

What Type of Senior Executive are You?¹

Firefighter, counselor, implementer or strategy leader.

In our forthcoming book [FOCUS](#), we present four types of senior executives leading companies: Firefighters, implementers, counselors, and strategy leaders.

Firefighter

Firefighter executives are typically turnaround artists. They swoop in to turn around a messy situation, making it stable. The owner of a small company suffered health issues immediately after it was acquired by a private equity group. The group brought in a CEO to smooth the transition and stabilize the acquired firm. Business schools hire interim deans till a search is completed. After [UBER](#) fired its CEO, a firefighter CEO was installed while the company searched for a new CEO. Firefighting executives don't have a mandate to contribute to the firm's long-term strategy.

Implementer

A senior executive who is an implementer performs key tasks with competence and fidelity with minimal supervision. Such an executive believes their role is to manage, manage but not lead. The executive manages a company objective through completion. For example, a private equity fund retained a chief technology officer whose job was to review and fix the IT infrastructure of an acquired company within nine months. The implementer's goal is to narrow the scope of their remit, make it precise, deliver on time, and remain within budget.

Counselor

Some senior executives view their role as primarily developing and mentoring younger or inexperienced team members, acting as their coach or counselor. Inventors and entrepreneurs who launch companies can benefit from mature executives who can be their counselors. Counselors can act as executive coaches, help manage and smooth interpersonal relationships among executives, build executive teams through hiring, empower others to act, and build engagement and teamwork. They typically delegate strategy to others, focusing on interpersonal relationships, personalities, and conflict management.

Strategy leader

A strategy-leader adds value by enabling senior executives to develop a focused and sequenced strategy. At times they can firefight, counsel, and implement. But, smart strategy leaders enable others to reduce and prioritize company initiatives, and therefore focus the collective energy on implementing a clear

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strategy. The main contribution of a strategy leader is to develop and execute a simple strategy plan that helps everyone focus.

If needed, the strategy-leader uses the HR group to counsel, taps the COO to implement, and enables other senior executives to firefight when needed.

Focus: How to Plan Strategy and Improve Execution to Achieve Growth is available for pre-order on all leading bookstores including Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

The book assesses the strategy challenges faced by executives in formulating strategy and driving execution. The authors present seven inhibitors of strategy effectiveness in companies large and small as well as seven actionable research-based strategy enablers to fine tune execution and rally all the stakeholders in a unified direction.