

EFFECTIVE EXECUTION CLOSES THE GAP BETWEEN PLANNING AND RESULTS

ACCORDING to *Get It Done* authors Ralph Welborn and Vince Kasten, “More than 64 percent of C-level executives from 250 midsized to large companies in the United States and the European Union have said that being able to execute, to ‘react quickly to changing business opportunities, models, technologies, and processes is critical for their success,’ and yet is nearly impossible to achieve.”

It would seem that execution is truly a forgotten art. Sadly, many companies are missing out on primary benefits that go unrealized due to the lack of an effective execution plan. With a few core alterations in their processes, these companies could easily:

- Bring innovative products to market faster than the competition.
- Achieve higher profits through doing it right the first time.
- Meet targeted goals that result in increased shareholder confidence.
- Increase the morale and confidence of employees throughout the organization.
- Enhance the organization’s reputation as a leader in its industry.
- Attract top talent to work for the organization.

Let’s review five areas in which clear execution can have a predominant impact.



Identify Top Performers

People are vitally important in the execution of strategies. Once ideas are developed into strategies, it is people who carry those ideas into implementation. Whether they do so poorly or effectively is oftentimes debatable.

The key is to identify your top performers and involve them in the progression of your plans. In *The Talent Management Handbook – Creating Organizational Excellence by Identifying, Developing and Promoting Your Best People*, authors Lance and Dorothy Berger encourage organizations to create a customized list of their

own core competencies, then map the competencies to each job.

When you effectively source and align top performers with the right jobs, the organization will have the talent it requires now and in the future to attain its strategic goals.

Identify Goals That Support Strategies Through Decisive Actions

Strategy and goals go hand-in-hand. Organizations that succeed in execution have strategies that are:

- Well thought out and clearly defined
- Consistently communicated within their organization and with customers
- Strictly adhered to



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Strategy is only half of what is needed to accomplish goals effectively. Without proper execution, the strategy you choose will have little bearing. Before launching your next project take the time to look at factors that could inhibit performance. Identify common roadblocks and ways to remove them. Outline areas for which follow-up and follow-through will be necessary. Create a thorough action plan. When you start with laying a firm foundation through effective execution, your strategy will unfold seamlessly and your performance will be exemplary.

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EFFECTIVE EXECUTION

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The actions (execution) that follow make or break the strategy. And so the formula goes:

- Identify the goals
- Determine the strategy
- Then take the appropriate action (execution) to make it all happen

If your goal is to increase corporate sales by 15% by the end of the 4th quarter, your strategy may be to develop a plan so that each individual on the sales team has identified their key and target accounts. The actions you may take to accomplish the goal may include each sales person creating their key account list of 20 accounts that are qualified to spend over \$50,000 and a target list of at least 10 accounts.

Successful Communication

Poor communication is one of the most detrimental factors in new strategies. Before effective execution can take place, everyone involved must fully understand the strategy as well as the goals and the actions expected of them. Corporate speak must be defined to ensure fluid operations. An assumption that key terms and ideals are understood could undermine your level of success. Make a concerted effort to incorporate explicit communication into every phase of your goal setting, strategy planning and execution.

Establish A Committed Execution Mindset

Frequently, visionaries and upper management can fall victim to the habit of assuming others will perform the execution of a plan rather than establishing a mindset of execution. When this happens, a pothole is formed along the pathway that leads to accomplishment. Likewise, some employees who may not be primarily involved with the implementation may neglect to realize that they, too, need to be committed to an execution mindset. Everyone should have a core understanding of the plan, their roles and how to proceed.

Follow-Up and Follow-Through

This prominent management policy is not forgotten when it comes to effective execution. To ensure execution continues on track from conception to completion follow-up is vital. However, determining the level and frequency at which you will follow-up may require some experimentation. Test several methods and observe the results to discover what works best for your team. You may choose to use one-on-one reviews, reports, group reviews, department or site visits, problem solving sessions or other methods.

You can be one of the few companies who progresses past what others have deemed an insurmountable challenge. You can overcome and excel where others have failed. When you focus on the vehicle that will carry you from strategy to success, the gap between planning and results will close quickly.

Almost nothing will hinder successful execution more quickly than poor communication. Before launching full out with your plan of action conduct a series of meetings with managers, department heads and employees to make the goals and expected results clear. Encourage an open environment where questions are welcomed and appreciated in order to keep everyone in the loop.

THE SALES SPECTRUM

Effective Strategies for Dramatic Results

THERE IS NO doubt... selling is the backbone of every company across the globe. Without this revenue-generating activity, bills aren't paid, payroll isn't met and companies cease to expand.

This is exactly why continually improving the selling strategies of your sales professionals is so vitally important.

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When looking to implement future strategies, don't forget to answer the question, "How?" Oftentimes, visionaries will create solutions to challenges based on "what" (the strategy) and "why" (to accomplish the goals). But the "how" - the execution - is frequently neglected. From the very beginning of your planning sessions, incorporate the question of "how" into discussions so you can immediately lay a firm foundation for solid execution.

TEN ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY

LOOKING FOR A way to create a comprehensive communication plan that will strengthen your organization's ability to achieve effective execution? Adhering to these 10 elements can help ensure that everyone involved has the same vision, is focused on the same goals and has the same plan of execution.

1

State the goals and strategy in simple, easy to grasp language. Be prepared to repeat them over and over again at every opportunity. Repetition brings about remembrance. While that saying may be an old advertising catchphrase, it is equally as applicable to communicating strategy.

2

Clearly define the individual actions that must be taken to execute the strategy. Stating the expected end result can be helpful in allowing employees to focus on the goals, however, without a detailed roadmap to follow, your team may get lost along the journey.

3

Clearly define the benefit(s) the organization will realize through executing the strategy and achieving its goals. People are always more likely to be onboard when they understand the benefits of any plan. When conveying those benefits, be sure to also include insights as to how the results will affect your team members.

4

Specify the milestones to be met, including dates. Have you ever tried to lose weight? In order to make the weight loss plan seem more "do-able" most fitness and nutrition experts encourage the setting of mini-goals along the way. The same principle applies here. When each milestone is met, celebrate!

5

Prepare a chart of the project team and reporting structure for execution of the strategy. This is an excellent way to stay organized and to keep others aware of the chain of command.

6

Identify the key deliverables and accountability structure for execution of the strategy.

7

Define your mechanisms for monitoring progress. Define how, by whom, how often and when progress checkpoints and reporting will be scheduled. This is done as a way to track and recognize accomplishments as well as assure the forward progression of the strategy.

8

Properly resource the strategy with the right people, money and equipment. A plan is only as good as the people who will carry it out. Without optimum personnel and an appropriate budget and equipment to back them up, success is likely to be illusive. .

9

Review known challenges and initial contingency plans to address them. Thorough execution begins in the mind. Will others be resistant to change? How will that be addressed? Will policies need to be altered? Will accomplishing the goals require cooperation from other departments? It is always best to consider possible roadblocks during the planning stages in order to effectively overcome them later on.

10

Identify processes and ownership for addressing further challenges, developing additional contingency plans, and resolving problems on a timely basis. As your plan progresses, you will almost certainly be confronted with additional issues. Be prepared and be flexible.

When you take these 10 elements into consideration, communicating your plan of execution will go much more smoothly. When everyone has the same understanding, the implementation of any plan can progress with greater speed and success.