

# EXECUTION – GETTING THINGS DONE

## INTRODCUTION

1. The focus of leadership is on the ability to influence.
2. The focus on management is on the accomplishment of tasks.
3. However, both leadership and management must focus on the mission/vision, the strategy, the tactics, and **people**.
4. Execution is not just a tactic it is a discipline and a system. (Is the mission and vision actually being implemented, both effectively and efficiently)?
5. The gap between promises and results must be closed and be a small one.
6. The practice of execution consistently does more to produce and create momentum and in turn make change happen than anything else we can do.
7. Consistent execution ultimately goes back to the leader, and the leader's willingness to take on this discipline.
8. This concept is quite Biblical:

God blessed those O.T. kings who actually rooted out idolatry and implemented courses of action to produce commitment to Jehovah.

Jesus in his parable honors the son, who although says he will not honor his father actually does as opposed to the one who says he will but does not.

James argues that a living faith is one that is demonstrated by doing what one is committed to in words.

9. We as stewards over ministries that belong to God must make sure that the ministry we talk about actually gets implemented.
10. This discipline like most disciplines begins with us personally before it gets extended to the ministries we lead.

## THE GAP BETWEEN DREAMS AND REALITY

1. Every ministry I have encountered that is not effective, the leaders tell me all the reasons why such is so. The biggest reason is usually environmental (this is a missionary issue), the second most used excuse is a lack of commitment on the part of people (this is a leadership/influence issue), and the third is a spiritual one (this is often a denial issue). (I recognize that all these excuses may have legitimacy, but if that is so it is the court of last resort). However, there is often one main reason, that is the real one, and it is not discussed. That issue is the leader.
2. Good leaders take responsibility for what happens or does not happen. If things are not happening good leaders begin to ask what they are doing wrong since it is not happening. One major reason why things do not happen is the gap between the things we talk about and the actual implementation of those words into actions.
3. Good leaders help people discuss what it is that they, the people, can actually do to make effective changes. Execution brings us back to reality based change. Our role is to determine what the preferable future looks like then determine our current point of departure, and then work out the specific real steps that enable our people to move from the departure to the future. We next must make sure these steps are actually taken.
4. Execution, as a discipline means that it must be part of our personal and organizational DNA. Execution is not the creation of tactics rather it is making sure the tactics are actually put into action. It really involves rigorous accountability to make sure that things get done.
5. Getting things done, starts with the leader. Again I would argue it must be modeled as well as implemented with others. Also, execution is not micro-management. Micro-management is telling people how to do things, while execution is making sure things get done. If things are not getting done then, the leader becomes very interested in not only the “why” but the “how”.

## BUILDING CASTLES IN THE REAL WORLD RATHER THAN THE AIR

(Seven Essential Behaviors for Leaders)

1. You know your ministry and its demands. Most pastors do not understand the ministry and how it is to be accomplished in 2004. Major areas that must be mastered:

- Biblical and theological
- Historical
- Cultural
- Organizational

2. You are realistic about what is actually occurring in your ministry and what is not happening that should be occurring at this point in time. You can realistically distinguish between:

- Vision wishes
- Actual ministry realities
- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Potential results – quite possible and unrealistic

3. The complex demands of ministry in a fast paced changing culture demand that we focus on just a handful of priorities. There is only so much we can work at getting executed in a day, a week, a month, and a year. Each one of the priorities needs clear, specific, and behavioral goals. Without such goals we have no way of knowing whether things are actually getting done or not.

4. Setting priorities and establishing goals are meaningless if there is no regular or consistent accountability to actually see if they are being implemented. This is true for us personally as well as those who minister alongside us. This means that when we delegate we must make sure that those to whom we have delegated responsibilities are doing what was agreed upon in the establishment of goals.

5. We must make sure we recognize and reward those who are actually accomplishing that which enables ministry to take place. We need to make a close connection between execution and rewards.

6. An important key to getting people to execute is to provide specific training through mentoring or coaching to help them actually accomplish that which best benefits the implementation of ministry.

7. Leaders work at self-awareness. This requires the willingness to seek critique without attacking the one doing the critique. We then assess the critique over a period of time, along with checking with truth tellers to determine the validity of the critique, and then making required changes. The changes are often real ones that help us move from ideas to implementation. However, the changes may relate to new perceptions that help people around us implement more effectively and efficiently. No one is totally self-aware and in most cases the changes we most need to make within ourselves we can not see.

(Cultural Change is possible when the goal is execution)

1. Changing the culture of a ministry is related to changing the beliefs and behaviors of people. In fact changing strategies and structures, without changing beliefs and behaviors, will produce little change and it will not be sustained over time.

2. Changing a ministry's culture requires a set of social operating principles that change beliefs and behaviors that are linked to the bottom line (how the ministry as an

organization behaves). A ministry's culture is the sum total of its shared values, beliefs, and behaviors. However, you don't start with values to change the culture. You start with the beliefs that impact behaviors.

**Note:** *We don't think ourselves into a new way of acting; we act ourselves into a new way of thinking!!!* (We know Biblically that the creation of new life habits for individuals begin when our mind is renewed. However, those new habits do not become bedrock beliefs and values until they are habits that have been practiced over time).

3. We begin to do this by rewarding good behavior and not rewarding dysfunctional behavior. In fact it means, not only not rewarding dysfunctional behavior but confronting it. Such action demands leaders who are good at praising and honoring those who behave well and who will at least be adequate in confronting those who try to control though highly dysfunctional behavior.

4. This also means that we must create an atmosphere where people can challenge, question, and critique each other with out being hurt by that. We cannot do this, if we cannot model this as a leader.

5. We as leaders all get the behavior we model and we tolerate.

(Finding the right people to do the job)

#### **CAVEATS:**

1. Whenever pastors of larger congregations get together to discuss ministry the number one topic of discussion is how to hire and fire staff. This reflects how crucial this topic is whether staff members are paid or unpaid.

2. In ministry there is often a crucial trade-off between what needs to be done right now and finding the right people at this time to make sure this ministry is done well. Therefore, if you do not have the right person for a ministry that needs to be done right now, you must understand that and set the person up in that situation correctly for their benefit and the benefit of the overall congregation.

3. The leader is responsible for individuals who lead other ministries. However, the leader has a greater responsibility to the overall ministry since that affects a multitude of people, plus those yet to be reached for Jesus Christ through this ministry.

(Finding the right people to do the job)

1. One of the most crucial responsibilities a leader has is getting the right people in the right leadership positions in the ministry of the congregation. This should not be delegated. It also means that part of the leaders training is to train those serving with the leader to get the right people to work with them.

2. The first job before recruiting someone for a ministry task or position is to determine the 2-4 non-negotiable criteria required for the effective implementation of that ministry. Once that is completed the leader then begins to learn all that the leader can learn about prospective candidates to see who can best meet that criteria.

If that person, in the leader's opinion cannot meet the criteria, the leaders needs to work at setting the person up in the position to deal with the problems that will come, because they will come.

3. The leader must have the courage to deal with non-performers, which is perhaps one of the hardest things to do in ministry, both to act and to find the best time to act.

4. Good leaders do not put people in positions of ministry leadership just because they like them and get along with them. It is crucial they have the ability to fulfill the tasks.

5. The bottom line question is whether the person performing the ministry responsibilities they have been assigned are doing them well or not. (Will they get the job done)?

6. People who perform well in terms of the needs of execution do the following:

They energize others to perform well.

They make difficult decisions quickly and well.

They bring the leader possible answers to difficult questions.

They accomplish their ministry through others (develop leaders).

They follow through and make sure the right things happen.

7. When interviewing people listen for how energized and enthusiastic they are about getting things done. It is okay to discuss philosophy, needs, and strategies, however, it more important to discuss how implementation will work. People need to know that you are expecting them to set specific, tangible, and behavioral goals and that you will be holding them accountable to those goals. Remember that part of motivating people today is to challenge them to strive for implementing something well that will be part of their legacy and their offering to God.

8. In most cases the leader needs to make the initial reference calls in order to focus on the referee's judgment of the person's energy, ability to implement well, and what has that person actually accomplished. (Remember, the focus is on accomplishment) It is also important to find out how this person handled adversity, both personally and professionally and what they did to deal with the situation. When hiring full or part-time people the leader should be willing to go to three or four levels of references. Always be looking for candid appraisals. Also, remember to read between the lines.

## FINISHING THE TASK

1. The link between an effective strategy and its implementation is people. We must get it right with the people process or the ministry does not get accomplished.
2. We need to be constantly evaluating the person in relation to the ministry that person is being asked to lead. It is not just a matter of seeing how they are performing at this level but making sure they have the ability to take their sphere of ministry to the next level. This is one of the hardest things to first perceive and then deal with in any ministry organization; telling people who are competent now that they cannot lead the ministry to the next level. Yet the N.T teaches that there are not only different varieties of gifts but that the Spirit determines different effects for the gifts. It is relatively easy to understand, often hard to confront, those who are not performing well. The more difficult task is dealing with those who are performing well at the current level when they have reached the peak of their abilities.
3. We need to have a process in place to find leaders and then develop leaders. This first requires us to be life-long learners who are developing as leaders. Secondly it means learning how to do leadership development in order to help others in their journey in becoming leaders. Often this begins with casting that vision for them and then showing them how to achieve that vision.
4. Part of leadership development is helping people see how they fit into the near, medium, and long term.
5. It is also helpful to let people know that they are being evaluated both in relation to performance (after all, execution has to be happening) and behavior (how one performs and gets others to perform to achieve the goals). The nature of the Body of Christ requires the ability to let people behave in a variety of ways despite the perceived values of the day. e.g. (Teams versus individuals)
6. Working with people this way demands an environment that is open and encourages honesty and critique of the strategies and tactics and their implementations.
7. Good strategies require the how's of execution. A good strategy provides direction from the present to the future. It also needs to be built and owned by those implementing it.

8. The strategic process includes the following:

- assessing the external environment
- understanding those we are serving and who we are reaching
- determining the best way to deal with obstacles
- knowing who the competition is
- determining if the strategy can be executed
- setting important milestones
- balancing short and long term expectations
- determining the critical issues to be faced
- determining that the ministry will be viable long term.

9. Good strategies are constantly reviewed to make sure that the ministry is on target, that goals are being reached now and will be in the short, medium, and long term, and that we have the right people in place.

10. Strategy designs where a ministry is going and an operational plan provides the path for the people who are going to implement the strategy. This is where money, people, and the over all mission are brought together.

11. There are three flaws related to budgeting:

- not enough honest dialogue on the assumptions and priorities in the budget
- placing the focus only on the major results the leaders desire
- not helping the people see the big picture.

(Most ministries want to present to their people and other constituencies a **vision** budget).

12. The leaders are always asking key questions related to the strategy, tactics, and the expenditure of dollars about any ministry:

- Who are we serving and what do they need?
- How do we go from felt needs to unfelt needs?
- How are these needs expressed in this culture?
- What is the competition for people having their needs met incorrectly?
- Do we really add value to the lives of people now as well as for eternity?

This presentation on the issue of Execution is based upon the book by the same name, written by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan as adapted for ministry contexts with some of his own biases added, by Paul Borden.

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