

WENDY HIRSCH CONSULTING

Turning great ideas into great achievements



The Executive's Guide to Implementation

What every leader should know about implementing for results.



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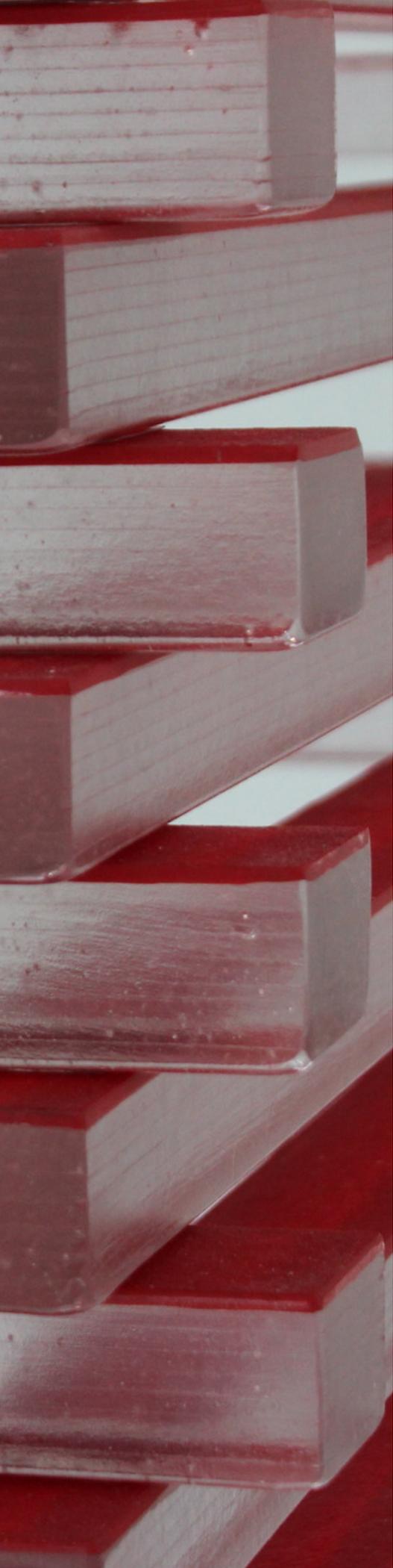
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References

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20 YEARS EXPERIENCE

has taught me a few things about implementation.

Have you ever finished celebrating the approval of a new strategy or major initiative and thought, "Now, what?" You are not alone.

Too often implementation is an afterthought in organizations. Which is unfortunate. Research shows, how you implement matters as much to your success as what you implement. A "just do it" implementation approach rarely works.

While there are no silver bullet solutions guaranteed to make all implementation successful, there are sound practices that are worth knowing about and using consistently in your organization.

That's what this guide is about. More specifically, it's about a few things all executives should know about implementation.

Because when executives start advocating for good implementation practice in their organizations, results are not too far behind.



IMPLEMENTATION

/impləmən'tāSH(ə)n/

To make something
active and effective.



easy part



hard part

5 MYTHS

about implementation that can stand between your organization & success.

Technical skill = Implementation skill.

The person who knows the most about what you are implementing may not be the best person to implement it. Implementation is a skill unto itself, which requires deep abilities in a variety of areas such as project management, communications, change, measurement and engagement.

"We are focused on the future, current state doesn't matter anymore."

If you want to get to New York, it makes a difference if you are starting in New Jersey versus somewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, right? Similarly, implementation is about traveling the distance between current and future states. It matters — alot— how much distance is between them. Understanding both current and desired future states is essential.

"We can implement at a high-level based on the big picture."

If you are fuzzy on the answers to these two questions — "Why are we doing this?" and "What is it, exactly, that we are implementing?" — success will be hard to define, let alone achieve.

There are two phases to implementation: Start & Finish.

Embedding a new policy, practice, or strategy in an organization is more like planting a tree, than constructing a building. You can't just plant it and walk away. You have to water, prune and protect it until it's hearty enough to stand on its own. Implementation is an iterative process that requires consistent effort over time.

Activity = Results

Getting things done is not the same as getting results. Defining desired outcomes and putting a measurement plan in place is essential to avoid confusing busyness with effectiveness. Be aware, activity is immediate and easier to measure than outcomes, which will take longer to see. Don't declare victory — or defeat — too soon.

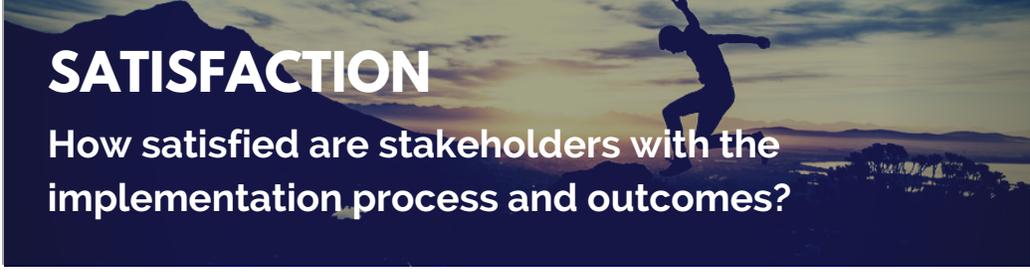


3 QUESTIONS

to ask before you declare victory or defeat.

When you come to the end of an implementation, how do you know whether or not it has been a success? I encourage executives and implementation teams to think about successful implementation as multi-dimensional, rather than a singular thing one attains.

The simple, 3 question framework below can help organizations to comprehensively evaluate their success by considering three dimensions —completion, achievement and satisfaction (1). Effective implementation requires strong performance in all three.

	 <p>COMPLETION</p> <p>Did you complete all intended aspects of the implementation, within the anticipated timeframe?</p>
	 <p>ACHIEVEMENT</p> <p>Did you achieve the intended performance and outcomes from the implementation?</p>
	 <p>SATISFACTION</p> <p>How satisfied are stakeholders with the implementation process and outcomes?</p>

Keep in mind, perfection is an elusive goal, so it is often more instructive to evaluate performance in these dimensions on a graduated scale, rather than taking an all or nothing approach. Identifying relative strengths and weakness on various dimensions can also better focus improvement efforts. Further, consistent use of such a framework to assess performance on all projects or implementation efforts in an organization can provide a rich body of feedback on organizational implementation capabilities.

1.The three question framework outlined above was adapted from Susan Miller's research on strategic decision-making. See: Miller, S. "Implementing Strategic Decisions: Four Key Success Factors." *Organization Studies* 18.4 (1997): 577-602. Web.

HOW TO DO IT

TAKE A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

In the 1990s, researchers in healthcare understood that proven practices would never benefit patients if they weren't effectively implemented in hospitals and doctor's offices. Their investigations into what works (and doesn't) in implementation has yielded some clear themes in good implementation practice. Content and scale will vary, but most implementation requires the development of a system of complementary elements for success, such as those outlined below.

COMPONENTS

Components provide structure and definition to the implementation.



Desired Outcomes
What you want to achieve



Innovation
What you are implementing



Plan & Infrastructure
How you'll do it



Training & Coaching
How you teach & reinforce new skills



Monitoring & Measurement
How you know if you've achieved your desired outcomes

ROLES

People create and use components to drive the implementation forward.



Implementation Team
Plan, execute & troubleshoot



Front-line Staff
Actively use the innovation



Leadership
Inspire, explain & reinforce



Customers/Beneficiaries
Benefit from the innovation



Other Stakeholders
Interested influencers

PHASES

Phases provide appropriate focus to the implementation at different points in time. Phases are more iterative than linear.

DECIDE

PREPARE

EXECUTE

IMPROVE

SUSTAIN

About Wendy Hirsch Consulting

Expertise without the overhead

I offer a unique consulting-coaching model that allows organizations to leverage my deep implementation expertise to help their team deliver on current transformation objectives while building their internal capability to confidently tackle the organization's next big opportunity.

Because every organization is unique, I offer flexible engagement options that allow clients to leverage the right level of support to fit their organizational needs, culture, and budget.

I invite you to learn more about my consulting & coaching services at wendyhirsch.com

Need help? Let's talk.

Getting ready to start an implementation in the next few months, or looking for help turning around a troubled effort? A conversation is often the best way to find out if my skills might be a good match for your challenge.

[Click here](#) to schedule a time to talk, or simply call or email me.

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