is it what you want to achieve with what you feel or are supposed to take ownership of? (Formulate which aspect requires attention). | |
| Feeling of competence | To what extent do you feel competent to work on the assignment? Does the assignment offer you enough space to develop yourself further? | |
| Feeling of belonging | To what extent do you feel a respected part of the group you are working with on the assignment? Do you have the feeling you are in it together? | |
| Autonomy | To what extent do you experience space to determine yourself how you work on the assignment? Do you have sufficient freedom to steer and make choices? | |
| Taking responsibility | To what extent do you feel responsible for the assignment? And to what extent do you take responsibility and work on the assignment? | |
| Being accountable | To what extent do you account to others for how you work on the assignment? To what extent do you have the need to enter into a dialogue about it? | |
| Defining territory | To what extent do you state what is and what is not part of the assignment? To what extent do you have control over the participation or non-participation of others? | |

Table 1. Self-assessment of ownership

To answer and discuss the questions you can use the retrospective of Martin Seligman (2004). You score each of the seven questions intuitively on a scale of 1-10, write a short explanation for each question, and then reflect on the results. Of course, you can also do this with a group. You then share the score and explanation and discuss the outcome. What images and experiences

are there about the assignment and your and others' roles in it? What scores high, or low? What behavior is visible in practice? On the basis of this exploration, it may become clear what can be done to stimulate ownership. Note: the total score (the sum of the aspects) is not so interesting, it is about the scores on the aspects, about what the assignment needs and the mutual interaction between people in it.

Developing a repertoire of actions for ownership

Next, of course, is the question of what you can do to develop feelings of ownership. According to Pierce et al. (2001), these feelings can be strengthened in three ways.

- *Having control over the subject.* This is about being able to use and exercise control over the subject or object, as a basis for the development of psychological ownership (Rudmin & Berry, 1987). You are in charge of it.
- *Develop deep knowledge about the subject.* A feeling of ownership can be created by building a relationship with the subject. Acquiring deep knowledge about it builds a bond with the subject (Beggan & Brown, 1994; Rudmin & Berry, 1987).
- *Self-investment in the subject.* Investing time, energy, and attention allows one to become one with the subject so that feelings of ownership can develop, the sense that something is "your baby" (Csíkszentmihályi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981).

These three paths touch on different aspects of ownership. If we take out our model again and look at each of the aspects, we see, for example, several possibilities (see Table 2). What possible actions do you see for yourself with each of the seven aspects?

| Aspect | Action repertoire (examples) |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Self-actualization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spending time on the subject and exploring your relationship with it - Exploring your professional identity in relation to the subject - Determining what you truly enjoy and derive satisfaction from in your work |
| Feeling of competence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delving into the subject matter (e.g., what do you know about it?) - Exploring your unique abilities (such as knowledge and skills) - Accepting that you don't have to be a jack of all trades |
| Feeling of belonging | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine what is important to you in collaboration - Investing in personal relationships with others - Consciously choosing which and how many teams to commit to at the same time |
| Autonomy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explaining what you need to accomplish something - Wanting or daring to make decisions - Taking initiative on issues that are important to you |
| Taking responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making clear which responsibility you want to take on - Do not wait until the other determines it for you - Indicate in time when and with what you need help |
| Being accountable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examining and reflecting on how things are going - Standing up for it and telling your story (in candor) - Learning from mistakes and failures and adjusting accordingly |
| Defining territory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (re)defining boundaries in what you do and do not take up - Realize with whom you are working on the assignment - Determine whether and how to give others access |

Table 2. Action repertoire for developing ownership.

Development of collective psychological ownership

So far, we have approached psychological ownership primarily as something individual that arises in interaction with the environment. It grows or shrinks through our conversation about it, through attunement, expectations, reactions, and negotiation. Increasingly, however, we work in teams or groups on assignment that call for collectivity and shared ownership. It is therefore interesting to look at 'collective psychological ownership' or ownership that is experienced collectively. Jon Pierce and Liro Jussila (2010) describe this as the "collectively held sense (feeling) that this target of ownership (or a piece of that target) is collectively "ours"" (p. 812). The difference from individual ownership is in the sense of "ours". Collective ownership results in common feelings, knowledge, and beliefs about the subject it relates to. And this is complemented by individual and collective rights (such as use and control) and responsibilities (Pierce & Jussila, 2010).

The transition between individual and collective ownership takes place in three stages. First, you feel individual ownership toward the subject and experience it as "mine". Then you notice that others are also connected. A shift from individual to collective takes place, and the subject involves not only 'my' but also 'our'. Then collective ownership occurs, where there is agreement between individuals and the concept is transformed from individual to collective level.

According to Pierce and Jussila (2010), the personal sense of "us" develops most when we belong to a certain group and are also treated as such by others. This requires that the group has shaped experiences in such a way that each group member experiences shared control, shared knowledge, and/or shared investment - the three "pathways" we mentioned earlier - on the topic. You experience the activities and outcomes as the product of your own effort and input, coupled with the effort and input of others with whom you are connected and with whom there is interdependence. The authors state that interdependence, collective identification, group cohesion, and team chemistry are important factors that influence collective psychological ownership.

The step from individual to collective ownership requires giving space to the other and staying on one's own, the description implies. Then collective psychological ownership can develop around a subject, theme, or organization as a whole. Our model is also perfectly usable for the collective, as we have already shown in the description of Seligman's retrospective.

Psychological ownership and the role of the leader

'Managers account for at least 70 percent of the variance in employee engagement scores', according to research by Gallup (Beck & Harter, 2015). In this article, we don't want to delve too deeply into the role of a leader in developing feelings of ownership, but it is clear that they have a strong influence on it. By no means do they always set a good example themselves; does someone not only ask for ownership as a leader, but also show what that can look like? The way in which they conduct the dialogue about this also deserves attention (is it one-way or two-way traffic?). And also, the question to what extent they themselves stand in the way of ownership, for example by being overactive and thereby dispossessing others, is relevant. Björn Prevaas, Jo Bos and Helmuth Stoop (2018) have written about this when it comes to the role of a program manager.

Self-examination of creating ownership

We have also formulated a set of questions for the creation of self-examination into ownership. These can be useful for a first exploration of the way you as a leader work on developing (feelings of) ownership. You can also answer these questions in the form of a retrospective.

| Aspect | Question | Score (1-10) |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Self-actualization</i> | To what extent do you create space for people to connect the assignment to what they find important and to what they want to achieve in work and life? | |
| <i>Feeling of competence</i> | To what extent do you know the abilities of the people involved and do you create opportunities for them to further develop themselves while working on the assignment? | |
| <i>Feeling of belonging</i> | To what extent do you work on making people feel respected as part of the company (team, collective, group) with which they work on the assignment? | |
| <i>Autonomy</i> | To what extent do you give people room to determine for themselves how they work on the assignment? To what extent do you offer the means and possibilities to work on the assignment? | |
| <i>Taking responsibility</i> | To what extent do you give people real responsibilities? To what extent do you check whether those responsibilities fit with what people want and are able to do? | |
| <i>Being accountable</i> | To what extent do you demand accountability from people about the way they work on the assignment (actions, beliefs, etc.) and what they realize? | |
| <i>Defining territory</i> | To what extent do you direct what is and what is not part of the assignment without defining the boundaries beforehand? | |

Table 3. Self-examination of ownership (leader)

Finally, you could ask yourself as a leader the overarching question: to what extent am I standing in the way of ownership? Leaders are often inclined to look outside themselves for the causes of a lack of ownership. In doing so, they forget that they themselves can also be an important trigger or obstacle. Arend Ardon (2011) describes how they sometimes unconsciously block a change or cause its opposite. He shows how this works based on vicious circles.

Suppose you find that your employees are too reactive and passive. You experience the pressure to achieve results, because your client or manager calls you to account or because you want to achieve something. So, you start directing more: you address people and hope for improvement. They see an overactive manager who takes the initiative, and they wait to see what will happen. That behavior confirms your image that they are waiters and so you go one step further. And in this way a vicious circle is created.

The other extreme of too little control is also visible in practice. Professionals get all the space they need from their manager to shape and carry out their work, on the assumption that they can determine that themselves. There is hardly any discussion or guidance. The professionals experience this as a manager who gives no direction and has unclear expectations. The result is

that they themselves, each in their own way, take the lead. The manager in turn feels that the professionals are self-willed and difficult to approach. Both too much and too little control can get in the way of (collective) ownership.

It is therefore valuable to investigate how this works and to make yourself part of the situation. Ardon speaks about "making a picture including yourself". It helps not only to look at that picture, but also to let others look with you. Ask what they see, how they experience it and compare this with what you had planned. A so-called reflective practical session is a suitable way of doing this. In it you make explicit beforehand what you want to do, why you want to do it in a certain way and what you want to achieve. Then you do it, someone observes your actions, and afterwards you reflect on what happened.

Creating a repertoire of actions for ownership

What can you do as a leader to create or encourage feelings of ownership? We make suggestions for this in Table 4. We also indicate what you'd better not do. We have also included a reflection question that examines your views on an aspect of ownership. This is because it is also important to know how you view a particular aspect. We have noticed, for example, that project and programme managers often do not see a role for themselves in the 'feeling of competence' aspect; they think it is up to the hierarchical manager to help people develop in their role or function.

| Aspect | Action repertoire (examples) | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Do | Don't | Reflection |
| <i>Self-actualization</i> -> Together search for meaning | Make it personal, look for what drives people, work on shared vision, ambitions and goals, storytelling | Approach ownership businesslike and functional, impose something on someone, mainly steer by responsibility | To what extent do you think people should be able to chase their dreams in their work? |
| <i>Feeling of competence</i> -> Stimulate and help people to develop themselves | Show the way to substantive depth, give appropriate space and challenge to learn, give trust, work on mutual trust, help if things go wrong | Especially appreciate results, separate learning and performing, punish mistakes | To what extent do you feel you have a responsibility for the development of your people? |
| <i>Feeling of belonging</i> -> Strengthen mutual relationships and solidarity | Ensure that people complement each other and value diversity, pay attention to relationships between people, let people make explicit what they need from each other | Mainly focus on results, treat everyone equally, always put the content first, have high expectations of team building activities | What do you think is the relevance of the existing mutual relationships in the team for this assignment? |
| <i>Autonomy</i> -> Give people space and possibilities | Give people control and confidence, make resources and possibilities available, think along actively, investigate where you yourself impede someone's ownership, remove obstacles | Give someone total freedom, dictate, appropriate people, look over their shoulder, check how and what they do, be overactive or solve things for others | What does it mean to you to give people control and confidence? To what extent do you have to pave the way for someone? |

Table 4 (part I). Repertoire of actions for developing ownership (leader)

| Aspect | Action repertoire (examples) | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Do | Don't | Reflection |
| <i>Taking responsibility</i> -> Encourage taking responsibility | Encourage sharing of responsibilities, show interest in what people encounter when taking responsibility, celebrate developments, progress and results, set an example | Leave responsibilities unclear, determine for the other what his responsibility is, let the conversation go if people do not take their responsibility | To what extent do you yourself set a good example when it comes to taking responsibility? |
| <i>Being accountable</i> -> Ensure that people want to be accountable | Ask someone what they think is good work and how they want to account for it, show serious interest in how the work on the assignment is going, encourage multi-voicedness, give feedback and discuss what the other person needs | Let your own judgment be leading, communicate via reports and records, use figures without meaning | How do you make sure that people want to be accountable (instead of having to)? |
| <i>Defining territory</i> -> See how the pieces of the puzzle fit together | See assignments as a joint responsibility, investigate whether and how the pieces of the puzzle of what everyone can and wants to do fit together, have a discussion about the feasibility and the ambition level of the assignment | Set boundaries for others, make someone's responsibility too small or too large, define roles too sharply in relation to each other | To what extent are you talking about 'your' assignment (compared to 'ours')? |

Table 4 (part II). Repertoire of actions for developing ownership (leader)

In conclusion

Psychological ownership is not a concept that you can switch on or off as the call for ownership increases. In practice, you often see that people are directed to take responsibility. But this does not usually promote an increase in feelings of ownership. It is essential that someone can express himself in the subject or theme to which the ownership relates, that it is experienced as

important. That constitutes the core. In this article we have expanded this into a practical model that helps with self-examination and conversations.

Our experience is that people find the conversation about their and others' ownership of an assignment, for example, of great value. It is useful to share reflections and observations and to explore what helps and inhibits feelings of ownership. As support for self-examination and conversations, we have formulated a set of questions that help to gain insight into the assessment of the seven aspects of our model, both from the perspective of yourself and from that of the leader who expects ownership from others. We also made suggestions for a repertoire of actions.

With our model of ownership, we want to offer a helping hand for assignments in which ownership takes an important place in the realization of the vision. We are open to practical experiences with this model and suggestions for further improvement.

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Carlijn Nelis is a Dutch consultant in the field of organizational change and organizational development and is co-owner of management consultancy firm C3 consultants and managers. She works as a consultant, researcher, project leader and program manager on change processes within healthcare, welfare, and other social sectors, often in complex organizations and in collaborations of multiple organizations. She supports directors and managers in their issues in the field of organizational change or organizational development, such as organizational design, cooperation, cultural change, innovation, and the realization of new working methods, with a special interest in learning and development.

She has experience in guiding and collaborating with professionals on changes in their work, with focus on the tension between professional interest and organizational interest that these issues can entail. Carlijn is a partner for the board, management, professionals and can switch between these levels and establish a connection. In addition to working in different assignments, she is part of the professional identity research group and gives workshops and masterclasses within her field of organizational change and development. Carlijn can be contacted at c.nelis@c3am.nl.



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In The Netherlands she's recognized as a thought leader in this field. Her work is the basis for a lot of organizations on how they think of and work on learning and development, not only in the educational sector but also in health care, government, and many others. She's a regular guest teacher at various business schools, gives lectures and masterclasses and was program director of the post-master Learning, Development and Change. Also, Manon is a member of the advisory board of several Dutch journals and a member of the scientific board of the Dutch association of consultants. **Manon** can be contacted at manonruijters@goodworkcompany.nl.



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Björn undertakes all kinds of initiatives to further develop the discipline of program management, in particular through publishing and organizing events and conferences. Books he published (in Dutch) are for example *Working on Programs* (2014), *Program Canvas* (2016) and *Leadership of the Program Manager* (2018). In The Netherlands he's recognized as a thought leader in the field of program management. Together with Manon Ruijters he works on the cutting edge of learning and performing, to try to intertwine both, for example: how to evolve projects and programs into more learning organizations? Or: how to use programs better to help organizations to grow and develop their capabilities more effectively? Björn can be contacted at bjornprevaas@goodworkcompany.nl.

About Good Work Company & C3

Good Work Company is a small Dutch consulting firm, founded and run by Björn Prevaas and Manon Ruijters. The company advises organizations in the field of learning, development, project and program management and the connections between these fields of expertise. The aim is to stimulate Good Work in organizations: work that is good (excellent), does good (ethical) and feels good (engaging), in line with the ideas of Howard Gardner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and William Damon. For more, visit www.goodworkcompany.nl.

C3 Consultants and Managers is a small Dutch management consultancy firm within the healthcare and welfare sector with the ambition to improve healthcare and welfare together with its customers and clients. For more, visit www.c3am.nl.