According to our survey of more than 200 people, 69 percent of employees who avoid confronting coworkers are avoiding issues of accountability, and half say the reason for shying away from these discussions about behavior, expectations, or performance is that they are afraid of a negative outcome—like making an enemy, enduring a miserable argument, or getting fired.

The survey also revealed the top four reasons people avoid crucial confrontations at work:

- 50 percent are afraid of a negative outcome.
- 16 percent don’t know how to start, hold, or finish the conversation.
- 10 percent can’t find a good time to talk.
- 10 percent don’t think the other person will care about the problem.

What’s more, 93 percent said not having these sticky, yet crucial, discussions has negatively affected the quality of their work life. Rather than hold their bosses or coworkers accountable, most people resort to a host of unproductive tactics such as working around or avoiding the other person, talking behind that person’s back, or acting out their frustrations in other ways.

An innovator in corporate training and leadership development, VitalSmarts combines three decades of original research with 50 years of the best social science thinking to help leaders and organizations change human behavior and achieve new levels of performance. VitalSmarts has identified four high-leverage skill sets that, when used in combination, create healthy corporate cultures. These skills are taught in the Company’s award-winning training programs and New York Times bestselling books of the same titles: Crucial Conversations, Crucial Accountability, Influencer, and Change Anything. VitalSmarts has consulted with more than 300 of the Fortune 500 companies and trained more than one million people worldwide. www.vitalsmarts.com