

Four Steps for Achieving Excellence in Execution

As an essential business topic, strategy execution is in its infancy. Yet it's quickly evolving as leaders demand more knowledge, structure and resources on how to achieve it to remain competitive in the rapidly changing business environment.

When leaders address how to execute strategy, it's not always with the same energy, drive and conviction they applied to crafting it. Often, they are missing the skills and tools needed to excel in their execution efforts. A leadership team doesn't walk into a conference room and declare, "Let's create a bad strategy!" Although they believe they have crafted a winning strategy by the end of the planning, they only know if it's good once it's executed.

Once the execution begins, the theory starts to become the reality. The hard work of planning your organization's future comes into play as you test the thinking and assumptions. You discover how good (or bad) your strategy is. The key question for many leaders is where to focus to achieve excellence in execution?

I have been researching and consulting to clients in this field since 2000 and these four steps that can have a dramatic impact on improving your organization.

1. Holding people accountable
2. Reallocation of resources
3. Constant communication
4. Right measures

1. Holding people accountable

With more work to do than there are hours in the day, many people are spread too thin. Holding people accountable is a powerful tool for ensuring your people are focused on the right actions and prioritizing what needs to be done.

To do this let people know what you are holding them accountable for, when you will check-in on them and what you expect to see happen. By doing this you can drive the possibility of people taking the right action from 10% to 95%.

2. Reallocation of resources

Even though leaders instinctively know execution requires extra resources and effort, few are able to free up valuable time and resources to do it justice. Some are not willing and others are basically hoping it won't be needed. As a result, little energy toward the execution is displayed. Committing the resources and time for execution every week in your schedule is a best practice.

A McKinsey & Company survey noted, firms that actively reallocate capital expenditure across business units achieve an average shareholder return that's 30% higher than the average return of organizations that were slow to shift funds.

To do this ensure you set your budget after you craft your strategy and allocate the resources accordingly. Also reduce the number of ongoing initiatives so everyone is focused on the highest priorities with the right support.

3. Constant communication

As communication is becoming easier through mobile devices, blogs, social media, etc., leaders become poorer at communicating their strategy and key messages. Many people in an organization—even as high as 95%—can't tell you their own organization strategy. If they don't know what it is, they can never execute it. After leaders announce the new strategy, they do little communication beyond that.

The challenge is to constantly communicate the right information throughout the whole implementation journey

To do this, after the initial launch, continue to communicate. For example, what lessons are being learned, what is happening, what is coming next. As well as sharing best practices feedback from different stakeholders on an on-going basis and updates against progress against the strategy objectives.

4. Right measures

If you don't have the right measures in place to track your progress, you won't know where you are along your implementation journey and which direction to head. Without the right measures in place:

Measures are the means for managing the execution and the business. Without specific measures, leaders typically rationalize any outcome as they expected.

To do this create a Strategy Scorecard. Once you complete the strategy, translate it into objectives. Then every objective has at least one measure and, from there, the measures drive the actions.

The material for this article has been adapted from Robin Speculand's [latest book](#) and fourth in the series, *Excellence in Execution – HOW to Implement Your Strategy*, Morgan James NY.

A recognized pioneer and expert in strategy implementation, Robin Speculand is driven to transform strategy implementation globally by inspiring leaders to adopt a different approach. The founder and CEO of [Bridges Business Consultancy Int](#), he created the [Implementation Hub](#), the world's first online portal dedicated to strategy implementation. His work begins as clients are crafting their strategy and starting to think about the implementation. This international bestselling author has sold more than 40,000 books worldwide and been featured on BBC, Channel News Asia and CNBC. Robin is a masterful event facilitator and an engaging keynote speaker. His work has been featured widely in the media, including BBC Global, Gulf Connoisseur, CNBC, Channel News Asia, Oman Observer, Sunday Telegraph and Financial Times.