

Driving Execution

Seven ways to get your team's brilliant ideas executed.

By Gerry Riskin

Every firm has trouble with implementation. Here are seven tips on driving execution on your firm's important initiatives.

1. **Be brutal in prioritizing.** If you end up with any individual trying to get more than 2 or 3 things done, your mission will implode under the weight of your aspirations.
2. **Be specific in assigning responsibilities.** No plan will be executed without an individual solely accountable for it... plans that belong to a group will evaporate into the ether.
3. **Break each initiative down into specific negotiated timelines.** The accountable individual must participate in determining the target deadline for the overall initiative as well as the timeline for the next incremental step(s).
4. **Agree on the next step with great clarity.** When you see the accountable individual walking down the hall, asking how the initiative is going will result in a meaningless response. Asking how the next specific agreed step is going will garner extremely useful information.
5. **Obtain weekly status updates.** If you can do this in a spreadsheet so that you don't have to have actual conversations each week, all the better. Any initiative for which there is no progress in a week has no chance of being achieved. An occasional week during which there is no progress is quite tolerable if truly and anomaly. However, if the problem becomes chronic, fire the accountable person from the project.
6. **As leader, your job is to help others get things done.** Sometimes they will need your coaching to realize the pieces of their initiative which can be delegated or perhaps there are other options and alternatives for getting things done that had not occurred to them.

7. **Meticulously track each and every achievement, then aggregate and publish them.** Those involved in getting their initiatives done will be highly motivated by watching their peers succeed. They must believe that they are on a winning team; a "can do" team; your winning team ... where succeeding is the norm.

[Contact the author, Gerry Riskin.](#)