Closing the Gap Between Strategy and Execution

This program is in the Executive Certificate in Strategy and Innovation track

Program Details
Most leaders rely on a set of implicit beliefs about how to get things done when they try to execute their strategy. Many common assumptions about execution, however, are incomplete at best and dangerous at worst. Despite its importance, execution remains poorly understood—for every ten books on how to formulate a strategy there is only one on how to translate it into effective action. Executives often focus on specific tools, such as the balanced scorecard or management by objectives, to manage risk and drive strategy execution without understanding how these tools interact with one another.

Led by Dr. Donald Sull, a global expert on strategy execution in complex organizations, this new two-day course will help leaders reframe execution so that they can avoid common mistakes and focus on the actions that are most likely to bring results. The course introduces a systemic view of strategy execution based on over a decade of research and field-tested in dozens of corporations around the world.

As part of your participation in this program, you and 30 or more of your colleagues will complete a state-of-the-art survey in advance of the course. The data from this survey will be analyzed to provide you with real-time insights that help pinpoint concrete opportunities to improve your organization’s execution capacity.

Closing the Gap Between Strategy and Execution is:

• **Practical.** All of the tools and frameworks introduced in the course have been field-tested with corporations and not-for-profit organizations around the world for over a decade. Every session includes at least one self-diagnostic or template to help you translate the course content into specific actions tailored to you and your organization. The course will provide tools and takeaways to help you translate insights into concrete actions when you return to work.

• **Tailored to operating executives.** The program introduces a simple framework to identify the leader’s role in execution, as well as data-driven insights to translate their strategy into measurable results. Participants will learn how to effectively structure and guide discussions that are critical to implementation.

• **Systematic and comprehensive.** Execution is explored as an iterative process of risk management, making sense of the current environment, prioritizing activities and investments, securing commitments and ensuring delivery, and making revisions in light of new information.

• **Based in practical research.** The course is grounded in Sull’s research, including dozens of structured experiments that involved structured interventions in companies and that quantified the impact on operational and financial results. A state-of-the-art survey uses big data to measure and quantify how well organizations execute their strategy and identify specific areas for improvement.

• **Hands on and interactive.** The sessions include a mix of case study discussions, interactive lectures, in-class exercises, and opportunities to learn from peers

Takeaways
Participants of this course will leave with:

• A comprehensive model of strategy execution
• Data-based insights from a state-of-the-art survey that will help you pinpoint concrete opportunities to improve your organization’s execution capacity
• Best practices from some of the most effective organizations in the world
• A structured tool for developing a strategy for execution that is easy to communicate and translate into action
• Simple rules to embed strategic guidance into key activities while retaining the flexibility to seize unexpected opportunities
• A series of worksheets to help you translate insights from the course into concrete actions you can take when you return to work
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Sample Program Schedule
(subject to change)

Day 1
8:00AM–12:00 PM: Winning through execution
   Why strategy execution unravels, and what you can do about it
12:00–1:00 PM:  Networking Lunch
1:00–5:00 PM: Leading for execution: In this highly interactive session, we introduce a simple framework to identify the leader’s role in execution

Day 2
8:00AM–12:00 PM: Simple rules for a complex world
   Strategy for execution
12:00–1:00 PM: Networking Lunch
1:00–4:00 PM: Translating strategy into action with simple rules
   Execution in volatile markets

Requirements
There is an application process for this course. Enrollment is limited. To be admitted, participants must:

• Currently serve as the CEO, MD, or member of an executive team running a significantly large company or division within a larger organization, typically booking revenues of at least $30 million.
• Have a large scope of responsibility, including managing teams across multiple units or departments.
• Chief Strategy Officers with enterprise or substantial business unit responsibilities, and project managers with responsibility for overseeing large projects, are also strong candidates.
• Agree to identify at least 30 of their colleagues who will complete a survey of their organization’s execution capacity. The survey is completely confidential and administered by MIT Sloan.

Program Faculty
Donald Sull is a Senior Lecturer at the MIT Sloan School of Management. He is a global authority on managing in turbulent markets, and directs a week-long course on effectively executing strategy in volatile markets. He has been identified as a leading management thinker by The Economist, the Financial Times, and Fortune which named him among the ten new management gurus to know. Sull has published five books, including The Upside of Turbulence (2009). Sull received his AB, MBA, and doctorate from Harvard University, where he taught entrepreneurship at the Harvard Business School before rejoining the London Business School faculty as a professor of management practice in strategy and entrepreneurship. Sull has won teaching awards at both London Business School and Harvard University.

“A fantastic walk-through of the whitespace between strategy and execution leaving the attendee with insights, thoughts, and techniques to navigate this space effectively.”
—Ravikumar R.
Past Participant
Read this review and others online.

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