



## BOOK SUMMARY

### *Execution – The Discipline of Getting Things Done*

By Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan

“Execution is not just tactics – it is a disciplined system.” –Larry Bossidy

This is as good a book on business success as I have ever read. Here are questions and insights gathered from the book:

1. Are our products positioned optimally in the market?
2. Can we identify how we’re going to turn the plan into specific results for growth and productivity?
3. Do we have the right kind of people to execute the plan? If not, what are we going to do about it?
4. How do we make sure the operating plan has sufficiently specific programs to deliver the outcomes to which we’ve committed?
5. Do we have a company wide measure for real productivity growth?
6. Which people will do the job and how will they be judged and held accountable?
7. What human, technical, production, and financial resources are needed to executed the strategy?
8. What will we need two years out when the strategy goes to the next level?
9. Does the strategy deliver the earnings required for success?
10. How can the strategy be broken down into doable initiatives?
11. What will we do if a benchmark or milestone has not been reached at the end of the first quarter?
12. Who’s cooperation will be required and how will they be motivated to collaborate?
13. What reward systems will we have to motivate people to a common objective?
14. Who should be involved in developing the strategic plan?
15. What goals will we set based on our ability to deliver results?
16. How, specifically, were they going to achieve their projected goals on a timely basis?
17. What are the milestones for progress of the plan and is the strict accountability of the people in charge?
18. Do we have contingency plans to deal with the unexpected – a shift in the market, a material shortage, a mass layoff, etc.?
19. Are these realistic goals?
20. Are we going in too many directions at once, or are we focused?
21. Can we be excited about this?
22. Have we defined the initiative clearly and it’s importance to the organization?
23. Does every executive have a 90-day action plan and clear agreement on following through?
24. Have we done a good job of linking rewards to performance?
25. How will we distinguish between those who achieve results and those who don’t in base pay, bonuses, stock options, etc.?

26. Have we defined everybody's jobs in terms of the three or four non-negotiable criteria that they must be able to do in order to succeed?
27. Which people have delivered consistently?
28. Which ones were resourceful, enterprising, and creative in the face of adversity?
29. Who had easy "wins" and didn't push for better results?
30. Who met their commitments at the expense of the organization morale and learned long-term performance?
31. What are our leaders doing to develop their people? Are those people actually growing and maturing?
32. Why are poor performers doing badly and what are the leaders doing about it?
33. What have they been doing for each individual who has been promised help with development needs – did he or she get a coach, another assignment to work out the deficiency?
34. Can we describe our strategy in 20 minutes, simply and in plain language?
35. What is the assessment of the external environment?
36. How well do we understand the existing customers and markets?
37. What is the best way to grow the business profitably, and what are the obstacles to grow?
38. Who is the competition?
39. Can the business execute the strategy?
40. Are the short-term goals balanced?
41. What are the important milestones for executing the plan?
42. What are the critical issues facing the business?
43. How will the business make money on a sustainable basis?
44. How are our cost compared with those of our competitors?
45. What productivity programs do we have in place to improve our cost position?
46. What would each of our departments have to look like if we... (tripled our profits in the next five years)?
47. Do we have the sales force and sales engineers to win in the new markets segments, or are they yesterday's people?
48. Do we have a road map of how it will change over time?

Here are some additional notes and thoughts from the book:

- “When 20% of the most powerful business leaders in America lose their jobs every year, something is clearly wrong.”
- “Meaningful change comes only with execution”
- “Execution is about people, strategy and operations.”
- “Dialog is the core of culture and the basic unit of work. How people talk to each other absolutely determines how well the organization will function.”
- “The intellectual challenge of execution is in getting to the heart of an issue through persistent and constructive probing.”
- “The HR dept. at EDS was renamed Leadership and Change Management.”
- “All you've got to prove is that you care for the people who are working for you. Whatever your respective personalities are, that's the personal connection.”

- “Anybody who thinks through the logic of a business will see that focusing on three or four priorities will produce the best results from the resources at hand.”
- “Cultural change gets real when your aim is execution.”
- “If you reward for performance, the interest in performance will be sufficiently deep to sponsor a dialog.”
- “Leaders get the behavior they exhibit and tolerant”-Dick Brown, EDS
- “If you look at any business that is consistently successful, you’ll find that it’s leaders focus intensely and relentlessly on people selection.”
- “Executive development needs to be a core competency...if you hire a talented person, they will hire a talented person.”
- “You can easily spot the doers by observing their working habits. They are the ones that energize people, are decisive on tough issues, get things done through others, and follow through as a second nature.”
- “Dialog ends with closure and a call to action”
- “The first things I look for are energy and enthusiasm for execution. Does the candidate get excited by doing things, as opposed to talking about them? Is her life full of achievement and accomplishment?”
- “I ask, ‘How does he set priorities?’ ‘What qualities is he known for?’ ‘Does he include people in decision making?’ ‘What is his work ethic and his energy level?’”
- “When the wrong people get rewarded, the whole organization loses. Problems don’t get fixed, non-performers get ahead, and the good performers sought looking for jobs at places where their contributions will be recognized.”
- “If you sit down and sit down with your boss, and your boss hasn’t said something to you about your weaknesses, go back! Because otherwise, you’re not going to learn anything.”
- “If someone should leave the company or project, would we be able to announce, on the same day, who will fill all positions created by the domino effect of related leaves or promotions?”
- “Get five people who know the person together in a room. Get them to open up, to share and argue their observations, and to reach a conclusion. The diagnosis will come from the convergence of their diverse views. There’s the core of your robust people process”
- “I want bigger margins than anybody else, and to accomplish this we have to have great people and train them better and faster than everybody else. We need to have educational programs that are focused on key business issues and problems, the things that matter. HR’s role is to help me solve these problems,”
- “One of the first things Larry did when he got to AlliedSignal was to focus a lot on Human resources talent. The HR function was one of the first elements of the organization we really drove to upgrade. And it gave us leverage all over the place.” –Don Redlinger, Senior VP of HR at Honeywell.
- “An HR leader has to have business acumen, the ability to understand how a company makes money, they ability to think critically, a passion for results, and the ability to link strategy and execution.” Don Redlinger
- “An effective HR Executive has to have a technical background, business acumen, managerial skills and leadership skills.”

Seldom does a book offer this level of insight! I encourage you to share this summary or the book itself with your management team. Get the book at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).