WORKSHEET + WORKED EXAMPLE

One Owner, Real Support

A confirmed ownership agreement for a bounded outcome.

25 minutes | DRI · Directly Responsible Individual

Use it in three moves

1. Define the outcome and its limits. Invite the proposed owner to check what they are agreeing to carry.

2. Make decisions, contributors, capacity, and escalation explicit. One owner still needs cooperation from other people.

3. Agree what completion means and how blockers will be raised. Revisit the arrangement if the work changes.

Define the outcome and boundary

What is this person responsible for bringing to completion? What is outside the scope?

Name and confirm the DRI

Choose someone with relevant context and obtain their agreement. Responsibility is not assigned by surprise.

Specify decision authority

What can the DRI decide, what needs approval, and how are disagreements resolved?

One Owner, Real Support

YOUR WORKING NOTES / CONTINUED

Agree contributors and capacity

Name inputs, dates, access, protected time, and backup. One owner does not mean one person performs everything.

Make progress and blockers visible

Choose an update rhythm and escalation route, not constant status reporting.

Define completion and review

Who accepts the outcome, and what learning will be carried into the next cycle?

A question for me

What am I promising to make possible for the person who owns this?

See one way through

FICTIONAL WORKED EXAMPLE / NOT THE ANSWER TO YOUR SITUATION

Define the outcome and boundary

Publish the monthly service report, including verification and distribution; deciding next quarter's priorities is outside scope.

Name and confirm the DRI

The service analyst agrees to coordinate the report, with the lead as sponsor.

Specify decision authority

The analyst chooses the working format. The lead approves external claims and resolves disputed priorities.

Agree contributors and capacity

Data owners provide verified figures by Tuesday. The analyst has half a day protected; a backup is named for leave.

Make progress and blockers visible

A short Thursday update lists done, blocked, and the decision needed. Urgent access issues go to the sponsor.

Define completion and review

The service lead confirms accuracy and the recipient confirms usability. Review missing inputs after publication.

The thinking behind it

An owner without support becomes a place to put blame. Make the organization's commitments as explicit as the individual's.

DRI means Directly Responsible Individual, a practice used in organizations including GitLab to clarify ownership. This original agreement distinguishes coordinating an outcome from doing all tasks or holding unlimited authority. Use RAPID for decision roles and RACI for a multi-activity responsibility map.

GitLab Handbook · DRI

Read You Have a Culture Problem by Nic Payne