

Executing the Strategy – Part 2

In November's newsletter, we discussed the issues with focus traps and being unable to execute strategy. This month we will cover some practical solutions to help your organization avoid focus traps and thus improve execution.

LAGGING AND LEADING MEASURES

First, we have to decide what metrics we will use to run the business. At Drive, we recommend that we use the following classification:

- Critical goals: Required to keep the business running and to keep our jobs
- Necessary goals: Related to achieving the strategic improvement plan
- Maintain goals: Everything else that we need to simply keep in the static state. Trying to improve these, in addition to the critical and necessary goals, will lead to a focus trap.
- Trivial goals: Typical for large organizations and often associated with a functional VP's goal. These goals are not aligned with the critical or necessary goals.

When measuring the necessary and critical goals, we must have different levels of metrics. Those metrics should fall into two groups of leading or lagging. Leading measures are measures that, if met, will lead us to the goal (lagging measure). Leading measures are things over which we have control. Lagging measures are results' measures that tell us if we have met the goal. An example of these two measures can be applied to everyday life. In the situation where one wants to lose weight, the goal weight is the lagging measure. Meeting the goal requires one to focus on the leading measures (calorie intake and exercise). Weighing oneself each week and expecting a reduction without a plan to reduce calories and/or increase exercise would simply be a fantasy.

CLEAR OUR PLATE

At this point, I am assuming we have answered the question in our strategic planning exercise, "Which things (no more than three) would transform the business if we focused all of our resources on them?" Once we have decided which items take priority, we must make room for them "on our plate." We must ensure that nothing takes priority over these one to three items. The 5D Exercise is one method we can use to "clear our plate".



- Delete: What can we simply not do?
- Delay: What are some things we can delay until our next planning cycle?
- Dedicate: What things can be done with excellence if we dedicate resources to accomplishing them? In this case, the resources would be completely removed from the day-to-day (whirlwind) in order to succeed with the wildly important goal.
- Delegate: Are there items we can give to people outside of this team? This is also an opportunity to develop others.
- De-scope: What are some things we can scope smaller in order to free up resources?

In [Strategic Alignment part 4](#), we presented a “resource-roll-up” tool that can also be used to identify overburden and underutilization of our people, thus supporting the 5D exercise.

DAILY ACCOUNTABILITY

Now that we have “cleared the plate,” we need to ensure we have daily accountability for focusing on the leading measures (process focused) that will help us ensure the lagging measures (results/goal focused) are met. Tools that allow us to assess the leading measures are below:

Leader Standard Work

Managing Daily Improvement (MDI) Boards

Problem Solving focused on the “highest hitter” from the MDI boards

Tiered Meetings

Performance Evaluations

CHECK/REFLECT/ADJUST

Monthly/Quarterly Accountability examples focused on whether or not we are achieving the desired results (focused on the lagging measure) is what we call Check / Reflect / Adjust. Through this process we partner with the client and provide an outside set of eyes on the improvement plan for the year. We help determine if the intended results were achieved following the correct process and why we did or did not succeed in achieving the desired



results. We also determine what must be done differently to recover and ensure we achieve the targets.

These Check / Reflect / Adjust sessions are the key to keeping the team on track since they tend to fall into the whirlwind during the month or quarter. How do you check on progress to the strategic improvement plan? How often? How often do you check on the whirlwind? Do you check the whirlwind more often than the strategic plan?

Does your organization struggle with a cadence of accountability? Drive can help. We have a team of proven experts in improving business performance, and we offer a 200% guarantee, so there is no risk. For a no-obligation introduction meeting, please contact Paul Eakle at paul.eakle@driveinc.com or 865-323-3491. Stay tuned for next month's newsletter series where we will discuss practical solutions to execution issues.

