

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAY...IT'S WHAT YOU DO

How Following Through at Every Level Can Make or Break Your Company

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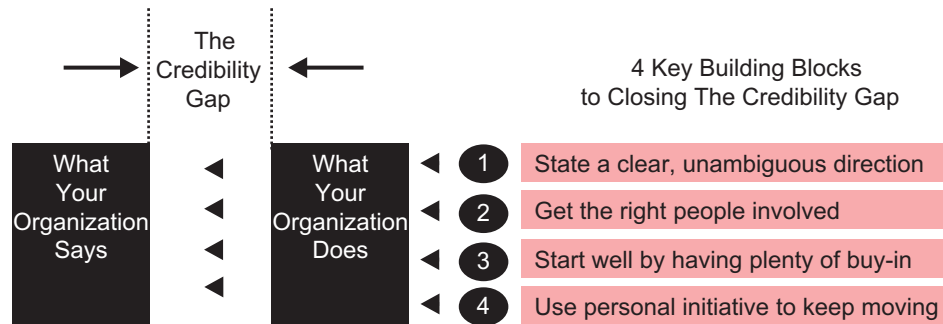
The Web site for this book is at www.laurencehaughton.com.

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MAIN IDEA

In average companies, only about half of what actually gets decided is ever followed through on. The rest of the items just fall through the cracks and get ignored, usually inadvertently. A number of studies have shown that over the last fifty years, 83-percent of all corporate slowdowns were attributable not to external economic forces but to the lack of follow-through within the organization itself. Therefore, to improve your performance, spend less time worrying about finding the best strategy to use and more time closing the gap between what you say you want to do and what you actually end up doing.

To be more specific, there are four key building blocks you can use to close the credibility gap between what you say and what you do:



“Over the last decade, business has tried every quick fix and crafty financial maneuver to get a leg up on the unrelenting competition. None of it has had sufficient staying power and a lot has landed our businesses (and more than a few executives) in trouble. Now it’s time to forgo all the exotic answers and get back to basics. What makes or breaks your company is your ability to get everyone at every level following through.”

– Laurence Haughton

“Becoming a winner, a loser, a climber or a tumbler in any industry is not the result of finding (or failing to find) the perfect strategy for your organization. What makes or breaks a company’s performance is its grasp over management’s most basic mission – to make sure everyone at every level follows through.”

– Laurence Haughton

Building Block #1 – State a clear, unambiguous direction Pages 2 - 3

Every executive starts out with good intentions, but the pressure of having too much to do often means they end up not conveying their expectations with absolute clarity. It’s little wonder, then, that people head off in different directions. To avoid this:

1. Turn vague expectations into clear, specific targets people can work towards.
2. Empathize with your people and help them connect the dots.
3. Provide tactics with your instructions that will help people succeed.

Building Block #2 – Get the right people involved Pages 3 - 4

If you get the right people in place, you significantly enhance your likelihood of following through. This simply means matching your people with your desired outcomes and expectations. To achieve this:

1. Always hire for attitude rather than for experience.
2. Make sure everyone is on the same page.
3. Find someone who will champion follow-through as your project leader.

Building Block #3 – Start well by having plenty of buy-in Pages 5 - 6

Don’t assume people will automatically buy-in to your new idea simply because it makes good sense. Instead, anticipate that inertia will make people reluctant to change. To increase buy-in:

1. Outmaneuver your reluctant people.
2. Teach everyone to try the new idea before criticizing it.
3. Create a hot execution team everyone wants to be in.
4. Get hands-on personal involvement.

Building Block #4 – Use personal initiative to keep moving Pages 7 - 8

Leaders must do everything feasible to maintain the mood for following through on what needs to get done. The only way this will happen is if people are encouraged to use their personal initiative rather than constantly waiting for directions and instructions. To guarantee more initiative:

1. Share your purpose for why things need to be done.
2. Show more respect for the judgement of the people involved.
3. Hit the right balance between enough and too much accountability.

