

Building FAD in Your Business: Focus

Successful companies build FAD (Focus, Alignment, Discipline) into their businesses. Another article explains the derivation of FAD. In this article we will discuss focus in greater detail.

Focus: Focusing on a limited number of initiatives, while limiting distractions from the many other opportunities that present themselves, allows companies to complete initiatives better and more quickly. Often companies create too many initiatives to complete which then fragments the resources that are being used to accomplish these initiatives. There is actually empirical evidence in the product development world that product development teams complete three projects more quickly and with better results by completing one project at a time rather than attempting to complete all three at once. This would be like trying to learn to juggle three different objects at the same time rather than perfecting one object before moving on to another.

How often in your company do you attempt to accomplish too many initiatives at once while completing none on time or as well as expected? Many companies start the New Year with grandiose visions of growth through multifaceted initiatives then by the end of the second quarter it becomes apparent that “things didn’t go as planned” and the company must re-evaluate or juggle initiatives. Few initiatives are completed at this point.

We worked with one company that had nearly fourteen strategic initiatives for the year. Each initiative also had five or six supporting tactical initiatives which drove the total initiative count to over seventy! The company was typical of many entrepreneurial organizations in that they started the year off with great enthusiasm but became ‘distracted’ with running the business and other ‘opportunities’ that came along and really didn’t complete many of the initiatives. The CEO believed he needed better strategies when in fact he just needed fewer initiatives. We worked with their leadership team to develop and define four strategic initiatives and only two to three tactical initiatives, which could be accomplished with their existing resources. By design, these initiatives were to be completed before the end of the year knowing that once these were done we could add others – but not until then! The company has successfully completed many of these current initiatives simply because they were focused on completing a few compared to being stretched across many.

How focused is your business? Do you have a limited number of initiatives or too many? Are the initiatives specifically defined? Are you trying to juggle too many objects at once? If you asked each member of your leadership team to list the top five initiatives for the company, would your responses be unanimous? If you don’t receive unanimous responses, what is your team working on?

Providing focus has allowed companies to complete more initiatives in a shorter period of time and therefore beat the competition and grow. **Focus** improves a company’s ability to execute.

To see the detailed articles on Alignment and Discipline, please see the list of articles.

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