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*Five Essentials to Empower Your Organization*
*for Business Success*

Advisory Article

*Mark Bashrum*

# Five Essentials to Empower Your Organization for Business Success

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Advancing the organization and achieving business success require developing new products, finding new markets, and building enabling systems and infrastructure. Keeping execution aligned with the strategy to accomplish these objectives has always been one of the most difficult challenges in running a business. In the current environment the task seems more daunting than ever due to the following:

o Harsh economic realities and the resulting environment of scarcity have often meant that those individuals once responsible for championing programs to implement and sustain process improvement, change management, and project management competencies are no longer with the firm or are dispersed across a newly reorganized and often fragmented organization.

o Along with organizational improvement efforts, many of the support structures meant to reinforce a culture of execution have also been disbanded or diminished.  This has left the development, training, and reinforcement of project management best practices, methodologies, and systems floundering.

o With few exceptions, most industries are experiencing the aging of their workforce and the inevitable loss of critical human capital.

o Tough regulatory requirements associated with new legislation are impacting many industries. Healthcare, pharma, and financial services have all seen a barrage of compliance mandates over the past few years, which are diverting their best and brightest resources to meet hard deadlines to avoid punitive consequences for non-compliance.

As with most challenges, meeting them comes down to ensuring the basics are in place. Delivering desired outcomes depends on project-focused competencies and a culture of execution.  The key professionals in your organization who are responsible for advancing your strategy through new products, new markets, and new systems must have a solid foundation of competencies and be supported by a culture and structure that drives execution.

1. **Tried and true—start with people.** Determine the skills and competencies required to execute effectively in your environment and assess your people to understand how they measure up.  Pay particular attention to those project-focused employees who shoulder a majority of the responsibility for executing key initiatives.

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2. **Bring the organization up to a base level of competence.** Creating a foundation of understanding is essential to ensuring that individuals share a common platform from which to build skills. Data shows that establishing even fundamental competencies in project-related skills can have an immediate and measurable impact on the business.

3. **Create coaching and mentoring programs.**. Once talent walks out the door, it is gone forever.  Leverage highly skilled resources while you still have them by establishing a formal coaching and mentoring program that is focused on building the next generation of leadership.  Ensure that mentoring programs are integrated into your on-boarding efforts so new hires have a coach from day one.

4. **Rebuild and re-engage your execution support structure.**  Organizational structures such as project management offices (PMOs) and business analysis centers of excellence play a critical role in ensuring that execution is supported by a culture of discipline and rigor.  Start with inventorying and assessing your current support structure and look for ways to enhance and empower these organizations.

5. **Focus on the business impact of development.**  Since the end game is to impact the bottom line, it is critical that development efforts focus on measuring business outcomes rather than on the quality of the program. While this may be intuitive for business leaders, it may require a change in mindset for those responsible for delivering development initiatives.

These five essentials are included in a new research study by ESI International, the world's leading project management training company, Download a free copy of "Powerless:  Why Businesses Can't Execute" for a closer examination of the widening gap between strategy and execution, and what organizations should do about it at http://www.esi-intl.com/resources/industry-research/viewpoints/powerless-why-businesses-cannot-execute

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**Mark Bashrum** is Vice President, Corporate Marketing and Strategic Intelligence, ESI International. He is responsible for providing thought leadership to the market and to the company's many strategic multi-national clients around the world. For more than 15 years, Mr. Bashrum has been providing learning and development services to Fortune Global 1000 companies.

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