



C-Suite Tip Number 1

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We all know about the pyramid structure. It's a generic way to think about an enterprise and how most are organizationally design. Divided into three layers, the top layer of the pyramid is comprised of the senior-most leaders. These are the people responsible for setting strategic direction and guiding the enterprise

towards its future. While certainly concerned with quarterly performance, the leaders at the top of the pyramid must also have a forward-thinking, "Where will we be in 5 years?" kind of mindset.

The middle layer of the pyramid is comprised of the middle management of the organization. These people must be able to interpret the strategic direction set forth by the senior leaders and translate it into actions that the units that report into them can understand and act upon. While these managers certainly care about strategy, their primary focus is this year. Can we do what we need to day this year to reach our goals and objectives?

The lower layer of the pyramid is comprised of supervisors and rank and file. This layer is responsible for execution. Their time frame is much different from the managers and senior leaders. Their point of reference is today. Can we do the work that must be done today, on-time and on-budget? And, they inherently understand, that they will suffer the consequences of poor performance, if they don't.

So, when it comes time to roll-out your next key strategy, where do you begin? In the middle, of course!

The middle management team makes or breaks strategic execution! As mentioned, they're the ones that must interpret the strategies and translate them into something that is actionable by the rank and file. If they fail to do this well, the organization falters, resources are squandered and, unfortunately, many times heads roll.

Here are 3 essential tips to get them on-board (and, by doing so, improve your chances for success in the launching your firm's next strategic initiative):

- **Tell and Teach:** Think about it, you're asking your mid-tier managers to act as teachers. And, to teach well, they must first understand. So, commit to establishing the understanding that they'll need to help the rest of your organization grasp and commit to your vision and strategic plan. Do all that you can to help them comprehend all of the content and nuances of those strategic elements so that they can do a bang up job of translating them for your people.
- **Jump-Start The Messaging:** Don't leave it up to your middle management to determine how they will go about the work of interpretation and translation for their teams. Instead, take the time to think about all of the implications and likely actions that you would want them and their people to tackle in helping the organization execute its strategies. Craft a template for them to use to deliver the message.
- **Orchestrate The Cascading:** Once you equip your managers with the requisite knowledge and messaging content they can begin to cascade the message throughout the rest of the organization. However, they may not do this in an disciplined and rigorous way. So, be sure to orchestrate cascading of the information by establishing a roll-out schedule that details when the managers will do the work of strategic messaging.

After all, you want to make certain that all of your organization understands the company vision, strategies and, most importantly, their roles in the subsequent execution and achievement of your goals and objectives. If you can do this, you will have done your job.

To close, senior leaders need to focus on the middle of their organizations in order to achieve their strategic intentions. If you can engage the middle management, they will do the rest. If you don't, your strategic execution will fall flat. It's really as simple as that!

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