How to Complete 100% of Your Team's Weekly To Dos Every Time

Mike Kotsis, EOS Implementer in Michigan, has this insight on getting more done and a neat idea at the end.

Gene

Are you frustrated that everything isn't getting done from one meeting to the next? You're not alone! Many of my client leadership teams have expressed similar frustrations over the last year. Frustrations were cropping up in two main areas that had a low completion percentage:

- Rocks – the priorities that people committed to over the last 90 days
- To Dos – 7-day action items that come out of weekly meetings

Teams were only seeing completion rates of 40-50% of their To Dos, but they drastically increased their weekly completion percentage to 90%+ consistently.

Want to see your team's completion rate skyrocket like that? Here are 7 steps to getting all of your team's To Dos done every week.

1) Prioritize Your Issues First

Some of my clients' teams had lengthy issues lists, and they got into the habit of tackling the issues from top to bottom. But because of the number of issues, they only made it part way through the list. Sometimes they would fill up their plates with too much stuff for the week, but the tasks weren't always the most important use of their time. They just wanted to get the stuff crossed off the list.

The problem was that some of the most important items were at the bottom of the list, and they never got to them. This caused more work and reduced effectiveness, because the issues lingered without resolution.

Always solve the most important issues first. These are the things keeping your business from becoming its best. Prioritize the most important issues to solve first and tackle them in that order.

2) Ask the Question

One team realized that a particular issue was much bigger than they had originally thought, yet they still pushed forward with resolution. They didn't ask the question, "Is it one of the most important things we need to do right now, or can it wait until next quarter?"

Hindsight is 20/20. When they looked back on it, they realized it could have waited. Instead, they tried tackling something in a week's time-frame that was impossible to resolve in a week. On top if it all, the issue wasn't the most important thing to be done right then. It could have waited.

Now they know how to compartmentalize their issues to a long-term issues list.

3) Create SMART To Dos

Another reason why the teams' To Dos weren't getting done is that they weren't SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely

The To Dos weren't defined in a way that made it clear what exactly needed to be done in the next week. Taking the time to clearly define what needs to be done, and wording it to be SMART, is essential for everyone to be on the same page.

4) Embrace the Pause

When teams decide what needs to be done and they capture the To Dos, I've noticed they often continue talking while one person writes down the action item. The note-taker is frequently interrupted, and part of the To Do often gets misworded, or missed entirely!
Make sure everyone in the room pauses conversation for the 5-15 seconds it takes to get it down on paper.

5) Echo Each To Do

Even after pausing to write the To Do, it could still be written differently from what others thought it should be. Have the To Do writer echo the task back to the group. They should reread exactly what they've written to make sure everyone is clear on what needs to be done.

6) Recap the To Dos

Save five minutes at the end of your meeting to recap the entire To Do list and state who owns each of the items. This reminds everyone what they've committed to for the next week, and gives a final opportunity for any extra clarification or rewording that's needed before everyone hits the ground running for the next week.

7) Put Skin in the Game

This step was a game changer for several teams. In these cases, the teams committed to one another that if they didn't complete their To Dos, they would put money on the table for each incomplete To Do. In one team's case, they agreed to deposit $20 for each missed To Do into a central jar, which would be donated to a charity. With skin in the game, they challenged one another on each of the other six areas each week.

As a result, I've seen teams go from an ongoing 40% completion rate to a 95% To Do completion. And it's been consistent for the last 6+ months since making these simple and practical changes.

Learn from other teams' mistakes and successes – raise your weekly meeting To Do completion, and use these seven tips to make your team more productive!

Want more helpful tips on getting To Dos done? Check out this video on this video on compartmentalizing your business.

Keep Moving!

Gene Moorhead
Qualified EOS Implementer

Davmoor
Direct Line: (334) 717-7042
Website: www.davmoor.com

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