

SETTING BUSINESS GOALS ONE BITE AT A TIME!

*“Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.”
Hannah More (British Philanthropist)*

Everyone has goals although we don't always refer to them as goals! There are two basic types of goals. Short-term goals, quite often referred to as objectives, particularly in the business environment. Longer-term goals may include the completion of a major project or milestone in a company business plan.

The majority of our goals cannot be achieved overnight. Regardless of the goal type we must face reality and understand that in order to achieve our goals we must make a conscious effort to work towards them.

Why is goal setting so important? Goal setting gives us a sense of purpose about what we want in our lives – for ourselves and for our company. Without dreams and aspirations, individuals live life by just 'getting by', rarely accomplishing anything significant. Setting goals provides us with a road map for our business whether the journey is a short trip (like going to the corner store), or one that requires many months or years to reach our destination. We know that road maps provide us direction, and they help us get back on track when we get lost or stray off our course. Achieving goals is fulfilling and it gives us a sense of accomplishment – the feeling of a job well done – the feelings of look what I did!

Goal setting effects our every day business lives like making sales calls, performing administrative work or developing a marketing plan. Each one requires some form of goal setting to achieve the end result we desire.

Here is an example of a long-term goal and some ideas on how to achieve it. Let's say you want to increase your current revenues by 200% in twelve months time. This could be a pretty big goal for some individuals but not impossible.

Let's start by using the analogy of a large pizza. Could you eat a large pizza by yourself? The answer is yes! But, you cannot eat the pizza by shoving the whole pizza in your mouth all at once. You can however, eat the whole pizza over several sittings or one slice at a time! So invite you to think of your larger goals as a pizza consisting of a number of slices. Each one of those slices represents a smaller goal, objective, task or project that moves you towards the big goal of eating the whole pizza.

Okay let's get back to increasing your revenues by 200%. Let's say you want to achieve this goal one year from now. What will you have to do to make this a reality? Much will depend on what you are doing right now versus where you will need or want to be doing to make your goal a reality. How big is the gap? In this case it is 200%. What do you need to do to close the gap? What are the smaller goals required to reach the larger goal?

To increase your revenues you'll have to do some pretty serious marketing of yourself and your services. Your first smaller goal might be to determine whom you want to target – new clients – more business from current clients (your first slice of the pizza). Next you will need to determine where to find those new clients (your second slice of the pizza). Maybe you will need to expand your marketing efforts to include more or new networking opportunities – what will they be (your third slice of the pizza). Next you may want to fine tune your calling pattern as to how many calls daily, weekly, monthly, etc. you will make (the fourth, fifth, sixth, etc. slice of the pizza). Okay I think you've grasped the concept of the pizza analogy.

For each of these smaller goals set a target date by which you want to achieve this part of the overall goal. Its important to recognize that good long-term planning supports long-term goals. Remember the old expression, slow and steady wins the race. The same applies to achieving your goals.

Here are some tips on how to achieve your goals.

1. Use the SMART method. What does acronym **SMART** stand for?

S – specific –

Ensure that your goal is specific – be clear on what you want to achieve. In the example it is increase revenues by 200% over the next 12 months.

M – measurable –

How will you measure your progress? How will you know that you're on tack? In the example each of the smaller goals working towards the larger goal is measurable by assigning target dates of accomplishment.

A – achievable

Set a goal that is possible, even if it means pushing yourself beyond your comfort zone or it requires you to try things you have never done before. This applies to the big goal and all the smaller goals required to reaching the big goal. In the example going to new networking opportunities or making cold calls be a big stretch for some folks.

R – realistic

Ensure your goal is realistic. Don't set goals that are impossible despite all your efforts as this may discourage you from setting other goals. The increase of 200% may seem far-fetched for some people. However, I believe that anything is possible with realistic timelines.

T – timely

All goals must have a target date for completion. This target date will enable you to establish milestones against how you will measure your progress. With the example

we set a target date of one year. However, the time frame could be different. This is where the realistic part comes in.

2. Written goals are achieved goals!

A goal in your head quite often just stays there. It is a thought with little or no action. Written goals assist you in being clear about what you want to do, staying focused on your goal and avoiding the obstacles that can get in your way.

I know one individual who sets personal and professional annual goals for themselves. They have them written in the front day planner and they read their goals every morning. By reading them daily it reminds them what their purpose is and helps them ensure that their daily activities and actions are moving them towards their big goal or goals. I don't need to tell you how successful they are! They never cease to amaze me with their accomplishments, particularly their business ones.

I know another individual who writes a letter to themselves every year on their birthday. In the letter they outline the goals they plan to accomplish over the next 12-months. Next they schedule time over the next year in their planning tool for the various smaller goals required to reach the larger goal. Knowing the letter awaits them in one-year's time gives them the motivation they need to ensure they continually move towards their goals. They not only celebrate their birthday but their accomplishments as well. What a nice gift to give yourself.

Conclusion

Rome was not built in a day nor will all your goals be achieved in a day. So, do not become discouraged by the enormity of some of your goals. A successful and fruitful life is a succession of accomplishments. Your lifetime or long-term goals are attainable through a succession of short-term goals. Remember, anything is possible when you're clear about what you want and you know how to devour this pizza!

Happy goal setting!

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