

GOALS & HOW TO ACHIEVE THEM

Including CHECKLISTS to Success



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Insights on Increasing Productivity: Effectively Set Your Goals

Are you planning a new venture? Do you aim to boost your productivity? You should start with your goals. Goals are sometimes very simple and sometimes very complicated and hard to achieve. Nobody would ever say attaining a goal would be easier than setting it. It is true. Achieving or realizing goals would prove to be very hard and arduous than actually setting and formulating them. But you need to ramp them to start bolstering your overall productivity.

That is why further focus and deliberation should be done when setting the goals. Keep productivity on your mind. Achievability and efficiency of goals should be properly set. Start at the planning and formulation of goals stage. There are a handful of goal setting tips that would certainly help you get done with the sensitive and arduous task of setting your goals, be it for the long term or even for the short-term. In the end, you would realize you are also increasing your productivity. Here are several useful guidelines.

- When setting goals for yourself, consider and know yourself really well first. That is because you should take into consideration your various skills, ability, talent, capacity, competency, and knowledge in achieving or executing your goals. If you run short of any of the mentioned concepts, chances are realizing your goals would be as hard as you could never have imagined.
- To observe clarity and organization, it would be helpful to write down your goals in a piece of paper. In doing so, make sure to include the time frame or when you want the goal to be achieved or completed and what measures you can do to achieve or accomplish such goals. That way, it would be clear to you how and for how long your efforts in achieving such goals would be.

- Make sure your goal is specific. To do so, specify or have a clear picture or idea what it is you really want to get done. If the goal is still too broad or general, simplify it further and further until you get to the specifics.
- Make sure the goal is measurable. To make it so, make it easily comparable to several set of activities or to other simpler and achieved goals. By that, the progress and development of your efforts to achieve the goals would be measurable and comparable.
- Of course, being realistic is part of the game. You would not set goals that are too impossible to achieve, right? Otherwise, it is not a goal you are setting but an impossible and impractical dream, which could only be achievable by mere chances and luck. Being realistic makes up for practical and logical goal setting.
- Set time frames. If possible, deadlines should also be imposed. You know how your body does wonders when subjected to adrenaline rush. Sometimes, deadlines are helpful because they kick you to get going and make some things done. Of course, it would not always be helpful, but try it for once. You would be surprised how your productivity is boosted because of your motivation to beat deadlines.

Key Success Skills For Goal Achievement

In this section, we are going to examine some of the most important skills you must develop to become a goal achiever.

Achiever is the key word here. We are not going to discuss the process of “goal setting” here. With the following points/steps, we are assuming that you already have set specific, measurable goals for yourself.

As you work towards fulfilling your goals, you will need to be aware of the following skills and personal characteristics that must be in place in order for you to succeed...

MOTIVATION AND WILLPOWER

Motivation is one of the most important ingredients in any project. Doesn't it make more sense that your project will be more successful if you really want to do it?

Willpower takes you a long way as a project goes on, especially when you're trying to make changes in your behavior. Many people want to accomplish a certain thing, but can't get started or lose steam as the project goes on.

Motivation and willpower can work together for successful completion of a project. For example, Frank has admired his coworker, Sue, for a long time but has been too shy to talk to her. The Christmas party is in one month. Frank thinks he could find the confidence to talk to Sue if he could lose some weight. He decides to lose 10 pounds by the Christmas party. He eats right, works out, and loses 10 pounds...and talks to Sue. Home run! Sue might have liked Frank anyway, but he would never have known if he didn't build up the confidence to talk to her.

TALKING BACK TO YOUR NEGATIVE VOICE

Negative self-talk is common; everyone does it to some extent. How successfully we talk back to it determines how successful we are in life. It's a little sneaky, though, because it comes in different forms:

- Catastrophizing: "If I don't know all the answers they want, they won't be impressed, and I won't get the loan."

- Magnifying: "This is so hard, I can't do it."
- Self-punishment: "That was the most stupid thing I did -- I'm a fool."
- Negative self-labeling: "I'm old, useless, and ugly."
- Self-pressuring: "I should," "I must," "I have to."

The first step in countering this negativity is to be aware of it. Then you can challenge it by asking yourself if it's true or justified. Finally, replace it with positive, supportive self-talk. This will give you a positive self-image and the confidence to go on with your project.

You've already made a list of your good qualities and accomplishments. Recall these and add to them when negative self-talk rears its nasty head in your mind.

ASSERTIVENESS

Even if we are self-employed, we constantly work with others in the form of customers, colleagues, employees, and outsourcers. We can react in one of four ways: being passive, being aggressive, being manipulative, and being assertive.

Being passive often means waiting for others to take action before we move on a project. This leaves the fate of your project in the hands of others. The passive person has such low self-esteem that he either automatically agrees with others or even runs away.

Being aggressive usually means that we move without considering others' feelings or ideas, which can cause resentment. Aggressive behavior is competitive; the goal is to win over others.

Being manipulative means getting what we want through devious means and making others feel guilty. It is indirect aggression.

Manipulative people fear exposure if they are direct and feel it's safer to control and manipulate rather than confronting and being rejected.

Being assertive involves having respect for the people we work with. It is rooted in high self-esteem and is most likely to give us the results we desire. We don't wait for others to act for us, we don't act without consideration for others when necessary, and we don't try to indirectly control and manipulate others. Instead, assertive people negotiate to reach win-win results.

It might surprise you to know that we all use all four patterns at times. These behaviors are established in us from an early age, and we may not be aware when we're using them. But with some awareness and determination, we can change these behaviors if we want to.

Identifying the best behavior to use in various situations can contribute substantially to the success of projects.

The way to encourage assertive behavior in yourself is to:

- Be very clear about what you want
- Feel positive about your project
- Take initiative

Thinking through what you want and planning the steps might seem time consuming, but the rewards are great.

The way to successfully behave assertively with others involves:

- Knowing clearly what you want and feel and being prepared to state that directly and simply.
- Maintaining your position steadily without giving in to manipulation or the negative behavior of others.

- Acknowledge that you hear manipulators' statements and continue with your point of view or request without becoming defensive or aggressive.
- Negotiating to achieve a win-win when there is conflict. Compromising to get the best realistic position is the right thing to do for the success of the project.

HANDLING CONFRONTATION

Sometimes situations arise where agreement hasn't been reached on legitimate differences of opinion through means other than confrontation. Continued disagreement is a saboteur of efficiency, so the issues need to be aired, but this tactic should be used with care. To skillfully approach confrontation you should

- Acknowledge the other person's point of view as legitimate
- Clearly state both positions
- Make sure that the other person agrees that both of your positions have been stated correctly
- Accept that there may be negative feelings involved on both sides and accept responsibility for your own feelings
- Ask the other person for his preferred solution.

At this point, you both may be able to begin working toward a compromise.

MANAGING YOUR ANGER AND FRUSTRATION

In most undertakings, there are times where things don't work out as we expected or where obstacles arise. If we don't deal with our anger and frustration, those negative feelings can slow us down or even derail the project. Luckily, effective strategies allow us to manage and channel our negative feelings.

1. Be aware of your feelings. This is not always easy. We've learned to deny our feelings in many cases to be socially appropriate. But feelings denied can go underground and sabotage you. Know what you're feeling and why you're feeling the way you do.
2. Then decide what to do with the feeling. It's better not to express your anger until you have control of it. First recognize it, then control it, then decide how to handle it.
3. Convert your anger to energy that powers your projects and inspires changes.
4. Express your anger (energy) in a safe form such as exercise.
5. After you are in control of it, voice your anger directly and fairly.
6. Confront the situation that caused your anger in the most constructive way you can think of.
7. After you've dealt with your anger, release it.

PLANNING

A clear plan of action with effective implementation takes us from an idea to a completed project. Planning assures that each part of a project receives proper attention.

- Understand your project thoroughly
- Know your resources -- human and material
- Be flexible in order to make changes
- Be proactive
- Schedule based on the needs of the project and your own abilities

TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management is critical to the achievement of any/all goals. Actually, if you can't master this, you absolutely won't be as successful as you could be, no matter how good you are at anything else. Time

management should be done every day with your focus on taking care of your important and urgent tasks and minimizing or delegating time sapping tasks.

An excellent management tool for time management is to create a daily action plan where you write down all of your objectives for each day, in order of priority.

Here is a simplified time-saving checklist to help you work more efficiently and effectively:

Take On Less

- Learn to say "no"
- Delegate
- Eliminate unnecessary meetings
- Don't take on issues others should be doing
- Don't get bogged down with details except when it's necessary to do so

Work Efficiently

- Make and meet deadlines
- Tackle tasks as soon as you can
- Tackle tasks when you are most alert
- Make deadlines for others who tend to procrastinate
- Keep communications short and to the point
- Make phone calls when they will save time

Work Effectively

- Make a plan and stick to it
- Be realistic

- Plan anything that will take some time -- phone calls, written communication, meetings
- Take breaks -- they revive you
- Set priorities
- Finish what you start each day

EFFECTIVE DELEGATION

If your goals are business in nature, you must learn how to effectively delegate certain tasks so that you don't become a bottleneck for growth.

The thing you must decide first is which things to delegate and which things to keep for yourself. To answer that question, you must thoroughly understand the project and its demands.

To help you do this

1. Set the objectives for the task
2. Decide on the standards you require
3. Determine the best people for the tasks and how much training they will need
4. Establish realistic deadlines
5. Set up review points to analyze the progress.

The best things to delegate:

- Routine matters
- Tasks requiring special knowledge you don't have

Things not to delegate:

- Anything you need to do personally

- Emergency tasks
- Tasks that are exceptions to the normal method of doing things
- Tasks that might have serious repercussions

HANDLING STRESS

We all have stress, and if we're not careful, it can kill us. More and more studies are showing that stress is a component in many major diseases. If we don't handle our stress, it can also cause problems in our business.

Stress comes from four sources. These are called stressors.

1. Situational stressors come from our situation, our environment, and our culture. Work would be one of these, as well as unexpected situations, bad news, change, and noise.
2. Major life events such as marriage, death, divorce, birth, ill health, or financial problems.
3. Other people can be stressors if they have unreal demands or expectations.
4. Internal stressors like perfectionism, feelings of inadequacy, or unmet needs can be the biggest stressors of the four.

Learning to handle stress can make you healthier and happier, and it can certainly help you to run your business more efficiently. The first step is identifying when you are feeling stressful. Here are the questions to ask yourself at that time:

1. What's causing this stress?
2. When does it happen?
3. What exactly am I feeling now?
4. Why am I reacting this way?
5. What can I do to reduce my feelings of stress in this particular situation?

Here are some coping behaviors to help you handle stress:

- Accept your stressful feelings. They are valuable because they tell you that something is wrong that you need to pay attention to.
- Practice coping skills like saying "no," taking initiative, developing a sense of personal power, and taking responsibility.
- Establish a supportive network of people who are interested in your well being.
- Build a healthy lifestyle which combines good nutrition, exercise, relaxation, non-smoking, and moderate alcohol and caffeine.
- Realize that there are some things that you can't control and let them go.

MAINTAINING HIGH SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is essential to resilience. It allows us to believe we can withstand all the problems of life. It definitely assists us in running our business efficiently.

There are two types of self-esteem: internal and external. Internal comes from inside you: it's what you think of yourself. External comes from what others think of you. It's not very reliable since what others think of you can change.

As your efficiency in all areas of your life grows, so will your self-esteem. In addition, there are strategies to help you increase your self-esteem:

- Take initiative
- Develop motivation and willpower
- Take risks
- Give yourself "me" time
- Challenge your negative thoughts
- Be assertive
- Celebrate your improvements

YOUR GOAL SETTING CHECKLIST

____ Define the goal in as much detail as possible so that if someone else were to read the definition, it would be totally understandable

____ Define your why - why do you want to achieve this goal

____ Tell someone about your goal (accountability partner, trusted friend)

____ Surround yourself with people who will cheer you on and/or help you achieve your goal

____ Visualize your success - create a vision board or visual chart to map your success

____ Create a business plan to achieve your goal

____ Set small incremental steps to achieve the larger goal - prioritize the steps with timelines for each

____ Set a deadline for achieving the goal

____ Manage your goal - work toward it - track and evaluate your progress

____ Measure your success

____ Celebrate your accomplishment

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