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COLLABORATION HEALTH CARE

ALIGNING IDEAS WITH COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE TODAY



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More Than Just An Opinion

Somebody once said that an idea without any action is just an opinion. We all have a lot of ideas, but it's the steps you take to make those ideas a reality that really matter. Over the years we've watched a lot of ideas succeed and fail simply due to the steps that were followed (or not followed) when trying to make an idea a reality, or when trying to put a new strategy in place. It's in the execution that everything comes together. We'll talk a little about the importance of solid execution in this newsletter. And, we'll probably talk more about it more in the future- because getting it right is that important.

This month marks the 12th newsletter we've put out so it's somewhat of a "birthday" for us. We've had over 1000 downloads over the past year so we hope you've been able to use some of the thoughts and ideas we've put out there in your own work. Over the year, we've covered some pretty conventional topics and we've also provided some opinions and thoughts in some other not-so-conventional areas. When you put all twelve of them together you begin to see one view (our view) of approaches to business we try to apply when confronting the realities we're all facing in the changing marketplace and in changing organizations today. Health care is not going to get any simpler, and, it's important to evaluate different perspectives occasionally when you're running your own projects, or setting new directions for your organization. It keeps things interesting.

So, thanks for reading. Here's to the next twelve in 2009.

The Art of Execution

"Execution is not just the tactics- it is the discipline and the system"

When you boil it all down, in almost anything in business or in life, if you don't execute well the other things just don't matter. In addition to creating ideas, you have to take action and then take the steps you need to move things from concept to reality. You can have the most beautifully written mission and vision statements, you can have the most detailed business plan, you can have all of the wonderful new ideas and new initiatives you need; but if you can't execute i.e. get it done, it really doesn't matter.

You can look around and see the results of some exceptional execution efforts; the Obama campaign was executed extremely well (regardless of your political views); here in the Twin Cities the bridge that collapsed unexpectedly killing 13 individuals was removed, funded, rebuilt, and functional all in a little over twelve months; and you can look at companies like Apple and appreciate their ability to execute well by the steady stream of products they continuously introduce to the marketplace- at exactly the right time.

We've all had projects that have gone very well. And, we've had projects that just couldn't get off the ground. We've seen good ideas that work, and we've seen good ideas that didn't work. What's the difference between them?

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The Importance of Leadership

Effective leadership is a critical element of execution. Whether you are leading an organization, or leading an individual project initiative within an organization, the leadership provided is often the most critical component in predicting the success or failure of an execution strategy. Charan and Bossidy share seven essential behaviors leaders should possess to assure the execution of your project or organizational strategy leads to success:

- Know your people and your business
- Insist on realism
- Set clear goals and priorities
- Follow-through
- Reward the doers
- Expand people's capabilities
- Know yourself

While not guaranteed, the leaders who establish some clear parameters to follow will have a greater likelihood of establishing execution as a discipline and delivering consistent results over time.

We'd love to hear from you. Let us know your thoughts, your feedback, and other ideas.

e-mail us at: info@collaborationhealthcare.com

Art of Execution (con't)

It's all contained in not only coming up with the new ideas, strategies, and initiatives, but taking the steps you need to take to get them done. It's called execution.

Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan wrote an excellent book on the important role execution plays in the success or failure of projects or organizations. They put it this way, "Here is the fundamental problem: people think of execution as the tactical side of business, something leaders delegate while they focus on perceived "bigger" issues. This idea is completely wrong. Execution is not just the tactics- it is the discipline and the system."

In his book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins stated, "The good-to-great companies built a consistent system with clear constraints, but they also gave people freedom and responsibility within the framework of that system. They hired self-disciplined people who didn't need to be managed, and then managed the system, not the people."

Good-to-great companies know how to execute.

Whether you are a large company, a small organization, or running individual projects on your own, your ability to execute to bring new ideas forward is a fundamental requirement for success and survival in the health care marketplace today. The industry is changing too fast. The organizations (and people) with the ability to not only come up with the ideas, but make them a reality are the ones that will have the competitive advantage.

There are many different "systems" out there that organizations are using to establish the processes and measure their ability to execute. DMAIC, Lean, Six Sigma, etc. are a few project management approaches that come to mind. While these are great tools to use to support organizational or project execution, we would argue that the ability to execute is deeper than just the process used and must also become part of the culture. It needs to be just a part of the way you do business. We've found that it's easy to get lost in the process and terminology, and lose contact with of the purpose, mission, and people you're working with.

So, we've boiled the various approaches down to the following fundamentals

- You need a clear vision of where you want to go
- You need a clear definition of what you want to do
- You need clear assignment of roles, responsibilities, and priorities
- You need clear time-frames and expected deliverables
- You need clear, open, ongoing, and regular communication channels established
- You need a process to make adjustments to assumptions when you need to

And, you need the right relationships. Bossidy and Charan contend that getting the "people process" right is more important than either the strategy or the operational considerations. Because, "if you don't get the people process right you will never fulfill the potential of your business."

Collins agrees, however, he talks about making sure you have the "right people in the right seats on the bus" in executing projects or business strategies.

The ideas presented here are not rocket-science, however, putting all of the pieces together and making them work really is an art. We continue to be amazed with the number of organizations that have the pieces all lined-up, but just can't seem to put it all together. That's why execution is a discipline. Execution should be part of the

culture within an organization, or even within individual project teams.

In *Blue Ocean Strategy*, W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne contend that organizations should create a culture of trust and commitment that motivates people to execute the agreed strategy- not to the letter, but to the spirit. The ability to execute well should simply be part of the DNA.

So, as you complete your business planning for the upcoming year or take on new project initiatives for your organization, take a minute to step back and evaluate how well you have executed over the past year. What have you done well? What steps do you need to take to improve what you've done? What were your results?

The ability to execute well is going to be more important than ever before. The need for successful execution of individual projects won't diminish, and changing organizational strategies will be required to meet the changes in the marketplace.

As AG Lafley (CEO P&G) states in his book "The Game Changer", "If you don't execute, the consumer doesn't care what the strategy was. Execution is the only strategy that consumers/customers see."

We agree.

Happy Thanksgiving

Resources:

Execution; The Discipline of Getting Things Done; Bossidy, Charan; Crown Business; 2002

Blue Ocean Strategy; Kim, Mauborgne; Harvard Business School Publishing; 2005

The Game Changer; Lafley, Charan; Crown Business; 2008

Think About It

"It is probably not love that makes the world go around, but rather those mutually supportive alliances through which partners recognize their dependence on each other for achievement of shared and private goals."

Fred A. Allen

"To live is to choose. But to choose well, you must know who you are and what you stand for, where you want to go and why you want to get there."

Kofi Annan

"There are many wonderful things that will never be done if you do not do them."

Charles D. Gill