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Make Execution Your Competitive Edge

LORI TURNER

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A CEO recently shared with me the fundamental reason his business had stagnated – inability to execute.

This is a phrase I've heard countless times. It's just another way of saying, "We're not great at following through and maintaining marketing momentum."

Odds are that you've felt that pain within your company. What's causes this common challenge among small businesses?

Inability to Focus/Prioritize: In a small company, managers and CEOs wear many hats, making it a challenge to focus on a marketing strategy.

Fear: You may be so paralyzed by fear of making a mistake that you struggle to make decisions or pull the trigger.

Unwillingness to Delegate: Often this is seen with managers who have a perfectionist quality, which isn't unusual among CEOs and entrepreneurs.

Lack of Resources: If your company is small, you simply may not have anyone to delegate to and feel you don't have the financial resources to hire help.

Once you've identified the root cause of your marketing execution challenges, it's time for a solution.

Carve out time every week to focus on marketing execution. Assign a deadline. Identify an accountability partner – someone who will hold your feet to the fire. If you fail in the first month, fire yourself and delegate to another capable team member. It's the smartest termination you'll ever make.

Show the responsible employee what success looks like and how you will measure progress. If you have perfectionist tendencies, let go and trust your team to execute. It may not be perfect, but at least your marketing will have some momentum.

No one to delegate to? You must hire resources – a new employee, external contractor or a marketing firm. You can't afford not to. Marketing isn't an expense; it's an investment.

Avoid these common missteps:

Management by committee: Streamlined approval processes increase marketing momentum. Ideally, you need two sets of eyes – two people who understand your strategy and are accountable for execution.

Analysis paralysis: Don't spend too much time researching and planning. Give yourself three to four months to plan, and then roll with it. A good plan executed today beats a better plan tomorrow.

Overly ambitious: Break your strategy into bite-sized pieces. Give yourself a deadline for the first small piece and focus on that until it's done.

If you've experienced execution problems, now is the time to try again. Set your company apart from competitors by being a good executioner.

*Lori Turner, managing partner, RedRover Sales & Marketing,
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Lori Turner

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