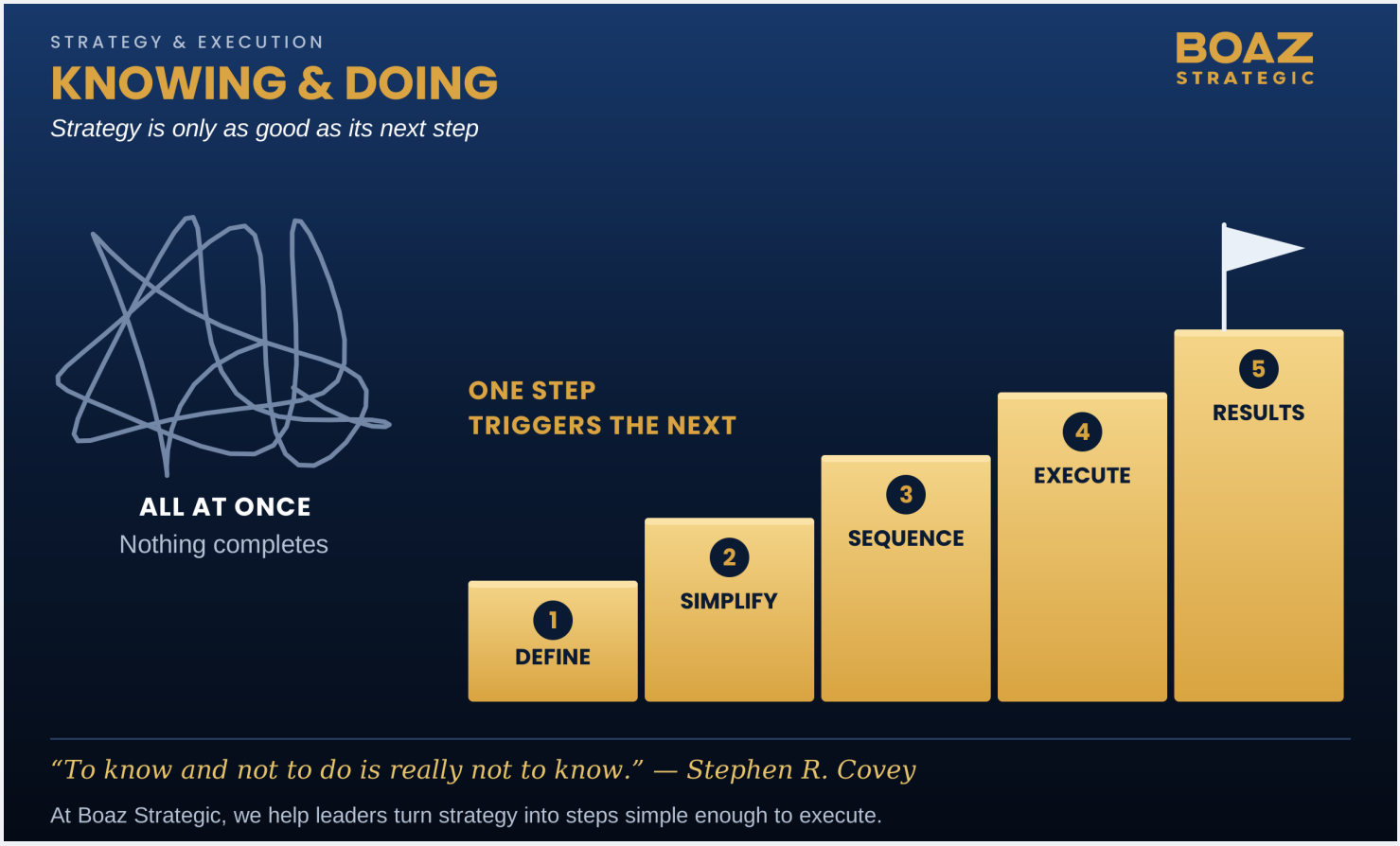


Stop collecting knowledge, *start executing it.*

> *To know and not to do is really not to know. — Stephen R. Covey*

Most leaders do not have a knowledge problem. They have read the books, attended the offsites and approved the plan. What separates organizations that perform from those that merely plan is less glamorous: the ability to turn what they know into what they do.

Knowing without doing is not knowing.

Stanford's Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert Sutton called this the knowing-doing gap, and they found it in company after company: talk substitutes for action, and plans substitute for results. The cost is measurable. Writing in Harvard Business Review, Michael Mankins and Richard Steele found that most companies deliver only 63 percent of the financial value their strategies promise.

Strategy without execution is an expensive opinion. Every plan has to carry its own path to action, or it never leaves the whiteboard it was written on.

Think of it like code.

Run every command in a program at once and it fails instantly: no structure, no order, nothing completes. Run the same commands in order, and each step triggers the next until the whole program runs clean.

Strategy works the same way. Define it in plain terms. Simplify it into small steps. Sequence them so each one sets up the next. Then execute one step at a time and let the results accumulate.

Try it on your own plan. Write down the next three actions, who owns each, and what must finish before the next can start. If you cannot, the plan is not finished yet.

A strategy is not real until it is a sequence someone can actually run.

At Boaz Strategic, we help leaders turn strategy into steps simple enough to execute.

Pfeffer & Sutton, The Knowing-Doing Gap, 2000; Mankins & Steele, HBR, July 2005

© 2026 Boaz Strategic, LLC. You are welcome to share this Leader Insight in full and unaltered, with credit to Boaz Strategic (boazstrategic.com). Please do not sell or modify it without written permission.