4DX - The 4 Disciplines of Execution

Dienstag, 22. Juli 2025 19:03

Summary

4DX describes a theory for managing organisations for maximum efficiency.
It describes the 4 Disciplines mentioned by the author, which propell execution and how to install them in teams.

General Ideas

- As a leader you can influence only two things:
  The **Strategy** or plan and the **Ability of the team** to execute
- To achieve something you have never achieved before you must do things you have never done before
- People want to win. They want to contribute to somethimg that matters
- The people are not the problem. The system is.

- ### There are two types of strategy

Stroke-of-the-pen:	Evey change that can be done by simply ordering it to happen
Behavioral-change:	Every change that requires people to change behaviour

The Whirlwind	= All day to day work that is necessary to keep the operation running but keeps you from achieving change. • The urgent tasks that pop up • The never ending flow of new things to do • The real enemy of execution is the whirlwind

- You can't talk your way out of a situation you have behaved yourself into!

4 Disciplines of Execution

1. Focus on Wildly Important

= Focus only on a few very important things

- Have as few goals as possible
- **Wildly Important Goals (WIG)** = the most important few goals you want to follow
- Many goals are important but you can only focus on a few especially important ones at a time
- WIGs have to be achieved in spite of the whirlwind

- Look for the thing that would have the greatest impact if being changed
- Look for the fundamental mission of the organization
- Most WIGs are not urgent but important

Defining WIGs

- There can be one larger WIG of the organization and smaller, more specific ones for the different teams
  But, they have to be aligned
- The people and teams have to decide for themselves what their WIGs are. Management should only have a veto

- Start with a verb
- Focus on what not how
- WIGs must have a clear outcome in the form of
  From X to Y by When

Installing D1

1. Consider different WIGs and their consequences if pursued
   Get Input from team members and other leaders
2. Brainstorm Lead Measures for the ideas
3. Rank the ideas by impact to the overall WIG or your mission
4. Define the WIG in one clear sentence

2. Act on Lead Measures

= Find what you can actually DO to get closer to your goals

Lag Measure:	=The actual measure you want to change E.g. Quarterly sales increased
Lead Measure:	= An activity that can be clearly measured and brings you closer to the goal E.g. doing 100 sales calls a day • A lead measure is the controllable input to what you do for achieving a goal • A good lead measure predicts the outcome of achieving the goal and can be influenced by the team

- You can't control how often your car breaks down (Lag Measure) but you can control how often you do maintanance (Lead Measure)
- Focus on the Lead Measures
- Define the Actiony that you have to take to influence the Lag Measure
- Commit to a defined amount for how you want to act on your Lead Measure (e.g. Do 100 Sales Calls a day)
- Lead Measures are about finding the activity that has the most impact or leverage on the goal and acting on that

- Let the team measure their input to the Lead Measure.
  See if the Lag Measure changes positively.
  If not, do more or define other Lead Measures.

- If some employees perform better than others, look what they do differently and make it a Lead Measure for the team
- It will be obvious if performance on them is lagging, if Lead and Lag Measures are measured regularly
- If you face pushback, they don't know how or why or they don't believe the Lead Measure will change something.
  Engage them in the definition process and explain how/why

Defining a Lead Measure

- Use simple Verbs
- What comes after "we will..." is enough to state the Lead Measure
- State How much/how often and how consistently it has to be perfomed
- Define a standard for how well it needs to be done

Installing D2

1. Brainstorm Ideas for Lead Measures
2. Brainstorm methods to measure them
3. Rank the ideas according to impact on the WIG
4. Test the ideas

3. Keep a Scoreboard

= Keep a Scoreboard that engages the team emotionally

- Any time the team has to see if they are winning or loosing
  Make it accessible
- Keep the most relevant data for the team to track their success on a scoreboard
- Make it simple. You should understand in a 5 seconds if you are winning or not
- Involve the team in creating the board
- Keep it updated. Define someone responsible for updating and a cadence when to update it

A Scoreboard should contain

The WIG:	1. Written (from X to Y by when) 2. Graph showing the Lag Measure compared to the goal as a timeline (Trend Lines, Bar chart, Andon, etc)
Lead Measure:	1. Written as a simple instruction 2. As a Table for people to track their input
Lead Measure:	1. Written as an achievable an measurable goal 2. Trendline with the goal and actual value

4. Create a Cadence of Accountability

= Hold the team accountable in regular meeting sessions (WIG Sessions) where only the commitments are tracked and discussion is made on reaching the WIG

- At least weekly meetings
- <20min long
- Let the team members commit to one or two things to do for driving the WIG
- Let the team make their own commitments
- Hold them accountable to do so until next meeting, no matter what
- The meeting should be held the same day and time every week
- NEVER allow the whirlwind or discussion about it to enter the meeting
- The Leader should clear the path fot the team to achieve their commitments
- The Leader should set a standard by participating and following the rules

The WIG Sesson has 3 Phases

1. Report:	everyone presents their results from the week
2. Review:	The scoreboard is reviewed and compared to the goal
3. Plan:	The next actions and commitments are planned. Everyone commits to 1 or 2 things that have to be done, no matter what

- Engagement of each team member is created by them commiting to their own goals and seeing the impact they are having

3 Reasons for low enagement

1. Anonymity:	They feel their leaders don't know or care what they are doing.
2. Irrelevance:	They don't understand how their job makes a difference.
3. Immeasurement:	They cannot measure the contribution they are making toward the goal.

- Commitments need to have a clear task to do and influence the lead measure

If the Commitments are neglected

1. Show respect for the person and their daily struggle
2. Reinfoce the importance of the commitments and the importance of the role they play
3. Offer to clear the path for execution and for them to commit doing both the neglected and new commitment until the next meeting

5 Stages of Change

1. Getting Clear	2. Launch	3. Adoption	4. Optimization	5. Habits
• Commit to a new level of perfomance • Set clear WIGs • Set up a Scoreboard • Commit to WIG Sessions	• Have a formal Kickoff Meeting • Make the leader heavily involved	• Favor adherence over results • Make commitments and hold accountable	• Start optimizing • Celebrate success	• The execution process becomes a habit

What Employees should think about the team

- I know what is expected of me at work.
- I understand how my efforts contribute to our overall success.
- The organization encourages my personal and career development.
- I receive timely and constructive feedback.
- Leadership communicates and explains key decisions.
- The organization values my opinion.
- I know what's happening in the organization because leadership keeps me informed.
- I enjoy coming to work.
- I regularly receive recognition or praise for my contributions.
- I am treated fairly at work.
- Individuals on my team are held accountable for results.
- Leadership follows through on their promises.
- I have the resources I need to do my best work.
- Because the team is aligned around a WIG and pursuing lead measures with shared accountability, team cooperation and synergyare maximized.
- I trust the leaders of our organization.