

In business, the adage “it starts at the top” can prompt an uncomfortable question:

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wants is an inability to get everyone on the same page, aligned and executing their strategy.

“I’ve witnessed CEOs struggle with this question: “Why is it so difficult to execute what I already know I should be doing?”” says Mark E. Green, a speaker, coach to CEOs and author of *Activators: A CEO’s Guide to Clearer Thinking and Getting Things Done* (www.Activators.biz). “They and their teams generally know what to do and how to get it done. But they avoid the decisions and actions they know could advance their success.

“All roads lead back to obstacles within your mind. New behaviors leading to execution require new ways of thinking.”

Green lists five ways for CEOs to change behaviors that obstruct them from leading their company efficiently and effectively:

- **If/when, then.** Green points to a study on influencing behavior by German researchers, who found that formulating an “if/when, then” plan – stating a specific time to accomplish a task – provided a cue to provoke the desired response. “I’ve worked with many CEOs who were not classically trained in accounting and finance and are overwhelmed by numbers,” Green says. “Such fears drove them to avoid financial information and reports. Making an if/when, then statement compels them to change the behavior.”
- **Relate and repeat.** To change, one needs to believe that change is possible. “Cultivate relationships with those who can help you see that the change you desire is attainable,” Green says. “Then repeat by testing out the new behavior or thought pattern and seeking feedback.”
- **Know when to say no.** As the company leader, being a giver is important – but not to the point where sacrifice damages your own performance. “Credible research

shows that high-performing givers knew when to say no,” Green says. “Track your

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our progress and fuels our fears. If you can keep the 80/20 Rule in mind, you can reduce your fears and accomplish more.”

- **Hold yourself accountable.** One way CEOs and entrepreneurs can judge their performance is by asking themselves self-assessment questions daily. “You need accountability strategies that require you to evaluate your progress and focus on the importance of your goals,” Green says.

“Often, the best way to modify a behavior is just to jump in,” Green says. “Seek out examples of the behaviors you want to employ, embrace some discomfort, and emulate them until they begin to feel natural.”

Small Business

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