



Title: **Strategy Execution Heroes**

ISBN: 978-908148731-3

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*An interview with Jeroen De Flander, author of *Strategy Execution Heroes**

We recently caught up with Jeroen De Flander, Strategy Execution expert and author of the recently released *Strategy Execution Heroes*. We talked to him about his new book and the importance of a sound Strategy Execution.

*First of all, what is *Strategy Execution Heroes* actually about?*

Strategy Execution Heroes is very different to other books on Strategy Execution. In short, it takes a very practical approach - it is a guidebook on strategy implementation for managers and future managers. It also includes more than 250 tips from experts and executives to help individuals implement their strategies.

*Why call it *Strategy Execution Heroes*?*

I believe that far too many managers produce far too many PowerPoint presentations. Organisations need individuals who can turn those presentations into a practical reality. Those managers who can get things done are the real heroes of an organisation, the ones who create and ultimately add value to an organisation - hence the title '*Strategy Execution Heroes*'. I want to recognise and honour those managers who are continuously striving to get a strategy implemented. And I hope more and more organisations will start to fully appreciate them for the value they add to their organisations.

If you focus on execution, does it mean that the actual strategy is not really important?

No, that's not the message. A solid strategy is - and will remain - the cornerstone of the future of any organisation. But I believe there are two issues here. First of all, the word 'strategy' should be demystified. It still holds too much magic in the minds of people. And secondly, there should always be a balance between the strategy and the actual execution - the journey - of the strategy.

I always say, "A strategy, even a great one, doesn't implement itself". Most organisations tend to forget this very simple fact. An organisation always needs execution-driven managers that turn fancy strategy PowerPoint presentations into practice. Having a strategy is not the end goal, it's only the start. But without a proper start, you won't win. So you need both a great strategy and a great execution in order to be successful.

*So exactly how is *Strategy Execution Heroes* different from other books?*

Pioneers such as Kaplan and Norton and Bussidy and Charan put execution on the map and in the minds of managers. But business strategy execution or implementation is no longer the gap that nobody knows. Organisations have become very aware that much great strategy is lost before it is turned into performance - mainly as a result of poor execution skills. So the performance gap is known. And it's time for managers to close it. And *Strategy Execution Heroes* helps these managers get the job done by offering more than 250 concrete tips and insights from experts and executives. In other words, *Strategy Execution Heroes* brings strategy and its execution to the level of the manager.

But is Strategy Execution really that important? Surely it's the end result that counts?

Strategy Execution should be that important. Think about this. An organisation, on average, loses between 40 and 60 percent of their strategic potential during implementation. So yes, successful Strategy Execution should be at the top of the agenda of every manager. There is still a lot to gain. And more and more organisations are realising this. There are even a few players who see and use their implementation power to their competitive advantage.



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Strategy Execution Heroes has a very impressive list of contributors.

It does! I'm very proud that such a great group of experts such as Sir John Whitmore and senior executives from top companies such as eBay, Coca-Cola and Lockheed Martin have helped to pack this book with so many practical tips and personal insights. And the combination of offerings from both experts and executives has resulted in a book that I believe has plenty to offer managers at all levels of an organisation. And that's what I really wanted to achieve when I started writing Strategy Execution Heroes.

Some quotes from Jeroen

On performance:

"Don't measure your performance by what you have accomplished, but by what you should have accomplished within your capabilities"

"In a 4x100-metre relay race, one runner starts before the other, but in the end it's the sum of the four runners that determines performance"

On strategy and its execution:

"A strategy, even a great one, doesn't implement itself"

"Strategy Execution is all about realising the full potential of your strategy - and not limiting yourself to only 50, 60 or 70 percent"

On goal setting:

"No goal commitment equals no performance, whatever else you try"

On strategy communication:

"Look beyond the send button and shift your focus to the receiving end"

On project management:

"I have never seen a successful project run by a bad project manager"