

# What is the Biggest Problem Facing Your Business Today?

by Gary Tomlinson

Learning from the school of hard knocks can be very informing, but often the tuition is too high! We should learn from other people's experiences. The purpose of this column is to share great business wisdom from the experiences of authors like Jim Collins, Michael Gerber, Gary Harpst, Michael LeBoeuf, Ron Willingham, Stephen M.R. Covey and others. Because when you combine great business education with your own business experiences the outcome you'll receive is far greater than the sum of its parts.

The wisdom of Gary Harpst's *Six Disciplines Execution Revolution* has been chosen to share with you this week. What is the biggest problem facing your business today? Is it the economy? Is it cash flow? Is it the competition? Is it strategy? Is it execution? Regardless of your answer, Gary Harpst believes "what most business leaders think their greatest challenge is, *isn't*. And, whatever their problems are today, they'll be different tomorrow and they will be bigger too." Harpst goes on to say "there is one business problem that if solved, will make solving all other problems easier." In his book, *Execution Revolution*, Harpst is "suggesting that excellence is the enduring pursuit of balanced strategy and execution. Strategy requires choosing what promises to make to all stakeholders and a roadmap for delivering on those promises. Execution requires getting there, while overcoming unending surprises. Of the two, execution is far more difficult to achieve, but is fruitless without solid strategy. Learning how to balance these two is the key to excellence. Excellence is a journey that never ends. It's an enduring pursuit that requires an enduring approach."

*Execution Revolution* is his follow up book to *Six Disciplines for Excellence* which may be the best book on "how to achieve and sustain organizational excellence." Recently, I had the opportunity of interviewing Gary Harpst:

**Tomlinson:** Your first book, *Six Disciplines for Excellence*, is a highly regarded strategy execution methodology. Why did you write *Execution Revolution*?

**Harpst:** When I wrote *Six Disciplines for Excellence* we were trying to help businesses understand a basic step by step methodology to create an environment of lasting excellence. A lot of businesses are able to have a period of good growth and good profitability but not many are able to sustain it.

The mission of our company was to document basic step by step methodologies to help organizations achieve and sustain lasting change. The purpose of *Execution Revolution* was to help business leaders understand that their biggest problem isn't the problem that is right in front of them, it's building an organization that knows how to draft a plan and execute it. A company that knows how to do that can solve any problem. It's a perspective change.

**Tomlinson: What would you want the readers to take away from your new book?**

**Harpst:** There are several key messages we want readers to take away from *Execution Revolution*. The first and most important message is there is one business problem that, if solved, makes solving all other problems easier. Knowing how to plan and execute, while overcoming “today’s surprises” is the most foundational capability any organization can have.

The idea of balancing strategy and execution is not new. By far execution is the hardest to achieve. It is the place where most businesses fail. We are on the cusp of a new way of attacking this very old problem. Execution has always been and always will be a problem. However, there is a paradigm shift coming. Leaders of small and mid-sized businesses now have an opportunity to go from almost no system to a new category in the excellence industry - a complete strategy execution program that puts everything needed for a balanced strategy execution together in one affordable combination. *Execution Revolution* gives hope that the problem of execution can be dealt with.

Harpst’s book *Six Disciplines Execution Revolution* is a breakthrough achievement. It is a serious book for anyone who is serious about improving their business. To learn more about Harpst’s *Execution Revolution* you can download my 20 page book report by going to [www.gary-tomlinson.com](http://www.gary-tomlinson.com) and clicking on “Book Reports.” Enjoy the education and feel free to share it with others because as Alvin Toffler says; “The illiterate of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”

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