

How leaders can better execute strategy

Working with different organisations it is clear there is often a disconnect between Company strategy and performance.

Why is this?

Start with the question: 'What is our strategy'? A good deal of time is spent on situational analysis and developing a 'world view' which is a crucial part of strategy formulation, but what next, what makes it actually happen and change the way your business works? Ever had that feeling of analysis paralysis?

A better starting point might be... so we have a strategy, how do we execute it? What are the decisions and choices we need to make?

KEY POINT: Strategy is not primarily about planning, it is about intentional, informed and integrated choices. Decisions and choices drive performance.

So What?

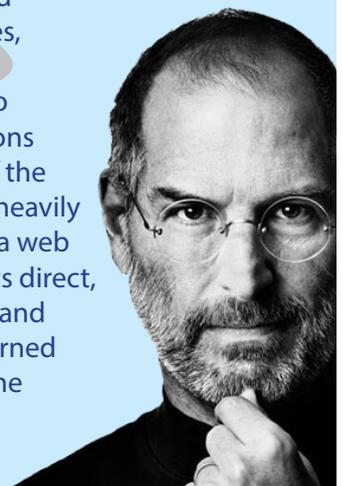
Research shows that 50% of company strategies fail completely and 70-90% of strategies fail to some extent; the number one reason cited is the failure of leaders to communicate the strategy to the rest of the rest of the company - to the people who will implement it. How much time do you spend communicating strategy?



coral leadership's Andrew Griffiths explains how strategy should drive company performance and why senior leaders should invest more time thinking about strategy execution as part of their leadership capability.

The Apple Revival

When Steve Jobs returned to Apple the company was in disarray. He was faced with some tough choices, it was simplify or die. In executing his strategy to rescue Apple, his decisions were: to cut out most of the manufacturing, reduce heavily his inventory and open a web store selling his products direct, cutting out distributors and dealers. His decisions turned round Apple in one of the greatest corporate comebacks ever.



Time to Communicate?

At coral leadership we use innovative methods to help leaders understand and apply simple ideas to connect strategy execution to company performance. Just like the Stanford University prisoner experiments of the 1970s, allowing teams to participate in a fictional company set up reveals all the dysfunctional behaviours between senior and middle management and workers. All you need to know about strategy execution in 45 minutes! **LITERALLY.**



Telling the story

Translating and communicating strategy is not about recycling Mission statements or producing glossy brochures, empty words don't inspire or motivate.

Time spent developing 'sticky stories' and 'killer facts' about your organisation stimulate thought and act as a call to action.

It may be time to re-think how you communicate with your teams and grab their attention. We will show you how.



How do we **know** our strategy is understood and **will** work?

Try this...

coral leadership clients walk the walk using the Logical Levels exercise. (The same idea as a full medical checks if the body is functioning correctly). Participants narrate their own story in a top down approach linking strategy to their work priorities, helping to understand the effect their leadership shadow has on the team and the environment they create. Discovering a common purpose and shared Values builds a cohesive team. Is your team functioning correctly?

All good in **theory** but what happens when you **try** and execute a strategy in a world full of **complexity** and **uncertainty**?

In a VUCA¹ world we cannot always rely on tried and tested ways where experience can often count for less, a more collaborative approach is needed to solve problems where there may not be an obvious answer. This is where your team will do the work for you, provided they know which direction they are heading and they trust you. Two big asks?

Around the boundary game

A task is set with no limits on how an issue is solved. A directive is given and the participants work out the answer, they collaborate and communicate with each other through movement only, work out a strategy, execute it and come up with a solution, achieving all this in a time that will be a complete surprise to everyone. A very elegant way of empowering teams and allowing them to realise that in the absence of a complete strategy, it is 'Setting the Direction' which is vital. The leader's role is to convey what needs to be done leaving the team to collaborate on how they do it. Now let's apply all the lessons from this to your organisation.



1 Volatile Uncertain Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) – a term coined by the US military

Think about the modern world of communication technology, it would be inconceivable for a strategy to follow two simple orders...



When less is more

In the complex and uncertain environment of battle, Nelson famously issued only two orders at the Battle of Trafalgar:

"No Captain can do wrong by placing his ship alongside the enemy"

"Engage the enemy more closely"

Or would it?

KEY POINT: Leaders should spend more time stepping back from the business and get on the balcony. Executing strategy is about setting direction and allowing teams the freedom to work out how to get there. Communication and trust are key.

Into the Future?

Interestingly as things get more complex we need to simplify.

In this economic climate becoming comfortable with constant uncertainty is a must, as is having to accept that you will not always have all the answers. We need to unlearn old skills and learn new ones to survive. Much of this is counter intuitive – make fewer decisions, think more before you make a decision or choice, keep your solution open and spend more time observing from your balcony to see what is really going on.

Most Executive programmes treat strategy execution and developing high performing teams as separate entities.

coralleadership provides the skills, thinking and linkage between strategy **execution** and company **performance**, essential for **leading** in a 21st century business environment.

Elegant solutions for a **complex** world.

u n d e r s t a n d

s i m p l i f y

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