

"Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising which tempt you to believe that your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires courage."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Establishing Goals

Great leaders have a vision. When you think of people like Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Henry Ford, the Wright Brothers and Bill Gates, you cannot help but being in awe of what they created as a result of their vision. Everyone on the planet has been impacted by their inventions. These visionaries brought us light, sound, transportation and computers. Entire industries were born as a result employing millions of people throughout the world.

At the time these creative thinkers first had their vision, many doubted that it was possible to make a light bulb, telephone, car, airplane or the Windows operating system. But they did by devising a plan to bring their vision to life.

Could you imagine if they listened to the naysayers? Our lives would be so different without cell phones, tablets and laptops connecting us at all times to one another (hey, that could be a good thing!).

The point is that each of these gentlemen developed goals. They had an idea and identified what they had to do to achieve the desired result. Do you?

Most people are aware of SMART Goals which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time oriented. This process is taught in business schools and widely practiced. I believe in setting SMART goals and have done so throughout my life to keep me on track.

Clearly defining a **specific** goal is critical to accomplishing what you want. Six questions that you to consider when writing a specific goal are:

1. What exactly do I want to accomplish?
2. Why is it important (purpose or benefits) to realize this goal?
3. Where (niche area, product line, geographic location, etc.) do I want to focus?
4. Which resources need to be available?
5. Who needs to work with me?
6. When can I do what needs to be done?

Establish tangible criteria for **measuring progress** toward the attainment of each goal you set. I highly recommend setting milestones with deliverable dates to break-up the task and keep you focused. For instance, if your goal is to introduce a leadership training program to your company, some of the milestones would include: developing criteria, objectives and budget; deciding if you want to develop the program in-house or hire a consultant; looking in training resources; evaluating if the available training programs are right for your company, etc. Each of these milestones need to have a firm date in which they will be delivered.

You can **attain** almost any goal if you are both *willing* and *able* to work on it. A stretch goal, or one that is harder to obtain, is more motivational than one that is easy. To be **realistic** you need to have the human capital, talent, financial and other resources available. Establishing a **time** or date to realize your

goal will ensure you are consistently working towards it. Time frames should be specific to avoid letting business or life events stand in your way.

If my goal is to generate \$100,000 in revenue in 2015 and the average project is worth \$20,000, I know that I need to obtain five new clients. From there, I have to determine how much activity must be done to generate enough leads to win five clients based on my average close ratio. If I close 50% of the leads I generate, I have to get ten solid leads which could mean that I must meet and have a meaningful conversation with 100 executives. So my goal would be to meet 100 people in 2015 that have a need for my service. Is that acceptable? How much time would I have to invest to meet a 100 prospects? Where would I meet them? What process would I use to develop and nurture a relationship with them? All of this would need to be taken into account when I establish my SMART goal. What SMART goal is important for you to work on?