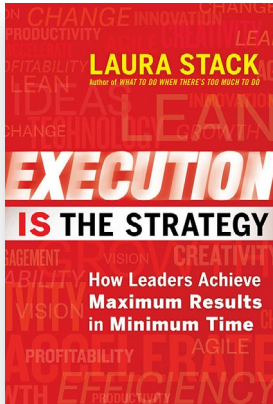


EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES

convenenow.com/executive-summaries



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laura Stack

Laura Stack, MBA, CSP, speaks and writes on the subject of productivity.

Execution IS the Strategy

THE NUTSHELL

Berrett-Koehler Publishers 2014

Today's leaders lean on their team members—the troops on the front lines—to help them make solid, reliable decisions on how to best execute the objectives that advance the ultimate organizational strategy. This strategy builds on four basic premises.

1. Interdependency

Strategy and tactics are part of the same over-arching process, with an inherent relationship. A *goal* is something you want to accomplish within a specific time frame. *Strategy* is your long-term plan or alternative methods of accomplishing that goal. *Tactics* are the short-term actions required to fulfill a selected strategy. *Execution* is the process of moving from the statement of a goal to the completion of a tactic. Efficient execution is the shortest distance between a goal and a check mark. Effective execution is the most profitable outcome of the distance between a goal and a check mark.

2. Fluidity

Strategy must be more flexible in its tactics now than in the past. As a leader, it's important to articulate the organization's strategy clearly. You'll realize better results if you create an agile culture full of flexible, strategic thinkers who remain focused on the overall

Execution IS the Strategy

goals and roles they play in achieving them. As a leader, it's up to you to design a culture in which your people are willing to step up and take that initiative. Your team needs the tools, training, and guidance to be free to determine how to best achieve well-defined success criteria.

3. Speed

Strategy must be executed more quickly than ever before to be effective. Achieving maximum results requires faster goal-setting and organic strategic execution. Your commitment to fostering agile, adaptive execution will make it easier to reshape organizational priorities in the moment. Empower your team to act quickly! Never be too busy to hear about an idea or an improvement.

4. Validity

Strategy must still be appropriate and strong, or none of the first three premises matters. You still must have a viable strategy, one that can actually achieve quantifiable goals within your constraints of time and cost. You also need to keep an eye on how well it's working, so you can refine your course as needed. The bottom line is simply that there is no shortage of good ideas. It's not about who has the best ideas. It's about who executes their good ideas best.

After more than twenty years of helping leaders create high-performance cultures and accelerate growth, I've identified four crucial factors that must in place for a leader to execute strategy efficiently—forming the L-E-A-D Formula outlined in this book.

Leverage explores how to employ the concept of leverage to apply a stronger force as a leader, strengthen your "levers" (employees), and improve your "fulcrum." Do you have the right people and drivers in place to achieve your strategic priorities that allow you to execute your strategy when the rubber hits the road? If not, you have a talent/resource issue.

Environment explores the importance of shaping an agile, responsive organizational culture, encouraging change hardiness in your team members, and engaging employees. Do you have the organizational atmosphere, practices, and culture that will allow your employees to easily support your strategic priorities? If not, you have a cultural/engagement issue.

Alignment shows you how to convince team members to care about your goals, define what those goals will be, and determine how to get there. Do your team members' daily activities move them toward the accomplishment of the organization's ultimate goals? If not, you have a communication/productivity issue.

Execution IS the Strategy

Drive focuses on your team's path to productivity. It includes how to remove obstacles from their paths, speed things up, and remove time wasters. Are your organization's leaders, teams, and employees agile enough to move quickly once the first three pieces of this list are in place? If not, you have a speed/agility issue.

You may not have time for strategic planning as such, but you should always make time to build an organizational culture that's adept at strategic execution—because execution really *is* the strategy that will propel your organization forward in today's fast-paced business arena.