



# Albu *on* Strategy

Winter 2010

## Five Building Blocks to Successful Strategy Execution

The legendary Alabama football coach Paul “Bear” Bryant retired with 323 wins over 38 seasons. He was one of the most successful college football coaches, taking 29 teams to bowl games. He would often say that players on winning teams ask for five things:

1. Tell me what you expect of me
2. Give me an opportunity to perform
3. Let me know how I’m doing
4. Give me guidance when I need it
5. Reward me according to my contributions

What struck me most about this simple, yet insightful advice is its application to business leaders.

At *Albu Consulting* we place a high value on good strategic thinking and planning. But strategy implementation is as important, if not more important than the plan. Our systematic approach to strategy execution management requires discipline and commitment. If you strip away everything, the most important driver of successful strategy execution management comes down to these five things:



**1. Tell employees what you expect from them:** Involve your direct reports (and in turn their direct reports) in creating specific and detailed goals with metrics that will support and drive the company’s strategic initiatives.

**2. Create a winning environment:** Once goals are set, hold everyone accountable and give them the resources and support to succeed.

**3. Let employees know how they and the company are doing:** Follow up in a consistent and predictable manner with employees, both individually and as a group, to check in on progress. This will cause discussion around issues and opportunities on a regular basis.

**4. Provide guidance when needed:** Positive and negative feedback will create discussion and lead to continuous improvements over the long term.

**5. Reward performance:** Recognize and reward employee successes, and deal with issues quickly.

Business is a lot like football. Following these five simple rules can help you build a championship team.



Dear Friends,  
As a former youth football coach, I found planning the game strategy to be an important and time consuming part of the job. Of much greater importance, however, was to communicate the strategy to the players, give them the skill and resources to perform, hold them accountable for results and provide them with continuous feedback.

In this issue, we focus on that second, critical aspect of strategic planning: implementation.

In our lead article we learn from one of the great college football coaches of all time. Year after year, Paul “Bear” Bryant fielded championship teams. His five-item list of what players need to succeed is something any business manager can use to great advantage.

Developing and updating a sound business strategy is a daunting task. Executing that strategy can be even tougher. *Albu Consulting* has partnered with *Keyne Insight* to bring you a brand new system for managing the execution of your carefully constructed business strategy. Our second front page story introduces this dynamic system for implementing your strategic plan effectively and efficiently.

You too can be a great coach like Bear Bryant. *Albu Consulting* can help. We have helped leadership teams improve performance, increase effectiveness, and create a culture of accountability focused on results.

Please call us at 203/321-2147 or email [ralbu@albuconsulting.com](mailto:ralbu@albuconsulting.com) and ask how we can help you turn your team into champions.

Sincerely,  
Dick Albu, President

## Introducing KEYNELink™ Strategy Execution Management Bridging the Gap between Strategy Planning & Implementation

Strategic planning is experiencing a comeback, and leaders have the best intentions of ensuring their plans get realized. Unfortunately, the sad statistic is that only about 30% of those plans are fully executed. So how do you make sure that your organization is one of those elite few? By effectively managing the execution of your strategy through a system that helps to ensure the plan’s success: **KEYNELink**.

*Albu Consulting* has partnered with *Keyne Insight*, creators of **KEYNELink**, a strategy execution management



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## RECOMMENDED READING

### Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done *By Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan*

This is the second time that this book has been highlighted in *Albu on Strategy*. Since being published in 2002 this book is well on its way to becoming a business management classic. In our current business environment, execution can be “The missing link between aspiration and results”.

Bossidy and Charan stress that three building blocks must be in place to insure a company executes effectively:

**Building Block 1:** Leaders with the right behaviors.

**Building Block 2:** A culture that rewards execution.

**Building Block 3:** A system for placing the right people in the right job.

“Execution is a discipline ...it is a systematic process of rigorously discussing, questioning, tenaciously following through, and ensuring accountability.” Bossidy and Charan cite three core

processes that will help institutionalize the discipline of execution:

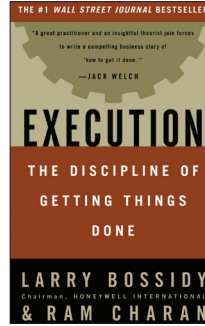
#### The People

**Process:** Consistency of practice that develops expertise in appraising and choosing the right people.

**The Strategy Process:** Promotes strong dialogue to link strategy to the people and operations process insuring it is constructed and owned by those who will execute it, and realistic in how goals will be achieved.

**The Operations Process:** Ability to focus on the specifics of operating and executing on a short-term time scale.

A key insight of the authors is that these three core processes must be strongly linked to one another to achieve effective execution. If you have the energy and commitment to adopt these practical principles, your organization will realize the results of its aspirations.



## Albuinfo

*Albu Consulting* is a strategy management consulting firm dedicated helping businesses develop robust plans and strong implementation. We work with owners, Boards, CEOs and leadership teams to bring out the best in companies.

Our goal is to help clients achieve sustainable profitable growth over the long term by:

1. Optimizing resource allocation by focusing on high priority, value-added initiatives, while eliminating wasted time and money on low priority activities
2. Creating an effective and efficient organizational culture, increasing collaboration and communication, eliminating silos and building an accountability-based culture
3. Enhancing management’s decision making process, making better decisions with more confidence over the long term
4. Creating a culture of continuous improvement with a willingness to change

Founded in 1994, Albu Consulting is recognized for its content and industry expertise, and for delivering results that create value over the long term.

Collaboratively with our clients, we provide practical and actionable recommendations that are rooted in sound, best-practice business principles, and industry knowledge.

Please contact us directly for a confidential discussion about the challenges you face, or if you know of someone that might benefit from our services, we would welcome the referral.

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“ Coaches who can outline plays on a black board are a dime a dozen. The ones who win get inside their players and motivate.

Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work. ”  
- Vince Lombardi

### Introducing KEYNELink... continued from page 1

system. KEYNELink is a dynamic system that “operationalizes” your strategic plan. It is designed as a management process to ensure activities directly related to the strategic plan are being implemented effectively and efficiently.

At its core, KEYNELink enables the CEO/Owner and the senior team to clarify, align and engage the organization around common initiatives and goals necessary to achieve the strategic plan. Initiatives, goals and tasks are cascaded down as deep into the organization as necessary. The KEYNELink system is designed so that everyone is held accountable for achieving

results, and as a result, strategy becomes a part of everyone’s day-to-day responsibility.

KEYNELink is a web based SAAS model application, so you can access it 24/7 from anywhere with an internet connection. The system provides the senior team visibility and transparency that a paper system cannot match, and makes it easier to monitor and take early action on issues and opportunities as they arise.

KEYNELink is a rich, multi-layered system that is difficult to fully appreciate without seeing it firsthand. Please call us to schedule a time to see a demonstration of what it can do. You’ll be glad you did.