

Business Execution

Creating a climate of focused action

Fact #1: Challenges, Intentions and Strategies are simple to describe, but not easy to implement.

Fact #2: People, combined with technology, make strategic plans and systems work.

“The scrap rate became half of what it was the previous year... That change alone, is worth, in the seating plant, one-half million dollars per year. In one year, Johnson Controls had \$4.2 million U.S. in scrap for the business unit, \$2.6 of that was our plant. I started showing people bar graphs showing our proportion of the total operating unit. One Dale Carnegie team took one line representing 12% of our sales, from 6% to 1% scrap rate. This was a \$390,000 dent in our \$2.6 million scrap rate. A significant accomplishment.”

Warren Martin- Former Plant Manager
Johnson Controls-Tillsonburg
(since promoted to head office- Dearborn Michigan)

Now Ask Yourself, “Who is driving my business?” Is it *just you* OR *you and your people?*”

Advancing at the New Speed Of Business requires a high level of Execution by each member of your organization.

The Bottom Line: Effective Execution is a Direct Competitive Advantage.



Written by
Kevin D. Crone
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Dale Carnegie Business Group

BUSINESS DIRECT

A Division of Dale Carnegie Business Group

Offering Dale Carnegie® in Canada

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Competitors are everywhere. Customers are demanding. Global events are impacting us all. Margins are shrinking. Everyone seems to be struggling with creating a competitive advantage, reducing costs, and providing memorable and distinctive customer service. Winning requires execution of these strategies through people. People make strategies, plans and systems work. Who is driving your business? Is it just you, or you and your people?

Making money requires execution by highly competent people.

We work with thousands of companies across Canada. They range from local divisions of multinational giants to local start ups. One thing we have learned in our 92 years in business is that a high percentage of the core business issues across various businesses of all sizes and shapes are similar. We know what works and does not work in Canada. Techniques change with the times but strategies built on sound principles still work.

In this report, we invite you to join progressive companies who are all growing their businesses while boldly facing current issues.

Top 5 Execution Issues:

1. Finding and keeping effective people

This mainly requires creating an environment designed to attract good people and retaining the best producers. This involves giving your employees opportunities to grow and enabling them to believe in themselves to make decisions on their own.

2. Handling the stress associated with doing more with less

Everyone has difficulty with this and it costs Canadian businesses about \$3.5 billion annually. Business owners and managers ask, “How do I get home to see my family?” We ask, “Where do you spend the majority of your day? Are you answering people’s questions, working *in* your business, or are you working *on* your business, coaching and mentoring your people?” Today’s typical business owners look to us as if they carry the weight of the world on their shoulders. They have to weather a remarkable array of storms. To counter they need to have strategies that drive the business and solid change management methods in place and this needs to show up at the operational level.

Common execution issues

3. Building accountability in people

We get asked, “What do I do to get people making decisions at the point of contact instead of me having to answer everybody’s questions?” This is a huge issue. Even large organizations with written job descriptions and full-time human resource people still have people who are unclear about what is happening. Once again, most people seem disconnected with where their business is going. How can they possibly execute and produce measurable results in a “reactive” environment?

4. Communications – *It is not a problem*

Communication is a *tool* not as a problem. Trying to solve the “communication problem” is like trying to solve a hammer. Most business people ineffectively use the tool of communication when trying to get things done. Why is communication still seen as a problem in today’s high tech world? After all, we have cell phones, fax machines, e-mail, express packaging, telephones and high-speed internet video conferencing – all tools unheard of in previous decades. Knowing, talking or hearing *about* something is not the answer. Today’s business conversations seem dominated by victims of circumstance, whiners and complainers **not** committed communicators. When people effectively execute clear strategies, you create an action-oriented culture in which engaged people act upon important issues.

5. Linking strategy to operations and people

Don’t sacrifice your long term vital future for the temporary present. Today, more than ever, organizations require strong leadership. Without clear direction, people are at a loss as to how to move the business forward with accountability to do their part towards taking the business to where you want it to go. Most employees are disconnected or unclear about their specific role in creating the business future. They must be available to implement the strategies and ensure a transition from the idea to the operating plan. (Traditional job descriptions are not enough.) Building accountability in people is a challenging and somewhat daunting task. In most cases, a strategy’s success depends on the ability to implement it.

**Execution
is a
Distinct
Competitive
Advantage**

Challenges, intentions and strategies are simple to describe, but never easy to implement. Here's the good news: Few organizations are willing to step up to the challenge. Execution as a competitive advantage beats business process improvements and product or price oriented advantages. Lowering prices is easy to emulate while high-level execution skills cannot be duplicated without a similar commitment. Once you out-pace your competitors, they can't catch up unless you slow down.

Dell Computer made execution their competitive advantage by saying, "We can deliver a computer faster than anyone else, and you the customer can help engineer it." The execution of that strategy differentiated Dell and made them very successful. Getting more serious about execution can wake up you, the business and your people.

The Fundamentals of Execution

You put yourself in the top ten percent when you:

- **Interrupt the present** - go for the wake up call for you and your organization
- **Clarify what is really happening in your marketplace and organization** - relearn your business and get closer to where your people are at
- **Clarify where you are going** - a clear picture in contrast to your brutal current reality
- **Engage a willing team to help you get there** - handling change resistance - everyone is connected and knows their role
- **Connect everyone and set team and personal goals** - 3 or 4 goals will do
- **Clearly design and implement actions** that are aligned to strategies, operations and people
- **Coach everyone for performance improvement** - be a coach or go get one
- **Hold people accountable** for their specific improvement results - praise, point out improvements, make sure everything is in writing, constant follow-up and reward the "doers"

What's *new* about this? *Not much*. These suggestions follow sound, proven business principles regardless of challenging times or circumstances. But what is easy to *do*, is also easy *not* to do. Unfortunately too many companies struggle to bridge the gap between goals and results. Even with great strategies and solid plans, they are unable to execute properly.

Why it is not easy to do

We see people so focused on details, their feelings, and interpretation of circumstances that their mindset is difficult to interrupt. Typically they respond with, “*We’ve heard all this before. This is nothing new – same old, same old.*” Typically, what they do not see or hear is a clear, well articulated compelling view of where the business or department is going and, in contrast, a clear factual comparison to current reality. Most company directives are either vague concepts or filled with the unsaid; leaving individuals to speculate and draw their own conclusions. Many do not realize what needs to be done to convert a vision into specific actions. Blasting the troops or “enabling” everyone does not focus people in the right direction.

A Balanced Scorecard Approach Allows For A Clear Picture

A balanced scorecard approach allows for a clear picture to be communicated and measured in consistent, insightful operational terms ie. the scorecard should be from a financial, customer, internal business operations, and learning and growth perspective. The organization can be aligned, connected and strategy can be everyone’s every day job. You can make sure all see that balanced goals and actions from these perspectives are as important as operations, budgets and revenues.

Engaging other people

Advancing at the new speed of business requires the right people operating in a performance driven, focused environment. You create this by constantly engaging people in a clear view of what you want or what you are creating in comparison to current reality. Truly engaging everyone requires a positive, yet challenging atmosphere. This may seem tough to do, but the natural alternative is blaming, justifying, and creating an environment of negative stress. Connecting everyone means taking time with people to set and clearly communicate high performance goals on behalf of what’s really going on. Most managers contend that they are too busy to do this in addition to everything else. Even if they *say* they want to improve performance, most fail to implement the required follow up. Watching people in action and talking about the business strategies and how they are implementing them, is what a manager does.

When you coach people insist on realism, get people to see the business as it is. Resist saying how good or bad everything is. The failure to follow through is widespread in business. Follow through on all written goals constantly by asking people to get back to you as to what they have done on the clear actions needed. Praise every

improvement and any improvement. Companies might claim that employees are their most valuable asset but compensation and benefit packages alone don't drive the business. Find out where your people's attitudes and skills are at and link incentives and compensation to a balanced scorecard.

Managers instinctively know that coaching, mentoring and training are powerful ways to increase performance, but very few take this approach seriously because it's hard work and seems so difficult. Some recall their own negative experiences with "training" that did not produce direct, bottom-line results.

***Coaching,
Mentoring
and Training
Are Powerful
Ways To
Increase
Performance***

The heart of execution lies in the people, strategy and operations process. These are the three things that matter and should be tightly linked together. The leader or leadership team must be deeply engaged in all three. If you don't get the people process right, you will never fulfill the potential of your business.

Regardless of individuals trying to rationalize it away, this approach produces desired results even in today's competitive, fast-paced environment. Commitment to daily application of solid business fundamentals beats the "fad" surfers every time.

Some organizations engage professional performance development and/or training companies to speed up execution. Since there are so many choices, and many offerings sound the same, selecting someone that fits your organization and its goals is a daunting task. It's worth the effort though, since without effective ongoing coaching you can expect mediocre performance improvement regardless of well-meaning, business strategies and plans. Most people do not know what they need, let alone have the structure and discipline to improve and change. Coaching will provide what is necessary.

If you are serious about harnessing the awesome power of your current resources, please consider the following:

What's Working in Canada

For years we've worked with hand picked teams from companies in a variety of sectors focused on producing unprecedented results. We have successfully coached these teams to increase their personal team and business performance. They create an environment that builds accountable producers who are engaged in the fundamentals of getting things done on behalf of where the business is going. These teams have leaders who develop clear plans, set remarkable goals, engage their people in new actions and training and then measure results.

The following are a couple examples:

Vaughan Gibbons, President of Niagara's V. Gibbons Construction reports:

"Usually we operate using two crews, and sometimes, as many as five. We wanted to become more productive and efficient. We found ourselves overlapping tasks - costing us time and money. Since our team's Dale Carnegie experience, we see 3 to 5% more profit. In the construction business, that's huge."

Teams from one Ontario Johnson Controls plant produced reductions in scrap and other measurable outcomes adding millions in cost savings to the bottom line. According to Warren Martin, former Plant Manager (now promoted to head office in Michigan):

"The scrap rate became half of what it was the previous year... That change alone is worth in the seating plant one-half million dollars per year. In one year, Johnson Controls had \$4.2 million U.S. in scrap for the business unit, \$2.6 of that was at our plant. I started showing people bar graphs showing our proportion of the total operating unit. One Dale Carnegie team took one line representing 12% of our sales, from a 6% to 1% scrap rate. This was a \$390,000 dent in our \$2.6 million scrap rate. A significant accomplishment!"

"When companies don't execute, chances are they don't measure, train, develop and reward people who know how to get things done."

Kevin D. Crone
CEO, Dale Carnegie Business Group

Coaching in Teams

If you believe in getting results based on market strategies, management enforcement, and involving everyone in what's going on, then you will appreciate the following invitation.

An Invitation

For less than ten thousand dollars, here are *three specific actions* you can take with our firm to increase performance at today's speed of business. This process consistently produces tangible results within weeks, not years. Typical ROI ranges from 3:1 to 200:1!

Step by Step

1. Executive Business Advancement Conversation

Engage in a business advancement conversation with one of our Business Team Coaches. Tell them where you are going. We can help you determine the gap between strategy and results. You can experience a brief but powerful Digital Analysis to clarify the real picture of where you are at and what requires execution.

2. Engage a Team

Pick 12 to 15 of your key people and invite them into a similar conversation. Discover which of your people genuinely see what you see and what the business needs. This conversation also connects what they need to do to help you get there and what competencies the task requires to get to where you are taking the business. At the conclusion of this 90-minute to 2 hour meeting, you determine the *current reality* and who has a strong desire to join a committed team of seven to help you get to where you want to go. An option is to find out what is reality from your customers point of view. We can run a Customer Focus Meeting for 6 to 12 customers.

3. Join Others In Your Business Community

Along with other local organizations, your committed team (7 or more) joins a project designed to support and accelerate their specific issues and business mandates. Individually and in groups, they get access to professional coaching designed to significantly improve their own competencies directly applied to your business initiatives. We call this *Realizing Organizational Impact* by creating *Relevant Observable Improvements*.

By taking these 3 actions, you can create immediate momentum and energy towards where you are taking the business and you are building future leaders.

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