

Goal Setting – don't give up on this topic yet!

For many of us the start of a new year initiates the need to renew ourselves by making fresh commitments or to refocus our actions – either refine the old goals or set new ones.

Goal setting has become equated in so many places with the SMART process (you know, goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) and that is a great start. SMART is like Goal Setting 101 and if one has never defined a goal, applied a measure or set a deadline, this is terrific progress.

We've even got an online course that teaches a leader to effectively set goals and standards because they really are necessary to:

- Let a team member know what's expected
- Assess performance through the year against standards
- Identify growth areas and necessary improvements
- Appraise full year performance if you write pa's.

And if you work with team members to establish annual goals, if they participate in the process and sign on to accomplish those goals, you've made an excellent start. But it's really only the beginning.

Increasingly, many of us find something lacking in SMART – I've actually read several articles this early in January that theorize there's more to goal setting than SMART.

And I do so agree. It seems like we ought to be up to Goal Setting 201 in the business world by now. SMART is the basis for a clearly identified goal, but where's the real motivation, the passion we need to OVER-ACHIEVE the goal? Isn't that really what you're looking for?

I'm thinking in terms of **Advanced Goal Setting** now and I call it **DIVE™** - see what you think:



D – Difficult – we're talking about a goal that's not just realistic (R), but has stretch to it – that really challenges someone. The goal is not impossible to achieve, but after discussing with a team member how he/she may extend themselves, gaining agreement to the importance of the goal, why not add a degree of difficulty? People do rise to challenges.

I - I CARE - there is certainly no point in creating any goal if the team member is checked out of the job, has no commitment to the work. "I CARE" says this goal matters, it's important and I understand how it fits in the overall scheme of business results here. My work and the achievement of my goals complement the larger organization's achievement – that makes me valuable to the enterprise – I'm glad to be recognized for the work I do and the contributions I make.

V – Visionary – this is a characteristic we usually ascribe to leaders, but we also underrate team members’ abilities to see down the road. Helping a team member envision where the achievement of this goal could lead is opening doors he/she never imagined they might get through. I’ve used a great technique: use stickies to have team members post different thoughts in a central locale about how things will look once this goal is accomplished, what will be different, how will things work, what will it mean for our customers? This is a powerful motivator.

E – Extra Effort – If the goal has some stretch to it, extra effort will naturally be required. But because your team member can see the gain behind this goal, because he/she says “I CARE”, they’re willing to give that bit of extra – maybe it’s reading, maybe it’s taking an online course, maybe it’s tutoring someone else – you and the team member can think of many ways to reach the goal.

So **DIVE™** sums up what I consider the next level of goal setting – and it’s worth diving (sorry!) in to the depths of goal setting – this is where it all begins with your team members, where you have the opportunity to set the stage for the year, to engage their ownership and buy-in to what needs to be done, to begin developing that all-important relationship that makes such a difference in everyday work life.

No need to rehash all the studies that say “people don’t quit companies, they quit their managers”. The managers who create those relationships, who involve team members in goal setting, who work with team members to achieve goals, always have the edge - and the most loyal team members.

Just **DIVE™!!!**

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I = I CARE
V = Visionary
E = Extra Effort