



Goal Setting Guidelines for Leaders.

Two key skills critical for your success.

by Paul N. Smith, Ph.D.

As leaders, we know that setting good goals for ourselves is hard enough. And for most people, actually achieving them on a consistent basis is even more of a challenge. Learning to guide your employees through the process of setting and then achieving their goals can prove to be even harder – but it will reap significant rewards for you, your employees, and your organization.

Leaders of all kinds – bosses, managers, and supervisors – all need to learn how to become better at helping their employees learn how to effectively set and then consistently achieve their goals. This applies to both their personal goals and the goals related to their jobs. The good news is that you can learn how to do goal setting better.

In fact, these are the two most important things that as a leader you can learn to do that will have a measurable impact on your company's bottom line. These two key skills are critical to your success as a leader, and the success of your company.

1. Learning how to help your employees to effectively set and then consistently achieve their goals, and
2. Learning how to help them align their personal goals with their organizational goals.

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind to help you work with your employees to motivate and challenge them to effectively set and then more consistently achieve both their personal and their organizational goals.

- Top level leaders should work together to develop a strategic level vision and the direction for the organization. They should then involve all leaders within the organization to help determine what key goals need to be met for organizational success.
- Don't set goals for your employees. Give them the tools (teach them the process) and then let them set their own goals. It is much more powerful to work together with your employees to help them to learn how to more effectively set both their own personal and their own organizational goals – and to recognize the need for alignment between them. Ownership = greater commitment.

- Work with your employees to set goals annually, but review them with your employees formally once a quarter or as appropriate for the position.
- Informally discuss and review progress towards goal achievement with your employees periodically to ensure progress is being made.
- When new employees start, provide them with some “extra help” to learn how to set their goals for the first two to three months.
- Help your employees to learn how to set three to five main annual goals for success as individual employees, then for their department, group, or team, and finally for their overall organization. Ensure that each individual understands this need for alignment between individual, group, and organizational goals.
- Remember to make your goals “SMART”.
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Attainable
 - Relevant
 - Timely
- Help your employees learn how to set project and performance related goals, but also remember to set professional development goals for your employees (and yourself). Continuous learning is the path to growth and success.
- Have each employee keep track of their own performance measurements. It will motivate them more to track their own progress and will help keep them from feeling like you are micromanaging them. Of course, they need to keep you up-to-date with their progress as part of the bargain.
- Demonstrate a genuine interest in your employees' progress. If they don't think you care about their goals, they aren't going to be motivated to improve their performance or meet their goals.

There you have it. Two key skills critical for your success. Learning to help your employees to (1) more effectively set and to more consistently achieve their goals, and then (2) to align their personal with their organizational goals will reap significant benefits for you, your employees, and your entire organization. To your collective success!

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