

# Using a Powerful Tool: Goal Setting

Goal setting is the most powerful tool at your disposal in the development of your organization. Used effectively, goal setting principles can greatly enhance your skill as an effective motivational leader. Throughout history strong leaders and organizations, armed with specific goals and the force of commitment, have shaped the destinies of millions. You and your organization can leave an imprint on the lives of others by setting worthwhile goals and committing to their achievement.

Effective leaders dare to make their own decisions and to direct their organization toward success. Goals create the confidence that comes from knowing where you and your team are going and how you intend to get there. Goals serve as a filter to eliminate extraneous demands. Goals bring to life a sense of order and purpose that sustains desire and motivation over a long period of time.

## Designing Your Destiny

Your organization is a unique entity. No one outside your organization can choose the direction in which you will grow. You and your team members must dream your own dreams, identify your own goals, and design your own destiny. Define a logical starting place and an ultimate destination where your goals program will lead you. With these two points clearly stated, planning how to move from where you are now to your destination is relatively simple.

1. *Where your organization stands now.* Spend some time in honest assessment and evaluation of your present level of growth in the various aspects of your organization. Organizational evaluation helps you gain insight into your present situation. You will discover some outstanding strengths and some areas of needed growth. Use this information to build on your strengths and to select challenging goals for growth.

2. *Where you want to go.* Once you have defined your present status, next decide where you want the organization to go. Identify ultimate goals for you and your team – goals that define your leadership style and the results you wish to achieve from your effort. Next, identify a number of intermediate milestones along the way to those ultimate goals.

Those short- and intermediate-range goals involve all aspects of your organization – from people and productivity to maintenance and inventory. Carefully coordinate them so they are mutually supportive and so each one builds organizational growth and progress.

Where you want the organization to go may also include the long-range career plan you choose to pursue. Perhaps your career goal is to hold one of the top leadership positions in your company for a specific number of years before retirement. To support achievement of that career goal, set specific department or team goals for this year – goals that represent your appropriate contribution to the overall goals of the organization. Success in your present job brings you closer to success in your long-range career plan.

Defining where you and your organization want to go is a continuing process. Looking far into the future toward ultimate goals includes carefully choosing where you and your team want to be next year, next month, or by the end of this week or even day.

3. *How you will reach your destination.* When the first two steps have been completed, begin to develop workable plans for reaching your destination. Just as a travel agent must know when and where you want to begin and where you want

to go before arranging reservations, you need to know where to begin and where you want to go.

As you develop plans for achievement, include both short-range and long-range goals. Short-range goals are those that can be achieved in a relatively brief time frame. Begin by setting goals you and your team can achieve within the next two weeks. Each short-range goal you achieve generates a feeling of accomplishment, energizes your motivation, and increases your team's belief in your leadership ability.

Also establish long-range goals that provide overall direction for the organization. Long-range goals may take six months, a year, or several years to achieve. Plan to reach them by setting short-range goals that move you closer to their ultimate attainment.

It is valuable to sit down and think about what you and your team have achieved so far, to consider where you want to go in the future, and to dream of the strategies you will follow in pursuit of those ideals. And remember, goal setting works best through a written plan.

