

# We all hate goals, so think small

**W**hy do we hate goals? We set goals for changing our life, our weight, our work and our relationships. Countless seminars show you how to set goals, make them timely, accountable and worthwhile. For one day — or maybe even a whole week — after a seminar, every attendee is setting goals and working on their accountability. After two weeks, most of us have stopped keeping track. After a month, we've given up completely. Then we spend the next six months feeling guilty and blaming ourselves for being such lazy people.

Well, it's not all your fault. These conferences set you up to fail. Like most seminars on motivation, organization and relationship building, goal seminars are meant to pump you up for the day. They want you to walk out giving them glowing reports and tell them about how good you feel. You never get a seminar evaluation form a month after the seminar, do you?

Seminars do have some value. Jim Rohn in his book, *The Art of Exceptional Living*, prods us to continue to go to seminars, conferences and training programs. He feels that if we can walk away with just one good idea, the time was well spent.

One good idea I have taken away from seminars is to use my time wisely. As a result, I do my reading while driving; I switched to audio books. So, in addition to biographies and novels, I listen to many of the prominent new business books and motivational speakers. These motivators have two specific purposes: one, to motivate you to think

about changing your life for the better; and the other, as my partner's wife Tami so aptly puts it, is "to sell you more CDs."

The problem with the motivational industry is many speakers fail to address why some of the people who set goals actually reach them. Before you can achieve any major goal, you need a life-altering epiphany. Without a personal motivating reason, one will rarely have enough drive to move themselves from their current habits and routines.

One must have a vision of clarity — a revelation — and when it happens, they have to know not to ignore it. Basically, train yourself to be aware before the bad habits take over your life.

## FOCUS ON THE STEPS NOT THE PLATEAU

Goals are dreams put into action plans. They are as individual as your personality and, frankly, most of them are achievable. Work goals, personal goals, I'll-show-them goals — find one type that motivates you and then break it down into small, achievable steps — not immense tasks. The immense change will happen once you have altered your small habits.

The old joke about "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time" reminds us of this point. Goals are easily achievable if you break them down into little steps. It is not the elephants in our lives that block our progress, but the little things we do every day that make or break our achievements.

I once asked a friend how she climbed the enormous Mayan ruins in Mexico without giving up. She said she kept her eyes on the steps, not the top. If small easy steps lead to big suc-

cesses, why don't we take them? Steps that are easy to do are also easy not to do. We convince ourselves that one missed step will not make a difference. The small easy-to-do steps, repeated consistently, can lead to fulfillment or failure.

Many times the achievement of a goal is secondary to the things you learned on the way. As Jim Rohn says: "The greatest benefit to setting goals is not reaching the end, but what it makes of you to achieve them."

## AMENDING YOUR SALES GOALS

If we go back to the idea of change only coming from a personal epiphany, we can see why people rarely achieve goals that others impose on them. People tend to rebel against what others force on them. Goals only work if they are personal to and decided by the individual. This also goes for employers and employees.

Management will often decree an increase in sales, inventory turns and quality that the whole company must attain this year. The big push lasts for about two months and then everybody goes back to what they were doing. Company goals only work if they can be personalized to the individual level.

How do you take company goals and personalize them? By working only on things we can control.

Usually companies will set a target sales goal in dollars, and then fight with the salesperson when that dollar amount is not reached. Instead we should focus on the activity and support for salespeople. The sales dollars will appear from the groundwork we have laid.

## - SALES & MARKETING -

For example, a common method of management-derived sales goals is to demand a certain number of physical sales calls in a day. To control this, management will ask the salesperson to write down everyone they visited that day. Sales people will try at first to comply, but then one sales call goes longer than normal and then another day the traffic is terrible and pretty soon they are making up companies to add to their sales reports. The idea of counting calls is sound, but the method is flawed. Do we want our salespeople to lie to us on their call reports just so they don't get in trouble for not making a certain amount of calls? Do we want them to cut off customers' questions early because they have to make two more calls today? To make sales goals work, management needs to focus on controllable factors.

Companies can control how many appointments a salesperson has scheduled in a day. Through inside telemarketing, sales support and leads, you can set appointments with customers and prospects for your salespeople. As the support people work with the in-field sales staff, a rhythm and understanding will develop. Both the company and the sales team will grow to understand the average amount of calls that can be achieved in a day.

The company can also make sure that literature is easy to get, quotes are simple to write and shipping is fast. We can control how much time in the office we require along with how many nonsales producing committees we ask the sales people to be on. We also control the tools they use: laptops, GPS devices, cell phones, literature, quote forms, office time, product quality, required reports, advertising, marketing and technical support.

We do not control the success of their appointments, if they get an order, or a competitor's pricing.

A company is often thought of as having its own

personality. Within that company personality, we need to have a company-wide epiphany on defining the true goal. Is it to control or to grow? Is our company goal focused on sales growth, profit margin, inventory turns or lean attitudes? What is the ideal customer for us and who should we be targeting?

Figure these things out, and your goals will surely be easier to meet. ■■

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