

Four Laws of Effective Implementation ...

When we want something - for example more revenue, bigger profits, a new home, or a dream vacation we're told that we have to do 3 things. They are set a goal; make a plan to reach the goal and implement the plan. But which is the most important – the goal, the plan or the execution? If you judge by the number "How To" of books that have been written on the subjects then it's either setting the goal or making the plan.

There's no doubt in my mind that the third thing – implementation or execution – is the most important of the 3. Many years ago someone told me that "A weak plan strongly executed is better than a strong plan weakly executed". Just last week someone told me about a promotional piece that had been written for them. They didn't think it was great but, having spent time and money on it, they decided to use it and much to their surprise it worked. Not perfectly, but sales did go up and they did attract new customers.

So, how do we make sure we tackle this key activity – implementation - effectively? Here are 4 aspects of execution that are so important that they could be laws. Follow them and increase the odds of achieving the goal dramatically.

The first law of successful implementation is that 80% of something is better than 100% of nothing. Don't wait for the perfect opportunity, or try to develop the perfect product, or try to find a "breakthrough" strategy or write the perfect plan. You must take what you have and make a start – now, today. Because if you don't then there will also be some reason not to start tomorrow and before you know it the month or the quarter or the year have gone – and you'll have accomplished nothing.

The second law is simple – persist. There's an old adage about 10 salesmen who hear about the same deal. In the early stages, it's hard to get an appointment, the prospect is demanding but slow to return calls, and 4 of the salespeople become so frustrated they just give up. Four more drop out when the prospect begins to bring up objections and does price/benefit comparisons and asks for references. The moral is that the 2 salesmen who stay at it improve their odds of getting the deal from 1 in 10 to 1 in 2 – simply by persisting.

The third law of effective implementation states that we have to be prepared to adapt. There has never been a plan developed that worked precisely as conceived and exactly on time. All plans are based on assumptions which, even if they are logical and include the most detailed information available at the time, are just that - assumptions. Effective owners and managers review their plans regularly, for example quarterly, and compare what actually happened to their assumptions. Then they adapt their strategy and action plans for the rest of the year.

The fourth law is all about commitment. Once you've decided which to implement a plan then support it by allocating sufficient resources to it. No half-hearted measures - buy high quality raw materials, train everyone thoroughly, make the right equipment available and put enough people on the job. Because anything less than total commitment will jeopardize the goal.



The odds are that none of the 4 laws are a revelation. But in the face of day to day pressures we all lose sight of lessons that we've learned, things that are common sense. Remember these 4 laws and you'll achieve more.

To share your experiences, to take issue with anything I've said or to get some insight in how pursue the right opportunities, send me an email at jimstewart@profitpath.ca or call me at 416-258-9610.

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