



### Goal Setting

Google 'skills training' and you get 32 MILLION website links and listings to choose from! Add the word 'business' and, thankfully, the choice tumbles to a far more manageable 14 MILLION options. Add UK and you only have 3 MILLION website links to play with. One more refinement should do it – PERFORMANCE. Great. 2.3 million it is. There you are then. If you're looking for training solutions for your business just two minutes investigating per link and you'll only need 38 working YEARS to have done all your research. Best make it just 1 minute per link then! Ridiculous of course but what a confusing array of options isn't it? So what can you do? How can you get your people more productive, improve motivation and enhance overall performance? Where do you start?

If you are looking for performance improvements in *any* area of your business then there really is only one place to start – Goal Setting.

Invite any reputable training specialist into your business and they will tell you that sustainable performance improvements are almost impossible without well structured and meaningful business and personal goals. Many businesses do have goals. Many business owners have them too. If you don't though you truly are not alone. But if you do have them who knows about them? Do your people know what the company goals are? Do they understand them? Do they know what they can do/need to do to support the delivery of these goals? Do they have goals themselves? Does each department? Do these goals compliment/support one another? In our experience that is definitely not always the case but the long-term benefit of any performance skills training is greatly undermined without them. Furthermore very many businesses that do have them do not have regular review disciplines in place to ensure the goals they have got are still, in fact, relevant.

Fundamentally research has shown that two of the most positive aspects as to how people remain motivated in their jobs [in performance-related roles] are (1) the satisfaction of delivering of/contributing to targets and goals and (2) recognition of achievement in their contribution to the company's performance.

So how can you start the whole process of goal setting and implementation? Well let's look at what a 'goal' is in the first place. Many companies have objectives in place – "our objective is to be the No.1 widget supplier in our market" for example. These are great but these are objectives and tend to be more general, sometimes 'visionary' and maybe even subjective. Goals are more specific and target-focused – "our goal is to be *the largest* widget supplier in our markets *within 2 years*". A good start point therefore would be the creation of your company's objectives first – where you want to be and how you want to be regarded, your desired status and your aspirations – and then start to identify the goals that will underpin the objectives you set.

### Goal Structure

#### **Stage 1 - SMART**

Creating a goal is relatively straight forward. There is a well established formula for effective goal structure – the SMART principle. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic (some use Relevant) and Timeline. These five elements will help you establish the correct goal structure.

*"Our goal is to become the largest and most profitable widget supplier in the UK within two years"*.

Applying the SMART principle you would ask the following questions:





### Goal Setting... continued

1. Specific – is this goal clearly stating what we want to achieve?
2. Measurable – what measurements will we need/do we have that will help us determine whether we are the largest or not?
3. Achievable – where are we now? If we are No99 in the market is getting to No1 achievable? Well yes it is but it will be dependant on the gap between 99 and 1 and your strategy to get there
4. Realistic – ah, yes. Getting to No1 is, in theory, achievable, but is it realistically achievable and if so in the time we have identified
5. Timeline – what timeline have you set for this goal

Applying SMART will help you challenge the goal itself in 5 crucial areas and amend if needed. If it's not SMART don't start! It may just need a slight amendment

*“Our goal is to be the largest and most profitable widget supplier in Scotland within 2 years”*

### **Stage 2 - GISAR**

Training companies love acronyms and the next step in effective goal structure is another – GISAR. GISAR stands for Goal, Information search, Strategy, Action and Review and is a great friend to SMART.

Once, through SMART, you have created what you believe to be a SMART goal then GISAR will help you define what you do next.

1. Goal – what is the goal?
2. Information search – gain input and opinion into the goal itself. What are your options in how you deliver this goal? Who can you ask? What ‘intelligence’ is available you can use? Nobody has a monopoly on ideas remember.

3. Strategy – decide on the ‘how’ – from your options which ‘how’ are you going to choose? What do you think will work best? Once you decide... go for it.

4. Action – quite simply, start! Define the ‘who does what’ in getting the process going and start the process

5. Review – review, review, review. Constant and consistent reviewing is needed throughout any goal process. Why? Well things change. You change, your clients change, your competitors change, your people, your market, your products. If you do not review your goal and strategy regularly how do you know it remains SMART?

### **Stage 3 – milestones**

There is one final element to an effective goal structure and that is the breaking down of the goal itself. Good well-managed goals will have milestone points to track progress. These are extremely important especially if the goal has a longer timeline or is dependant on any significant strategic challenges. You should aim to break down your goal into achievable and deliverable ‘chunks’ so that success can (a) be achieved quickly and regularly (b) can be celebrated.

*“Our goal is to become the largest and most profitable widget supplier in Scotland within 2 years”*

Stage 1 – “the no 4 widget supplier within 6 months”

Stage 2 – “the number 3 widget supplier within 12 months”

Stage 2 – “the number 2 widget supplier within 18 months”

These milestones will also help you review your strategy and the reality of the goal itself as you go.

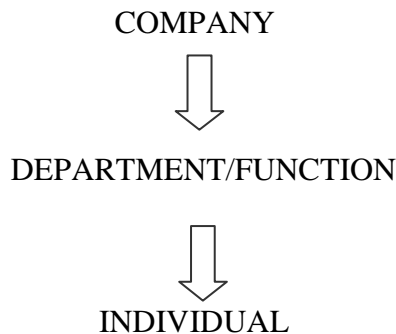
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### Goal Setting... continued

Often overlooked but crucial for maintaining motivation and job satisfaction is to support the creation and development of goals through to departmental and individual level.



The same process and structure will apply with one very important caveat – the department and individual goals should align with or support the company goals.

*“Our goal (sales) is to increase revenues of widget sales from existing clients from £100k to £150k per month within 2 years”*

*“Our goal (finance) is to reduce debtor days from 65 to 57 days within 2 years”*

Whether department or individual, goal setting needs to be (a) inclusive – involve the people who are going to deliver the goals (b) communicated and understood (c) regularly reviewed

### Training

People of all levels may need help on setting goals for themselves and their areas of responsibility (AOR). Once you have defined company goals you can help them, through support and guidance, create goals that are well structured, relevant and, more importantly, that they OWN. Furthermore ANY further training you want your staff to benefit from will have enhanced meaning if it is in support of clearly defined and understood goals – their skills development has true meaning and purpose.

At P1 we regard our training and support programs as a ‘catalyst for positive change’. Positive change can only come with clearly defined and comprehended goals

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