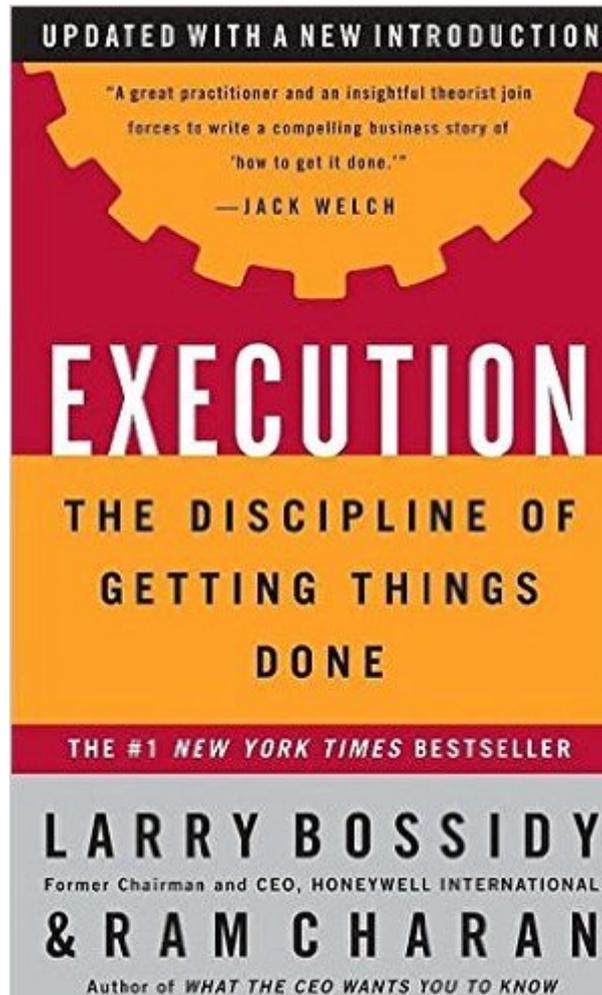


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# Execution: The Discipline Of Getting Things Done



## Synopsis

The book that shows how to get the job done and deliver results . . . whether you're running an entire company or in your first management job. Larry Bossidy is one of the world's most acclaimed CEOs, a man with few peers who has a track record for delivering results. Ram Charan is a legendary advisor to senior executives and boards of directors, a man with unparalleled insight into why some companies are successful and others are not. Together they've pooled their knowledge and experience into the one book on how to close the gap between results promised and results delivered that people in business need today. After a long, stellar career with General Electric, Larry Bossidy transformed AlliedSignal into one of the world's most admired companies and was named CEO of the year in 1998 by Chief Executive magazine. Accomplishments such as 31 consecutive quarters of earnings-per-share growth of 13 percent or more didn't just happen; they resulted from the consistent practice of the discipline of execution: understanding how to link together people, strategy, and operations, the three core processes of every business. Leading these processes is the real job of running a business, not formulating a "vision" and leaving the work of carrying it out to others. Bossidy and Charan show the importance of being deeply and passionately engaged in an organization and why robust dialogues about people, strategy, and operations result in a business based on intellectual honesty and realism. The leader's most important job "selecting and appraising people" is one that should never be delegated. As a CEO, Larry Bossidy personally makes the calls to check references for key hires. Why? With the right people in the right jobs, there's a leadership gene pool that conceives and selects strategies that can be executed. People then work together to create a strategy building block by building block, a strategy in sync with the realities of the marketplace, the economy, and the competition. Once the right people and strategy are in place, they are then linked to an operating process that results in the implementation of specific programs and actions and that assigns accountability. This kind of effective operating process goes way beyond the typical budget exercise that looks into a rearview mirror to set its goals. It puts reality behind the numbers and is where the rubber meets the road. Putting an execution culture in place is hard, but losing it is easy. In July 2001 Larry Bossidy was asked by the board of directors of Honeywell International (it had merged with AlliedSignal) to return and get the company back on track. He's been putting the ideas he writes about in Execution to work in real time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My dogged desire to get through this book ruined the first half of a windsurfing vacation in Aruba. It's very, very dry going, and at the end one wonders what, if anything the authors really had to say. It sounds on the surface like cutting edge management practice. For instance Bossidy and Charan introduce the concept of "the social software of execution" as a key element for creating the framework for cultural change in the organization. They go on to elaborate, "A key component of software is what we call Social Operating Mechanisms". At this point I was on the edge of my chair, ready to absorb what was being teed up as an idea of potentially transformational impact. So what are Social Operating Mechanisms? The authors go on to explain, "These are formal or informal meetings, presentations, even memos or e-mail exchanges - anywhere that dialogue takes place". Wow - this is really deep stuff... One wonders why the authors don't simply refer to communication rather than Social Operating Mechanisms. And, as a separate matter, the lack of literacy is surprising. Since when, for example, are memos and e-mail exchanges places? Stripped of all of this, what the authors have to say is simple common sense that can be summarized as follows: \* Successful companies have the important ability to get things done (or execute). \* Good leadership (knowing people, setting clear goals, following through, etc.) is a prerequisite of execution. \* Reward systems, communications, and feedback processes need to foster action and provide incentives for getting things done. \* Some people are more capable than others are to get things done.

What's left to say about this book on execution? With 130 online reviews many issues are covered

already. One point's missing, though. Look at the reviews; they are divided into two camps. The reviewers either think this is a mediocre book with very basic ideas (management 101) or they see the light. The latter realize that there's no need for new acronyms or faddy words in the management-speak. "Execution" is about getting things done, being persistent and realistic, as well as managing the 3 core processes; strategy (why? and what?), operations (how?) and people (who?). Building a performance culture is never as easy as it sounds. Looking back a few years, try to recall a few of those companies with great media attention and grand strategic visions. Many of them failed. And many of them will fail again and again, because the heroes are strategic visionaries that never bothered to deal with the issue of execution; continually and personally making sure that things were actually done. You know, when all is said and done, usually more is said than done... If you found this book fascinating, you'll probably have some of the execution traits hidden in your personality preferences. If you want to check it out, you might visit some of free Internet sites for a test (e.g. keirse.com). For a business, I believe it's paramount to make sure that you have a well-balanced team on all levels in the hierarchy. This also includes having enough executives with execution traits. Advice: Don't assume you have it; test it! Conclusively, this is a great book. I liked it so much that I even also bought the audio version! The reason for the audio version is that these execution ideas simply are needed to be absorbed over several readings (or listenings).

Larry Bossidy is clearly a five-star leader, and Ram Charan is a gifted consultant and teacher. It surprised me that their book didn't work as well as I had hoped. Execution's title confused me. Hopefully, you won't have that problem. I thought Execution would be all about how to take a strategy and operating plan and implement them well. Instead, Part III makes it clear that Execution is about meeting overall financial objectives through being an effective organization in setting strategies and operating plans to serve customers well while building an organization that can implement the plans for outperforming competitors. Part I, by contrast, makes it sound like Execution is only about implementation, noting that almost all organizations have the same strategies (or can quickly get them from consultants), access the same top talent and can easily acquire and employ competitively effective innovation. I also thought Execution would apply to all business people. Instead, the context for most of the AlliedSignal (Honeywell International's name when Mr. Bossidy became CEO there the first time) and General Electric examples which dominate the book is that of the CEO or group executive to whom divisions report in a large conglomerate. In this sense, Execution is like reading the latter chapters of Mr. Welch's book, Jack. The main difference between Jack and Execution is that Execution tries to build a framework for the book's

concepts while sharing examples (mostly of failure) from other organizations. Mr. Charan's sections of the book mostly focus on that positioning. Mr. Bossidy mostly tells about his own experiences at AlliedSignal and Honeywell. Mr. Bossidy, of course, worked with Mr. Welch at General Electric for many years. Mr.

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