



# THE 4 DISCIPLINES OF EXECUTION: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals

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## Overview

When you're a leader, some challenges like low staff can be solved with the stroke of a pen. Yet others, like improving performance and response time, require a *behavioral* change, something far more difficult. Behavioral strategies require clear goals, commitment, and accountability, but often these factors get lost to the daily whirlwind. Enter the **4 Disciplines of Execution**:

1. **Focus on the Wildly Important**
2. **Act on Lead Measures not Lag Measures**
3. **Keep A Compelling Scoreboard**
4. **Create A Cadence of Accountability**

While not always easy to maintain, remaining committed to these 4 disciplines for extended periods of time can lead to drastic improvements in your life.

*"...the disciplines will sound deceptively simple, but they take sustained work to implement... It requires sustained commitment."*

## Section 1: The 4 Disciplines of Execution

### Discipline 1: Focus on the Wildly Important

Instead of focusing on several objectives at once, pick one or two Wild Important Goals (WIG). Multitasking overburdens the brain. Instead of doing several things sub-optimally, do one thing exceptionally. While you can't ignore the responsibilities of the daily whirlwind, make your WIG your primary focus.

When you focus on your WIG, you only have a few changes at once that your team must adapt to. Lower departments should be allowed to establish their own objectives to feel more involved, but their WIG's should only be there to help higher-level WIG's. Their battles should win your war. All goals must follow the format of: "From X to Y by when."

*"Execution starts with focus. Without it, the other 3 disciplines won't be able to help you."*

To figure out your WIG, ask yourself, "If every other area of our operation remained at its current level of performance, what is one area where change would have the greatest impact?" Don't ask yourself what's most important, as you might pick a random responsibility. In reality, your WIG will only account for 20% of your time. The whirlwind (a.k.a. your daily tasks) will still take up most of your time. Sometimes you'll find your WIG within the whirlwind itself (e.g. reducing extravagant costs) but it may also come from outside (e.g. introducing a new product or service).

### Discipline 2: Act on the Lead Measures

People tend to focus too much on results instead of what led to them. By the time you measure results, you cannot change them! Your monthly reports or yearly revenue are **lag measures**.

Instead, focus on **lead measures**: the things you *do* to reach the goal. For instance, with fitness, exercise & diet are your lead measures while physique & strength are your lag measures. Lead measures must be both:

1. *Predictive*: They must be likely to achieve the goal.
2. *Influenceable*: They must be directly controllable.

Your lead measures will generally be defined daily or weekly, which provides ample time to adjust as necessary. They may be more difficult to quantify than lag measures, but they must be measured quantitatively.

*"In the end, it's the **data** on lead measures that makes the difference, that enables you to close the gap between what you know your team should do and what they are actually doing."*

### Discipline 3: Keep a Compelling Scoreboard

Team engagement will only grow when the players can *see* the effects of their efforts. Therefore, always keep a highly visible scoreboard of lead and lag measures.

1. It must be simple and show only the relevant data.

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