

### EXECUTING YOUR MISSION

by: Sandy Mico

*During my personal evaluation and planning time in December, I revisited some recent publications on the topic of “closing the knowing-doing gap.” I specifically focused on how I can help managers successfully execute a relationship-based mission.*

Managers have traditionally helped staff understand the strategic actions needed to carry out the mission, assigned accountability and measured results.

Given the realities of constant change, that is not enough. More direct involvement by management is required to cement the new skills, habits and attitudes of successful relationship builders. Think about how you first learned your business. If you were fortunate, you were mentored by managers and experienced colleagues.

Managing relationships and getting to yes are skills that must be perfected “on the job.” Learning to deploy EMI’s Effectiveness Models builds **competence**. But only **experience builds the self-confidence** that comes from knowing what to say to an existing or prospective client.

**What you do** is the most important determinant of successful change. Experience and studies suggest that over 80% of learning is lost unless it is reinforced by coaches and the use of effectiveness models. Our **Efficient Marketing** principles have been fortified with new research to help you transfer knowledge into action.

**Explain why before how.** Re-visit your Mission, Values and Vision. As Charlotte Roberts of Innovative Associates says, M-V-V constitute your “compass,” letting everyone know where to look for “due north.” To maximize marketing efficiency, make sure everyone understands the mission and can answer the question “what do you do for a living”.

We help \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

Re-evaluate the values of your firm. Is there a gap between what is stated and what is actually practiced? Do your decisions reflect stated values? *Resolve conflicts by reflecting on what it takes to execute the mission.*

Your vision should let everyone know what success looks like. Are expectations and rewards for divisions and individuals directly linked to this longer-term vision and measured by a similar scorecard?

**Lead by doing.** *Knowing comes from doing and teaching others how.* (1) Coach call plans and pipeline activities to master your relationship marketing and sales process. Secure a personal coach.

**Practice the process.** *Daily actions count more than plans. Focus on what turns knowledge into action.* (1) Your mission, values, & vision determine strategy. Strategy defines process. But only *practice* ...what people do together on a daily basis...*makes process*. Be aware, *people convert practice into process every day*. (2)

**Focus on progress, not perfection.** *Treat failure to act as the only true failure.* If you’re waiting for a “slow down” in the work-flow to execute relationship based activities, it won’t happen. The time to improve relationship skills is when everyone’s busy with clients and can *practice* their new skills.

**Build confidence through competence.** Learning to be an accomplished relationship builder requires practice, not sitting in a class room. Perfect skills on the job by employing Effectiveness Models in *a community of practice* with other colleagues. (2)

**Fight the competition, not each other.** Coach deals around clients, not business lines or job titles. Break down silos by leading cross-functional teams. Intimacy precedes trust.

**Measure & monitor what matters.** Don’t let another year slip away without moving closer to your mission. Shorten the intervals between planning and reviewing to a Monday/Friday cycle. Measure your results in rolling 12-month increments.

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**Remove ambiguity through your actions.** *What leaders do, how they spend their time & allocate resources matters.* Change your “spending” habits first. Expect others to follow.

**What are you waiting for? Get started by getting involved.** What better time is there to build relationship skills than when your normal course of business puts you in close contact with clients? Repetition is your friend and there is no better time to start.

Ideas adapted from (1) The Knowing Doing Gap by Jeffrey Pfeffer & Robert I. Sutton, and (2) The Social Life of Information by John Seely Brown & Paul Dubuid. Both books are highly recommended. ■

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