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T: 01235 770791  
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## **Using Goal Setting to Focus Our Success by Tony Atkins, Director of Advanced Training**

### **Goal Setting for Direction**

Why should we set our-self goals? Done properly, goal setting is a powerful tool. By knowing and clarifying our objectives, we are better able to identify priorities to help us to achieve. By having a goal and building a desire for its achievement we create drive inside our-self.

Leading psychologists have long since regarded the human brain as a highly complex, automatic goal setting mechanism. This means that each of us has an automatic success mechanism - called our Reticular Activating System. This is the part of our brain that spots things we have raised into our consciousness and have given a value. All we have to do, to make this mechanism work correctly, is to provide a clearly defined target that it can work towards.

Adopting a goal setting focus in business helps people to recognise how achieving company objectives will assist in the achievement of their personal objectives.

### **The Goal Setting Process**

For the brain to work towards a goal, the goal has to be precise so that our Reticular Activating System can recognise opportunities for us to move towards our goal.

There is a recognised twelve-step process for effectively setting our goals.

### **Step 1 - Be In control**

We need to commit ourselves to be controllers. We need to recognise that we can control our reactions and behaviour towards events.

Everyone gets hit with adversity. It can be an excuse for non-achievement, or be regarded as just another hurdle to be overcome.

### **Step 2 - Decide our purpose**

Success is not the same for everyone. Different people want different things out of life.

We need to decide our long-term purpose for every aspect of our life that is important to us. For example, such aspects of life as, personal, family, health, work, social, career, education, hobbies/recreation, retirement and spiritual.

Once we have decided our overall purpose for every aspect of our life, we have defined where we want to be in say twenty years time. We now need a time plan.

To achieve our purpose in twenty years, we need to decide where will we need to be in ten years? To get there in ten years, where will we need to be in five years? To get there in five years, where will we need to be in two years? To get there in two years, what should we achieve this year?

### **Step 3 - List all our real wants**

This list should be comprehensive and include both the tangible and intangible.

Partners should do this first as individuals and then together, to ensure they are pulling in the same direction. These wants should not conflict with our long-term purpose.

### **Step 4 - Select primary goals**

For each want, we select a primary goal that is achievable in months rather than years.

It has to be realistic, yet set high enough to be worth attaining and create excitement.

## **Step 5 - Define primary goals in comprehensive detail**

We have to define each goal in comprehensive detail.

For our automatic mechanism - our Reticular Activating System - to work effectively, the target has to be clearly focused. Not just fitter, but how much fitter? Do we want to be:

- able to do 20 press-ups or 50?
- able to run a 100 metres in what time?

Not just a car, but what car - make, model, colour, extras?

## **Step 6 - Believe it**

Aim as far as we can see. We will always see more when we get there. We can believe what we can see.

Remember the quotation, "*What the mind of a man can perceive, man can achieve*". Psychologists now agree that this quotation is not only true, but can be expanded to, "*What the mind of man can accurately conceive, it is forced to achieve*".

We need to truly believe that our goal is achievable. Otherwise, it becomes a dream that we never attain.

## **Step 7 - Desire it**

It is our desire, not our ability that determines our success. When we set a goal we really must desire it.

We build that desire when we define it in great detail. We build it more when we work on ourselves to believe we can achieve it.

We must constantly remind ourselves of the benefits of achieving it. As soon as our desire wears off the chances of achieving it are zero.

## **Step 8 - Imagine it**

To keep our desire, we need to imagine we have already attained the goal.

Imagine being fitter. What it feels like to be that fit. Use the power of our imagination.

If we put ourselves there in our mind, our sub-conscious will strive to get there.

## **Step 9 - Set a deadline for the completion of each goal**

A goal without a deadline is useless.

The chances of achieving it are remote. Setting a deadline develops urgency in ourselves.

## **Step 10 - Write all goals down**

Writing our goals down helps us to really understand what we want to achieve. It also forces us to define them in great detail.

Written goals are a constant reminder to us. They:

- put purpose into our every day activity
- make us enthusiastic
- keep us organised
- ensure we differentiate between activity and real achievement
- make extra effort easier.

## **Step 11 - Establish our starting position**

Having established our goals, we need to evaluate our current position and circumstances to determine what, and where, extra effort is required.

We need to really believe that the effort is both worthwhile and possible. Otherwise, we need to drop the goal, as we will not try to achieve it.

## **Step 12 - Do it**

It is clearly very important to enjoy the process of achieving and not just the achievement alone. We all wish to enjoy life as we live it and not just at the end when we have achieved. Indeed, this may be a goal we adopt.

We need to put in the effort and be prepared to pay the price of success as we achieve our goals. There is always a price to be paid.

The price of success is paid in instalments of effort as we progress. The price of failure is far greater and is paid in one lump sum towards the end, when we realise we did not achieve and are sadly reduced to thinking "if only .....".

**Note**

Tony Atkins will welcome the opportunity to discuss any views or comments prompted by this article. He can be contacted on his direct line number 0118 979 2533, or by email at [tony.atkins@a-t.co.uk](mailto:tony.atkins@a-t.co.uk).

Advanced Training will be happy to discuss your specific business needs and help you to deliver the right development for your people.