

Goal Setting

By Chris Boleman

Each time there is an opportunity to start something, it is important that there is a clear vision. This is done by writing goal statements that match back to the vision. It really does not matter if it is starting with a new job, moving to a new community, or preparing for the SAT's, each time something new is started there should always be a plan. Having a plan means laying out a blue print to achieve success. In order to do this, goals must be set to achieve.

Why set goals? Did you know that if you set goals to reach for yourself, you are twice as likely to reach them? Goal statements are powerful. According to Fritz, Brown, Lunde, and Basnet (2005), there are four reasons to write goal statements. These include:

- Goal statements provide us with motivation, energy, and enthusiasm.
- Goal statements provide direction and keep us on track.
- Goal statements ensure greater success.
- Goal statements build confidence in us.

How to write goals statements. Now that we see why we goal statements should be written, let's talk about *HOW* to write them. There are just a few simple rules to know when writing goal statements.

Rule 1: Make sure the goal is something that is really wanted and not something that just sounds good.

One of the most common mistakes in goal setting is that we write goals that sound good, but are not something we truly want to achieve. In other words, we are doing it for others and not ourselves. This is a goal setting recipe for disaster. Trying to reach goals set forth by others will not work for you. You need to make your goals specific to what you want to accomplish.

Rule 2: Always write the goal in a positive manner.

It is important to write goals in a positive manner. For example, you may say "I am going to increase Internet sales by 5% for this year." This is a positive way to word your goal. A negative way is to say "I am *NOT* going to continue to lose profits because of a lack of Internet sales. The "not" makes for a negative goal statement. Reading something written negatively is bothersome after a while, so try and keep the goal statement written in a positive manner.

Rule 3: Be specific about the goal.

Even though all these rules are very important, this one is often overlooked or abused. Being vague about what you are wanting to do introduces all types of problems when obtaining that goal. Let's look at the example above. "Increasing Internet sales by 5% percent" is the specific goal to accomplish. Writing "I am going to concentrate on Internet sales," is not specific enough. What does "concentrate on Internet sales" mean? It leaves the goal too open. Goals should have specific parameters.

Rule 4: Place a time frame on the goal statement.

Placing a time frame in your goal statement helps to make the goal more specific (Rule 3). Sometimes, we can reach goals in one week and sometimes it will take the entire

year. Whatever the time frame, it is important that you include that in the goal statement.

Rule 5: Make the goal statement measurable.

How else are you going to know if you reached your goal? Which one of the following goal statements is more measurable?

- A. I am going to increase Internet sales by 5% for this year.
- B. I am going to increase Internet sales.

If you said “A” you are correct. The first one is much more measurable than the choice B because B is not specific enough.

Reviewing your goal statements with others. Even though you should write goal statements that you want to reach, it is important that you review them with others who are connected to the goal. This could include family, friends, or co-workers. They can help you determine if your goal statement is realistic and can be met. It also allows for everyone to clearly understand what the goal is you are attempting to accomplish.

What to do with these goal statements. After you have written your goal statement and reviewed it with someone, it is time to post it where you can see it. Seeing your goal everyday will make you much more likely to reach it. Most people post their goals on a mirror in the bathroom so they see it every time they brush their teeth. It is always good to place these goal statements in your wallet or purse, your school locker, or the refrigerator. You can place it anywhere you like just as long as you can see it often.

Success comes to those who work the hardest. Being successful is based on setting goals and going out and accomplishing them. So, follow these easy steps and set your goals!!!

Always remember: GOALS WORTH REACHING ARE SUPPOSED TO BE CHALLENGING!

Reference

Fritz, S., Brown, F. W., Lunde, J. P., Banset, E. A. (2005). *Interpersonal Skills for Leadership* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.