

COMMON SENSE ... NOT COMMON PRACTICE STRATEGY EXECUTION IS FAILING

**Robert J. Glenski
FUEL Co-Founder**

Bottom line – today’s businesses are failing at strategy execution. Upon researching this important topic, the bulk of evidence is very convincing that as a whole we are missing the mark and not delivering on our strategies. Why is this?

During my many discussions with executives and team leaders, I often encounter the same conversation. Upon evaluating their strategy execution, we discuss specific high-payoff activities that can elevate their execution success, and the leader often responds...

“Well that seems like common sense!” Next I ask... **“Then why does it not seem to be common practice?”**

Many leaders share with me that they know what to do (the common sense) but rarely do I hear that these common sense practices are actually being implemented. Many quickly reply with “I don’t have time” or “we are too busy working on the business” or my favorite, “I’ve just accepted that it’s our culture.” Being busy doesn’t equate to getting things done. Many of our daily work activities are task related and not driving strategy execution that can lead to better business results.

So, what are some simple steps that you can take today to deliver on your strategies? HBR reports that...

Only 50% of organizations review their strategies on a regular basis – one day a month

Common sense says this is an easy fix. First, pull out your final plan (if you can find it!) and evaluate success to date on your execution performance. What has moved forward? What hasn’t? Set up a team meeting, discuss next steps, evaluate timelines, review ownership, and set a follow-up meeting for the following week. This initial step can be completed very quickly and will have a solid impact.

Another simple high pay-off activity is to share with your team leads how to deliver on strategies. HBR shared this important fact from a leading researcher in strategy execution, Lawrence G Hrebiniak, Ph.D., ...

The #3 reason cited for strategy execution failure was that managers did not have guidelines or a logical model to guide implementation efforts

Really, does that make sense to you? Does this really happen in today’s business world? Well, the short answer is yes. Often my clients agree with this research and are successful in applying a simple fix. Grab a couple of your team leaders or direct reports and ask how comfortable they are with delivering on business strategies. Offer a roadmap or simple “to dos” that you know will be successful in your organization. Direct the team leads on next steps and inspect what you have asked your team to accomplish. Most importantly, begin to change your expectations for managers from primarily “presiding over work” to being coaches of skills.

These simple high pay-off activities can be accomplished today with longer-term positive impact. Even starting a conversation with your team on execution will increase strategy execution importance and you may uncover a barrier that is hindering your team.

Getting done what is planned is a top priority for many executives. Essential business practices, often common sense, can easily be turned into common practice. Essential practices and high pay-off activities can be quickly implemented and deliver impactful results for your culture and business success.