



Execution IS the Strategy by Laura Stack Chapter 9 Tip Sheet

Measure Your Progress

You must link strategic planning and goal setting, with everyone on the team having goals that support the plan *and* each other. Not only do all involved have to perform the day-to-day tactical tasks that drive the operation, they also have to work on the higher-level, strategic goals as well – the parts that will eventually become their daily work. Along the way, they must constantly assess whether the tasks they complete in the short term will get them where they need to go in the long term.

This chapter takes a closer look at the process in the context of metrics, and how they might apply to your organization.

- 1. Plan your course.** Once you've (a) achieved buy-in, (b) set goals, and (c) made efforts to align those goals with your organization's, you must decide how you and your team will get there, and what to do when you wander off-course. If the actual destination changes, be prepared to plot a new course.
- 2. Keep an eye on your instruments.** Track metrics like cash flow, budget and schedule, quality of work, hours worked per process, customer satisfaction, and return on investment. Once you have those instruments in place and have a good idea of your overall situation, you can add and subtract specific metrics as conditions require. Guard against excessive controls, lest they stymie innovation.
- 3. Let your team members run plays their way.** Your people will never improve, either as a team or as individuals, if you don't relinquish some of your authority to them, get out of the way, and let them do things as they see best. Your job is to offer vision and guidance; theirs is to get the work done.

4. **Recognize the difference between strategy and tactics.** Strategy is long-term planning; tactics are the short-term methods and tools you use to accomplish your strategy. Maintain a firm grasp on the difference, while educating your employees on the distinction as well.
5. **Encourage accountability.** Accountability is a team linchpin; it links all of you at all levels, helping your people take serious ownership of their jobs while you exercise the ultimate responsibility. It's a heavy load, falling mostly on your shoulders. Step forward, take up the challenge, and use it to carve your own niche out of the business jungle in your own style. Let your people do the same, within the broad guidelines you set.
6. **Slay the dragon of complacency.** Few things can kill an organization more effectively than a false sense of security. Thus, always hope for the best but plan for the worst you can imagine.
7. **Conquer crises.** You can't plan for everything, but you can put generalized crisis plans into place that trigger when an applicable emergency occurs. Be flexible, and use the SLLR method to respond: Stop, Look, Listen, and Respond. Don't hesitate to involve others when you need their help, and conduct post-mortems after the fact so you're better prepared for the next crisis.

Remember, no battle plan survives contact with the enemy. Whatever happens, you and your crew must be ready, willing, and allowed to adapt on the fly. With enough effort and the right tools, you can eventually build a voluntary culture of accountability in which you don't have to ride people to get them to do the right things at the right times. Then you can execute your strategy instinctively, no matter what happens.

© 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](#).