



# **POWER OF EXECUTION CHECKLIST**

**GOALS ARE MEANINGLESS  
WITHOUT ACTION**

# **Power of Execution Checklist**

Goal setting is the process of deciding what you would like to accomplish and then make a plan to achieve the desired result. Now while everyone has goals and aspirations, not everyone knows how to achieve those goals. This checklist will run you through the simple steps to setting goals and creating successful strategies to achieve those goals.

## **Chapter 1: Vision Vs Execution**

### **What is the difference?**

Vision is great. In fact, it is the starting point for all big things to come. But vision means very little unless executed.

What this means is that it is great to have a plan but simply having a plan cannot get things done. It hardly even acts as a catalyst anymore. Take the very common example of trying to

lose weight. You know you need to work hard and put in a certain amount of effort to shed off the extra pounds.

If you fail to lose weight on a diet, then is the diet the problem or is it because you didn't follow through consistently? The vision was to lose weight and the execution required you to invest time, effort and a lot of will power into the process. Were you able to deliver?

## **The effort threshold**

Going by this working title, let us assume that every goal demands a minimum work threshold. If you do not invest at least a certain amount of effort, you won't get results. Based on the nature of the goal, the effort required may vary but the rule remains that you need to be engaged in following thorough.

Once again, vision needs execution to deliver results.

## **Defining vision**

A vision for personal goals could be for anything ranging from improving your health, mastering a culinary skill, becoming a better person or even becoming more sociable when in company. In fact, it could be anything that empowers you as a person or makes you feel like an achiever.

## **Defining execution**

If vision defines your goals then execution gets you to those goals. The success of any individual or business organization relies on its potential to convert a plan into reality. People who follow through putting their plan into action with a solid strategy often achieve those goals. Businesses that take on a logical and disciplined approach to doing things use many different techniques to convert their ideas into outcomes.

## Bringing the two together

In essence, **vision** is only the big idea behind every good or great plan. What it needs for it to have an effect is a **strategy**, by which it can be implemented. Now strategy is what you will follow to achieve that big idea.

By comparison, vision is a where and what while strategy is a how. Both vision and strategy are indispensable and missing either leaves you without direction and the capability to manage effectively.

Once you have a vision and strategy in place, the next step is **communicating** your idea and implementation plan to others. It is only when the plan is communicated to others that it can be effectively followed and executed. This holds true wherever a team is involved. You may be a gym teacher, a health guru, a motivational speaker or a businessman, you need to communicate your ideas well.

Once your vision has been communicated to others, it is time to take some **action**. And it is not only you that needs to act alone, but everyone on the team needs to do so too.

Let's say that everyone involved in a project decides to act. So what's next? This is important as it involves going back and **reviewing** whatever you have done so far. Successful individuals and organizations keep a close tab on the progress being made and how much work still remains. So, reviewing not only helps you with assessing progress but also charting the way forward.

It also ties in to **accountability** where you not only hold yourself but also your co-workers, colleagues, students or employees accountable to your vision and the actions that anyone has taken to get there. Accountability also paves the way for corrective action, if required.

If you can get through all these guidelines, then you have successfully executed your vision and no longer have an execution problem. However, the process is not as basic or simple as described here. After all, this entire book is dedicated to the power of execution so there is lots more to come.

# **Chapter 2: Execution Without Intention**

## **Why Good Strategies Fail**

Executing an idea can be very difficult which is why ultimately not every good idea becomes an instant hit. Sometimes, people decide not to do anything about their ideas and ideas get forgotten. Other times it can be external factors like lack of knowledge or mismanagement that kills off an idea before anything can happen.

But external factors aside here we will look at aspects which are under your control and mismanagement on your part may be doing more damage than good.

## **The problem of under communicating**

Many leaders tend to under communicate their vision and strategy which means that their vision never makes it to the execution stage. If you want to communicate more effectively,

you need to keep saying it, and saying it and then saying it some more. In fact, when you are done, just say it some more anyways.

An important consideration here- do not be a stickler for simply saying it “verbally”. Turn to other means of communication by saying it in person, on the phone, in an email, via video conferencing and also in meetings.

## **Lack of team involvement**

Any business, whether small, mid-sized or large needs everyone to be on board. The same goes for non-business scenarios as well. Despite having the best plan on paper execution can go out the window if all departments of the business are not involved. This is because the execution process needs contribution from every department so it needs to be a coordinated effort.



## **Poor decision making**

Company success and failure is dictated by decision making. The same also applies when you think about achieving personal and not business goals. Among these, poor decision making can kill a good strategy if people in the organization do not see it as a source of strategy failure.

Given a directive of too many goals can create a situation where everything becomes a priority. In this situation nothing really gets accomplished but projects do remain pending. Given this scenario, it is important for business owners to know how to select, prioritize, edit and delete decisions.

## **Insufficient data or overly complex plans**

Both these factors make up for poor communication. If a plan is based on wrong assumptions due to insufficient data or even misunderstood data then the drive towards execution will be a disaster from the start. A relatable example would be miscalculating financial estimates or even the number of people required for executing the plan.

## **Expecting results too soon**

When you implement a strategy you need to give it time to produce results. If the results do not come quickly enough, don't start to tinker with the strategy.

There is often a lot of excitement at the beginning of a process followed by a decline in interest and a return to everyday business. To keep things going in momentum, try not to ditch or change the strategy. Instead your focus should be on preventing a loss of momentum.

# Chapter 3: Strategic Execution Part 1

## The Planning Phase

A successful strategy-to-execution process provides a structured approach to clarifying, communicating, implementing and managing strategy. The goal of the entire process is to make sure that you know where you are so you can determine where you need to go. This gives you a baseline to work from.

This first part of strategy execution deals with all the steps that go into setting up the stage for taking action.

1. Strategy planning
2. Set clear goals
3. Communication

# **Chapter 4: Strategic Execution Part 2**

## **The Action Phase**

Now, communication, as mentioned before kind of falls in both the planning as well as the action phase of the process. So let's stick to calling it a parallel between the two.

Once your strategy has been implemented and put into action, it is now time to track its progress and keep close tabs on how well it is performing.

## **4.Tracking progress**

### **Measuring progress in business**

Looking at bottom line results in areas such as spending, sales or profits does not help understand how or why you reached those figures or how to improve performance.

One of the biggest benefits of measuring performance is that you identify areas where you may be struggling. If you have a master budget, conducting a monthly analysis will show you where your results do not meet your projections. Tracking may just be what you need to realize that your projections might have been too optimistic and that the performance did not live up to its expectation. Such measurements can help you pinpoint your weaknesses while letting you put checks where needed or take other measures to support your business.

On the other hand, tracking your sales, production, marketing and labor use helps you identify which aspects of your organization are doing well and which others need more attention.

## **5. Accountability**

**Discuss and set up expectations:** Clearly articulating expectation is not only mandatory but crucial to the organization's success in setting up accountability. Think about the basketball players from the previous example. Knowing their position and role in the game holds them accountable for any mistakes or gains made in their area.

**Look for input:** Looking for input engages team members in achieving goals. It gives them a chance to determine what works and establishes a vivid understanding of expectations.

**Actively coach the team:** Accountability and coaching go hand in hand. You need to know of any issues that arise to keep your team mindful and answerable to any action that they take.

**Hold regular strategy reviews:** Such strategy reviews, or call it communication is important to holding the team liable during the execution phase. As each step of the way is reviewed, everyone's performance becomes obvious and can give you a fairly predictable heads up on the progress of your strategy execution.

## **Chapter 5: How To Set Powerful Goals The S.M.A.R.T Way**

Goal setting is important because it provides focus and lets you work towards long range goals. And while you work towards those long range goals to learn how to get past short range obstacles on the way.

So goal setting is imperative for individuals, people, team players, coaches and corporations that wish to succeed. In fact it is for everyone who wants to set themselves up for success.

Here is what goals are all about:

- Goals require action
- Goals require deadlines
- Goals have a price
- Goals produce results
- Goals will challenge you
- Goals require hard work

## **Setting S.M.A.R.T goals**

Setting S.M.A.R.T goals is a way to make sure that your goals are all the things that will help you get to where you want to go. Here is what each letter of the word SMART signifies:

**Specific-** Specific goals will give you direction, vague goals will lead you nowhere. Ambiguous goals produce ambiguous results whereas incomplete goals produce incomplete results. So when setting goals you need to be extremely clear to everyone including yourself as well as others. The goals should be specific by being exact, thorough and adept at answering questions instead of creating more.

**Measurable-** This means including dates, amounts and numbers in your goals. Such figures will also give you benchmarks to measure your success. Evaluating progress is helpful in keeping you stay focused, meeting deadlines, and feeling the thrill of getting closer to attaining your goals.

**Attainable-** Set an achievable goal that you can accomplish within the restrictions of money, time, skills, abilities, environment and other relevant factors. It may stretch your potential but still be possible to achieve. Also, when you set an



attainable goal, you can also recognize previously missed opportunities or resources.

**Relevant-** Your goals should be aligned with the direction you are following in life. This means keeping goals true to your purpose and not wasting time with irrelevant goals. Keeping goals relevant helps you align focus instead of frittering your time away.

**Time based-** Every goal needs a delivery date so there is a time frame to work within. An important component of execution is that the strategy should have an end, a time in which you are aiming to accomplish it. For better management of a big goal, you can also break it into different parts and time frames. It also creates accountability along with a sense of urgency and achievement that will come.

## **Chapter 6: The Importance of Performance Coaching**

By definition, performance coaching is a process where one individual facilitates the development and action planning of another. This can be done in a personal, organizational, professional or entrepreneurial context.

Business corporations and team leaders of all sorts need to become good performance coaches to put their strategies into its execution phase. While there are many performance coaching methods out there, the most popular one seems to be something called the G.R.O.W. method.

Managers use this model to help their employees improve work performance, enhance problem solving skills, become better decision makers, acquire new skills and achieve their career goals. Once again an acronym like S.M.A.R.T, G.R.O.W also helps create the right context to help individuals transform their potential into peak performance.

## **What is the GROW coaching model?**

The GROW model offers the coach a simple yet effective framework for goal setting and problem solving. The grow model works with a collaboration between a coach and a coachee to work towards achieving goals. As a leader the coach who may be a manager, a seasoned entrepreneur, a teacher or anyone in a similar position who can help a subordinate make better decisions, solve problems that may be holding them back learn new skills and otherwise progress ahead in their careers.

**Goals-** the most important part of the coaching phase is to define and agree on the goals to be achieved. Coaching begins with determining a relevant goal. This could be anything from, a developmental goal, a performance goal, a problem to tackle, or even a decision to make.

**Reality-** reality lets you examine the current situation. If you want to proceed ahead with pursuing your goal, you need to be objective. Where execution is concerned, being realistic will let you remove many false assumptions from getting to your goal.

**Options-** After exploring the reality, focus can shift to considering the options. Options is when the individual explores and identifies ideas and solutions.

This step lets you determine what is possible and what is not. The coach does not make any decisions for you, but only guides you in the right direction.

**Will-** this is the final component of the GROW model where the will or the way forward for execution is established. In other words, the action plan for the next steps is determined.

The purpose of this final phase is to transition to a decision as to how you can achieve your goals. It is sort of like a commitment to specific actions to move forwards towards the goal.

## **Applying the GROW model to businesses**

In a traditional scenario, the GROW model coach only acts in the capacity of a facilitator assisting the client choose the best alternatives without offering any advice or a direction.

When the same is applied to a business leader a few things may change.

## Chapter 7: Why People Fail To Reach Their Goals

When people set up goals and fail to achieve them, there remains a known gap between *what the strategy says should be done* and *what actually gets done*. This is known as the execution gap and represents a scenario that is often caused by some very typical shortcomings.

On the personal front, these shortcomings stop you from achieving your individual goals while in the business world, the same can happen as a result of leadership flaws. Collectively, both scenarios present a want of clarity as well as action and fail when there are no metrics to measure success.

But in order for execution to be successful certain fundamental elements – as mentioned previously – need to be in place. While some you pursue diligently, others you need to avoid doing as they only widen the execution gap instead of bridging it. But when this doesn't happen then you need to stop doing the following to bridge the execution gap.

- Stop making excuses
- Give your goal some meaning
- Stop trying your hand at everything
- Lacking a plan and commitment
- Not having a deadline
- Giving up halfway

## **Chapter 8: Overcoming The Fear of Failure**

With so much talk about why good strategies fail or why certain goals are never achieved, you may think that you have covered everything about unaccomplished goals. However, the biggest hurdle that stops people from pursuing their goals is the fear of failure.

Having said that, failing to achieve goals does not mean that you have failed. It only implies that something may be wrong with your strategy and that you need to tweak it a bit. All you need to do is change your approach and change the way you do things.

The fear of failure can easily undermine your own efforts to avoid the possibility of a larger failure, immobilizing you and causing you to do nothing. This way your vision never gets translated into execution.

For some the fear of failure can present such a powerful threat that their impulse to *avoid* failure exceeds their incentive to *succeed*.

## **What is failure?**

Everyone has a different definition of failure given their individual benchmarks and values. It is a feeling of reluctance that stops a person from trying new things or getting involved in challenging projects.

In terms of setting goals and following through, fear of failure can sabotage all efforts. It can lead to procrastination, excessive anxiety or even perfectionism where you are only willing to try those things that you know you will finish perfectly and successfully.

It is almost impossible to go through life without experiencing some kind of failure but it is up to you how you choose to see your failure. Those who give up never follow their goals but others who view it as a learning experience pick up the pieces and proceed with getting to their goals.



Some ways that you can reduce the fear of failing can include the following:

- Analyze all potential outcomes
- Take action
- Get away for a while