



The Strategy Trap

Why Companies Fail at Execution and How to Get It Right

by Kevin Ertell



Non-Fiction - Marketing

200 Pages

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Book Review

Reviewed by Romuald Dzemo for Readers' Favorite

Kevin Ertell's *The Strategy Trap* answers the question: Why do most companies fail to execute their strategies? The book examines the disturbing reality that 90% of companies fail to successfully execute their key strategies and often fail in a spectacular manner, as evidenced by Ron Johnson's disastrous turnaround for JCPenney. The author uses his extensive experience at Borders, Sur La Table, and Nike to argue that this failure to execute is not because the strategies are poorly conceived but because leaders consider execution as some sort of mechanical afterthought rather than a process of sustained discipline. The book discusses the Six Cs framework as the tool for bridging boardroom vision and operational reality and success, expounding on co-creation, clarity, capacity, communication, coordination, and coaching during showtime.

Kevin Ertell uses compelling analogies, from Derek Sivers' "idea multiplier" concept to Lin-Manuel Miranda's development of *Hamilton*, to demonstrate how successful execution works, underlining that collaborative preparation and creative rigor are key elements of strategy. Many areas of the book kept me rooting for this author's ideas, and one of them was the idea of "slowing down to speed up." The author uses the Monkey Cage Sessions to illustrate the power of co-creation. The unique angle of *The Strategy Trap* is its actionable specificity. The author provides concrete tools, such as what he calls premortems, to diagnose and anticipate failure. Change Captains is a tool to help drive cultural adoption, and Accountability Charts help to eliminate ambiguity. This book is written in a conversational tone and infused with clarity, which allows readers to know exactly what is required to make strategies successful. It is a perfect read for business owners and leaders.