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SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES

Working Together to Achieve Goals

To gain full mastery of your attitudes, your time, and your life, immerse yourself in a total program of personal and organizational goals. Many personal goals involve items money can buy, and your career is the means for earning that money. Other personal goals focus on satisfying such intangible needs as security, ego satisfaction, and self-fulfillment that are inevitably tied to the work environment. When you recognize this relationship both intellectually and emotionally, you realize that productivity leads to the satisfaction of both your personal needs and your professional success.

Reaching business goals requires the cooperation of everyone in the organization. Ideally, everyone plays an appropriate part in choosing business goals, planning for their achievement, and working out the action steps. Few organizations, however, are ideal. Some business goals may be handed down to you with little opportunity for your input. You may find it easy to be wholeheartedly committed to the achievement of these goals, but it is possible that you might find yourself in partial disagreement with a particular goal or plan. At this point, carefully examine your priorities and values to determine exactly how you can contribute to the achievement of the stated goals and how you can grow personally by doing so – even though you might have preferred to see the organization move in another direction. Express your ideas about particular organizational goals and plans to the right person at the right time. Only in the case of a serious clash between your personal values and those of the organization will you find it impossible to contribute appropriately. With careful consideration, you can gain insights into ways to contribute to the productivity and long-term success of the company.

One element to consider in both personal and organizational goal setting is the time investment required. Most organizations develop more ideas for profit and expansion than they have the resources to carry out. Consequently, some criteria must be established for choosing profitable ventures. Traditionally, these decisions are based on projected return on investment of capital. Obviously, though, some projects that promise high financial return require more time on the part of team members than others. In strategic planning, organizations must consider not only the amount of capital required for undertaking a new project and the expected return on investment, but they must also plan realistically for the amount of time required of key people to implement and supervise the project. Some projects that promise a high return on the investment of capital are impractical when the amount of time required by certain team members is considered.

To ensure adequate time to undertake exciting new projects, all members of the organization need to practice time-proven goal-setting principles of effective personal productivity. This is one strategy that always pays big dividends!

How the Goal-Setting Process Works

Goal setting is the most powerful process available to improve your personal productivity. Without planning and goal setting, all the desire that can be aroused in the limitless potential of the human spirit is wasted like the random lightning of a summer storm. It squanders its force in one flash across the heavens and is lost in the void of space without utility, purpose, or direction. It goes unharnessed and unused, its potential power wasted. Ironically, the contrast resulting from its sudden brilliance seems to leave behind an even darker future once the momentary glare fades.

In striking contrast, goal setting – supported by careful planning – provides a sense of direction to keep you focused on the most important activities. Goals serve as a filter to eliminate extraneous demands. Goals bring to life order, meaning, and purpose that sustain interest and motivation over a long period of time. Goals

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evoke your noblest qualities; they express your desire to achieve, to improve your life, and to be more effective, more productive, and more successful tomorrow than you are today.

Goal setting is the most powerful action you can take to improve your personal productivity. Simply defined, the goal-setting process is the process of:

- Developing a mission statement for your life.
- Writing a specific goal(s) that supports your mission.
- Listing the benefits of achieving the goal.
- Anticipating possible obstacles and solutions.
- Writing detailed action steps and deadlines to achieve the goal.
- Integrating the action steps into your planning system.
- Determining a method of tracking your progress.
- Writing affirmations to support your belief in your ability to accomplish the goal.
- Developing a visual representation that effectively reminds you of your goal.

Although success carries different meanings to different people, there is a definition that fits your dreams as well as those of everyone else:

Success is the progressive realization of worthwhile, predetermined personal goals.

Success does not come by accident; you cannot buy it, inherit it, or even marry into it. Success depends on following a lifelong practice of goal setting and continuous growth – the process of “progressive realization.” Success also depends on seeking predetermined goals. Although many worthwhile achievements come as side effects of some other activity or purpose, they are, nevertheless, a direct consequence of the pursuit of predetermined goals. The full, ultimate effect of reaching a specific goal is not always clearly visible now, but the important point to recognize is that achievement and increased personal productivity invariably arise as a direct consequence of striving toward predetermined goals.

The sole purpose of the goal-setting process is to guide you on the entire journey from wish to fulfillment. The steps in the process are simple but not simplistic, comprehensive but not complex. Be patient and keep an open mind until the overall pattern of activity begins to unfold. Just remember that you are what you are today because of events that unfolded over time and your choices in response to those events. When you wish to change, to alter attitudes or habits, or to develop new personality traits that will increase your effectiveness, that, too, takes time. Individual pace may vary, but the sequential process of goal setting does not; so follow the plan as outlined. When you internalize the goal-setting process, your goals create a magnetic attraction that draws you toward their achievement.

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