

Setting Achievable Goals

Setting goals in business and life is essential to give you a sense of direction and shape what you do and what your business will become.

In 1979 a group of Harvard graduates were asked how many of them had written goals and action plans for their achievement

- 3% had clearly defined goals
- 13% had unwritten goals
- 84% had no goals in any shape or form

The 1989 follow up showed that the 3% who had written goals were ten times more successful than the other 97% who had not.

To achieve in your business you must have a clear sense of direction. You must decide exactly what you want, what is important to you and how do these fit with your values.

The trouble with not having a goal is that you can spend your life running up and down the field and never score.

Bill Copeland

When clearly defined and compatible with one another, setting goals will help you achieve success in your business, whilst enabling you to succeed in other areas of your life such as having a good work life balance or having the freedom to pursue your creative aspirations.

How clearly defined are your goals for your business?

We are probably all familiar with the SMART goal setting acronym. Here is SMART goal setting, but with some important additions.

S

Be as **SPECIFIC** as possible. What do you see, hear or feel when you imagine your goal achieved. The more vivid the image the more powerful it will be. Can you easily explain it to someone else? I want to be more profitable is not specific; how much more profit do you want to make, before tax or after tax, by what date.....

As well as being specific, goals must be **STRETCHING**. Is your goal something that will get you further forward, but still provide an element of challenge?

M

Goals must be **MEASURABLE** so you can quantify your progress and track it. What **MILESTONES** will you set?

Any goal you set must be **MOTIVATIONAL** too - What will achieving your goal get you? How well does it fit in with your values and what's important to you? Does it inspire you? Will it give you a sense of accomplishment on achievement? If not, then the chances of you achieving it are slim!

A

Getting a balance between being stretching and motivational and at the same time being **ACHIEVABLE** is key. Unobtainable goals will have a negative impact. But it is important that they are **ACTIONABLE** by you, not dependent on others' actions out of your control.

R

How **RELEVANT** are your goals to you? Your goals need to fit in with all areas of your life. A goal that is incompatible will mean inevitably that something will have to give.

Once you are happy with your goals ensure you **RECORD** them. As a minimum ensure they are written down. Better still, draw your goals making them as vivid as possible, and add lots of colour, too. Share them with others, so that they can encourage you. Then keep your goals in front of you to remind yourself constantly and keep you focused; then **REVIEW** them every day.

T

When wording your goals specify what you are moving **TOWARDS** rather than what you want to avoid. Your brain finds it difficult to process negatives, so by concentrating too much on what you want to avoid actually focuses the brain on this rather than what you want instead.

Finally, your goal must be **TRACKABLE** (including **TIMESCALES**) so you can review at any time how well you are on track. We all know the results of leaving everything to the last minute, so set some specific timescales when you will review progress, and schedule these into your diary.

