
FOUR HURDLES TO STRATEGY EXECUTION

Once a company has developed a blue ocean strategy with a profitable business model, the next challenge is strategy execution. The challenge of execution exists, of course, for any strategy. Companies, like individuals, often have a tough time translating thought into action whether in red or blue oceans. But, compared with red ocean strategy, this can be especially difficult for blue ocean strategy as it represents a significant departure from the status quo.

To varying degrees, companies may face four types of hurdles to strategy execution. Knowing how to triumph over these organizational hurdles is key to successful strategy execution. W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne developed four hurdles to strategy execution:

- **The Cognitive Hurdle:** Waking employees up to the need for a strategic shift. Red oceans may not be the paths to future profitable growth, but they may have served the organization well historically, so why rock the boat?
- **The Resource Hurdle:** It is assumed that the greater the shift in strategy, the greater the resources it requires for execution.
- **The Motivational Hurdle:** How do you motivate key players to move fast and tenaciously to carry out a break from the status quo?
- **The Political Hurdle:** As one manager put it, “In our organization you get shot down before you stand up.”

Cognitive

An organization wedded to the status quo

Resource

Limited Resources

Political

Opposition from powerful vested interests

Motivational

Unmotivated Staff

© Kim & Mauborgne. All rights reserved.

Although all companies face different degrees of these hurdles and some may face only a subset of the four, to overcome these effectively companies must abandon perceived wisdom about effecting change.

Conventional wisdom asserts that the greater the change, the greater the resources and time you will need to bring about results. Instead, blue ocean strategy flips this conventional wisdom on its head by using what we call tipping point leadership. Tipping point leadership allows you to overcome the four hurdles fast and at low cost while winning employees' backing in executing a break from the status quo.

