



Execution IS the Strategy by Laura Stack Chapter 10 Tip Sheet

Remove Obstacles from the Path

As it relates to a system or machine, efficiency is defined as “achieving maximum productivity with minimum wasted effort or expense.” As it relates to people in the workplace, it’s achieving “maximum results in minimum time” – the trademark and tagline of my firm, The Productivity Pro, Inc.

Time is the most costly component of human capital. As a leader, one of your jobs is to make it easier for your people to succeed more quickly. You can act as the team bulldozer by knocking over anything that interferes with their accomplishment. Here’s how:

1. **Challenge people to work through processes more effectively.** This may involve everything from finding time to think more strategically, to switching from a reactive approach to a proactive one, to putting sticky notes on a way to diagram a process and trying to cut out steps.
2. **Instill the need for speed into your team.** You can increase your culture's agility by reducing time-to-market and cycle speed for all essential processes, to avoid having to eat your competition's dust. Eliminate any internal processes that ultimately don’t add anything of value to the customer.
3. **Encourage continuous improvement.** Concepts like Lean, Sigma Six, or Kaizen, establish a means to eliminate waste and up productivity through consistent improvement. Establish a mindset of always getting better.
4. **Speed up your decision-making process.** Avoid the paralysis of analysis. Establish guidelines for making decisions, especially those involving strategic execution. Sometimes seconds count.

5. **Short-circuit groupthink.** A team of yes-men and yes-women is useless. While close collaboration remains a must, listen to everyone's opinions, including those of the quieter group members. It's too easy for a few assertive individuals to take control of the team.
6. **Avoid perfectionism.** You and your team are human beings. Rather than trying to be perfect, adopt a realistic approach in which you take advantage of human energy, initiative, and action to implement strategic execution in the moment.

All teams include someone who makes things easier for others to do their jobs. On a football team, blockers protect the quarterback and receivers. In the white-collar world, the team leader is the one who eliminates the obstacles, from crushing groupthink, to speeding up decision-making, to being a realist rather than a perfectionist.

© 2013 Laura Stack. Laura Stack, MBA, is America's Premier Expert in Productivity™. For over 20 years, Laura has worked with business leaders to execute more efficiently, boost performance, and accelerate results in the workplace. Her company, The Productivity Pro, Inc., provides productivity workshops around the globe to help attendees achieve Maximum Results in Minimum Time®. Laura is the bestselling author of six books, with over 20 foreign editions, published by Random House, Wiley, and Berrett-Koehler, including her newest work, *Execution IS the Strategy* (March 2014). Widely regarded as one of the leading experts in the field of performance and workplace issues, Laura has been featured on the CBS Early Show, CNN, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times*. Connect via her [website](#), [facebook](#), or [twitter](#).