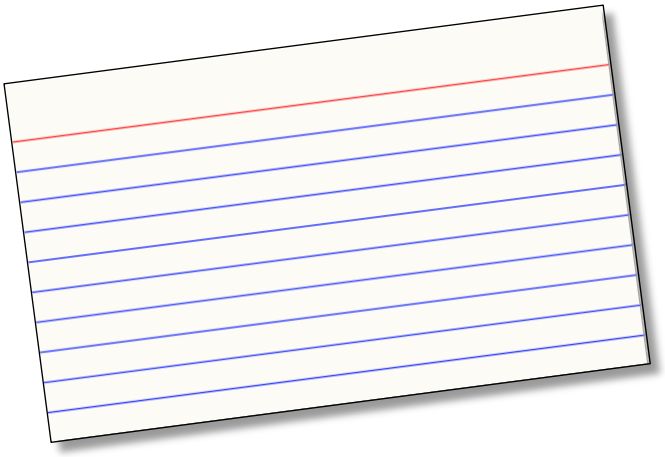
The Commitment Card Guide for Business Teams

A 90-day system for peer accountability
that builds trust across your team



Original concept by Coach Bob Ladouceur, De La Salle High School
Adapted by Sean Glaze

Sean Glaze | Great Results Teambuilding
greatresultsteambuilding.com | sean@greatresultsteambuilding.com | 770.861.6840

WHERE THE COMMITMENT CARD IDEA CAME FROM

The commitment card is not my idea. It belongs to Bob Ladouceur, who coached football at De La Salle High School in Concord, California.

The coach

Coach Ladouceur took over a struggling De La Salle program in 1979 and led it for 34 seasons before retiring in January 2013. Before coaching, he worked as a probation officer.
That background matters. He was not trying to build great football players first.
He was trying to build strong teammates who kept their word.

The results

Measure	Record
Seasons as head coach	34 (1979 to 2012)
Career record	399 wins, 25 losses, 3 ties
Winning streak	151 straight games, from 1992 to 2004
Legacy	His program inspired the book When the Game Stands Tall by Neil Hayes (2003) and the 2014 film of the same name

How the original process worked

Every week, Coach Ladouceur paired his players up, always in a different order. Each player wrote three goals on a 3x5 index card: a conditioning goal, a practice goal, and a game goal. Then he read that card out loud to his partner and handed it over.

The rule was simple. Every goal had to be measurable and observable. If a teammate could not watch it and count it, it did not go on the card. At the end of the week, the team could see whether each player delivered on his promise.

> *"The idea behind the commitment cards was that I wanted players to be responsible to each other and understand that their contributions impact the team as a whole."*
>
> Coach Bob Ladouceur, as told to Don Yaeger, Forbes (2015)

The impact beyond football

Here is the part that gets me. According to Coach Ladouceur, most of his former players kept those cards for years as a reminder to live up to the commitments they made to the people who once believed in them. He also used the cards to teach humility: nobody is perfect, and a missed commitment was a chance to learn, not a reason to hide.

The scoreboard got the headlines. The cards built the men.
That is why this tool works in a locker room and in a conference room.

WHY IT WORKS IN THE WORKPLACE

Most workplace accountability flows one direction: from the manager down.
Peers rarely make a specific promise to each other and then report back out loud. That gap is exactly where the commitment card fits.

Adults are not that different from 18-year-old linemen. We work harder for people we know are counting on us than for a goal sitting in a performance system.

- **It breaks down silos.** Partners across departments build relationships org charts never will.
- **It turns vague intentions into visible actions.** "Improve communication" becomes "Send my weekly project update to the ops team by Friday at noon."
- **It makes accountability normal instead of awkward.** "Did you keep your card?" is a safe question. "Why did you drop the ball?" is not.
- **It builds trust through small promises kept.** Trust is not built in a retreat. It is built in dozens of small commitments that someone actually keeps.

How it connects to the GREAT culture model

GREAT element	What the commitment card builds
Goals	Team priorities turn into specific, individual actions every two weeks.
Relationships	Monthly partners connect people across roles, departments, and locations.
Expectations	Commitments are written down and spoken out loud, so nobody has to guess.
Accountability	Peers follow up with peers. The leader is not alone holding the standard.
Thanks	Kept commitments get recognized in front of the team.



THE BUSINESS CARD

Same 3x5 card, or a shared doc for remote teams. Four lines.

Line	What goes here
Results goal	One measurable output tied to your role in the next two weeks.
Growth goal	One skill you will practice, with a number and a deadline.
Teammate goal	One thing you will do to make a colleague or another department better.
I commit to	Your partner's name for this month.

Vague versus card ready

Too vague	Card ready
Follow up with prospects	Send 3 proposals by Thursday
Be a better listener	Ask two follow up questions before giving advice in every 1:1 this cycle
Work on delegation	Hand off one recurring task to a direct report and coach them through it once
Communicate more	Send my project update to the ops team every Friday by noon
Support the team	Thank one person from another department by name in our team meeting

> **Key takeaway:** if a vague goal shows up, the partner asks one question:
> "How will I know you did it?"
> The answer goes on the card.

THE 90-DAY ROLLOUT

Three months, three partners, six card cycles.

That is long enough to build the habit and short enough to keep energy high.

Month 1: Install Cycles 1 and 2

Goal: *Everyone understands the why and writes cards that pass the filter.*

- Kick off with the Ladouceur story. Adults lean in when they hear about 151 straight wins and a probation officer who built men first.
- The leader goes first. Write your card, read it to your partner in front of the team, and report on it honestly two weeks later.
- Run a 15 minute card writing clinic. Rewrite three vague goals together as a group.
- Assign partners across functions when possible. A sales rep paired with someone from operations learns more than two reps paired together.

> **Coach note:** If the leader skips their card or quietly lets it slide, the system dies in month one. Your team is watching what you do, not what you announced.

Month 2: Build the Rhythm Cycles 3 and 4

Goal: *Report outs run on time and partners check in without being reminded.*

- Rotate to new partners. Same rules, new relationship.
- Track the team keep rate on a whiteboard or shared doc.
- Celebrate kept commitments publicly. Handle repeated misses privately.
- Ask each person to share one thing their partner did that helped them follow through.

> **Coach note:** This is the month enthusiasm dips. Protect the ten minutes in the team meeting. Do not let it become the first thing cut when the agenda gets full.

Month 3: Hand It Over Cycles 5 and 6

Goal: *Team members own the process and the leader steps back.*

- Rotate the role of running the report out among team members.
- Let people request partners they want to learn from, alongside assigned pairings.
- Hold a 90 day review: Which card are you most proud of? What did a miss teach you?
- Decide as a team whether to keep going, and what to change for the next 90 days.

> **Coach note:** When the team votes to keep the cards going without being asked, you know the habit took. That is the result that matters most.

THE TWO-WEEK CYCLE

Step	When	What happens
Commit	Day 1, 10 min	At the start of a team meeting, each person reads their card to their partner. Partner keeps a copy.
Pulse	Days 5 to 7, 5 min	Partners connect by coffee, call, or message. "How is the growth goal going?" A nudge, not an audit.
Report	Day 10, 10 min	Partner reads each goal and asks "Did you keep it?" Yes or no. No excuses.
Reset	Right after	Missed one? Share one thing you learned and one adjustment. Then write the next card.



Remote and hybrid teams

- Use a shared doc or channel with one card per person. Partners comment on each other's card at the midpoint.
- Keep report outs live on video with cameras on. The out loud moment is where the accountability lives.
- Pair remote and in office people intentionally. This is one of the easiest ways to keep remote team members connected.

GUARDRAILS FOR BUSINESS TEAMS

- **Keep it out of performance reviews.** The moment a missed card can hurt someone's rating, people start writing easy goals and the honesty disappears.
- **Leaders miss out loud.** When a director reports a missed commitment honestly, the whole team learns it is safe to do the same.
- **Honesty gets applause. Excuses get silence.** The locker room rule works with adults too.
- **Hold the time limit.** Ten minutes to commit, ten to report. If it drags, people start resenting it.

Troubleshooting

Problem	Fix
"This feels like a high school thing"	Tell the Ladouceur story and point to the filter. Measurable promises to a peer is not a kids' activity. It is how high performing teams operate.
Cards turn into task lists	Limit to one line per goal. The card is for stretch commitments, not your full to do list.
Senior people opt out	Senior people go first. If leadership is exempt, everyone else will treat it as optional too.
Partners never check in	Put the midpoint pulse on the calendar for both partners when the cycle starts.
Same goals every cycle	Require at least one new line each cycle. Growth means moving the target.

Measuring what matters

- **Keep rate:** commitments kept divided by commitments made, each cycle.
- **Connection reach:** people each team member has partnered with across departments.
- **Pulse survey at 90 days:** Who helped you follow through? What did a missed card teach you?

BUSINESS TEMPLATES

Commitment card

COMMITMENT CARD	Name: _____ Cycle: ____
Results goal	
Growth goal	
Teammate goal	
I commit to	
Kept it?	Yes / No What I learned:

Cycle tracking sheet

Team member	Partner	Results	Growth	Teammate

*Mark each goal Y or N. Keep rate = total Y divided by total goals.

Want a Hand Running This With Your Team?

You can run this guide on your own. Plenty of leaders do.

I would also be glad to help.
I work with teams on the culture around commitments, not just the tool...

Here is how Sean can help:

- **A team workshop** that walks your people through the G.R.E.A.T. steps as a catalyst event
- **A keynote** for your event on why being a Winning Teammate improves everyone's season.
- **One on one coaching** for the leader - so you have a thinking partner as you implement.



About the Author:

Sean Glaze is a workplace culture keynote speaker and team building event facilitator who spent 20 years coaching basketball before transitioning to corporate speaking. He has worked with organizations including Cisco, John Deere, CDC, Emory University, and Southern Company, helping teams build accountability, trust, and stronger collaboration.

He is the author of several leadership books including Rapid Teamwork, What Effective Leaders Do, and The 10 Commandments of Winning Teammates, and he built the G.R.E.A.T. Culture Model, a framework leaders use to diagnose and strengthen team dynamics.

Contact Sean!

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