

# The four reasons you fail to achieve objectives



When analysing why any individuals or teams fail to deliver against an objective (on the proviso that the objective is SMART of course) it is important that we correctly identify the root causes of the problem – any solution we propose has to address the root cause (s) in order to be effective. Solutions that address symptoms are largely ineffective and waste time and money. In today's complex business world the root causes can be difficult to identify and hence to assist us consider the following four most significant reasons for individuals and teams failing to achieve an objective.

## Individuals or teams do not:

- Appreciate the importance of the objective
- Have the knowledge or skills to deliver the objective
- Have the motivation or ownership to deliver the objective
- Have the tools to deliver the objective

The complexity of some business situations means that the root cause could be a mix of the above. By breaking the 'failure' down into one or more of the four reasons above means we maximise the chances of the root cause being identified and therefore the solutions we select being effective. The solutions could be part of our overall strategy.

## Consider the possible solutions for each reason:

### 1. There is no appreciation of the importance of the objective

- Make the issue a top down business priority – communicate it clearly at all levels
- Educate people so they understand the importance of the objective and the cost of failure / the rewards and recognition of success
- Measure performance, compare and make visible the progress towards the objective
- Set incentives for achievements of the objective
- Challenge when it is clear that the objective will not be met

## 2. There is not the knowledge or skills to deliver the objective

- Provide skills and knowledge via training
- Change the make up of the team to bring in the skills and knowledge required
- Assess employees to see if others have the required skills and knowledge
- Provide supporting information

## 3. There is not the motivation or ownership to deliver the objective

- Ensure there are clear roles and responsibilities
- Communicate the vision and strategy – put their roles into context with the overall objective
- Clearly measure and assess people relative to their performance against the objective
- Change the people

## 4. There's not the tools to deliver the objective

- Evaluate tools required (audit for ownership, competition, customers), prioritise and then set clear responsibilities with time lines for production of required tools.
- Investigate what already exists but is not shared
- Set clear ownership for who is responsible for constantly reviewing and updating this information

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