

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE (FORMERLY WOODWORDS)

March 1999

"Goal Setting – What are Yours"?

Most successful owners/executives are goal oriented. They are skilled at setting team goals with production line, sales, and management team members, as well as setting goals for themselves and following through.

GOALS SHOULD DEFINE:

- The business conditions that will exist when the desired outcome has been reached
- The time table in which goals will be achieved
- The budget and resources available to accomplish the goal

Goals get the business to focus on what is important. They force everyone to remember that plan is to keep "the main thing, the main thing." The challenge is to clearly define goals that are concise and can be reviewed daily by all team players.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Critical success factors are specific results on which the company/job depends. The factors may vary from job to job, or even within departments inside the organization. Before each new project, quarterly, or on some predefined criteria, take the time to identify your critical success factors and make them known to all employees. Some examples of critical success factors could include the following:

- Goals set for days without lost time for injuries
- Number of targeted new customers that became ongoing customers
- Productivity improvements using industry benchmarks - sales dollars per employee
- "XX" days turn around time on design work
- Guaranteed delivery in "XX" days after order confirmation

SET GOALS THAT ARE MEASURABLE

A key to this process is to have the ability to have data available that shows progress in meeting goals. This data should be able to be easily obtained from the management information systems you are currently using. If you don't have data for the goal you want to set, figure out how to measure it within your system, or set another goal that you can measure, which will allow you to assess the objective that cannot be easily measured.

POST GOALS

Make your business objectives a focal point of your business discussions and culture. Goals have very limited impact if only a few people know what they are. Your entire organization should be involved establishing, refining and buying into the company goals. Display progress with a scoring system, charts or other visual means.

Where there is a direct tie, show how goals contribute to profit and make this a central theme. It is important everyone understands that without business profit there is no business.

STATE GOALS AS RESULTS

Many times goals are worded generically as statements of problems or as action steps. For instance:

- Provide a superior, quality product
- Be more profitable
- Improve plant safety

While these are great concepts, goals need to have a specific end result. For instance:

- Improve gross profit by 10 percent
- Have zero lost-time accidents in the first quarter
- Gain five new customers that pay their bills by the end of the second quarter
- Have 95 percent on-time delivery in the first quarter

These types of goal statements keep everyone focused.

Finally, set goals that the business or your specific department has control over. Avoid the temptation to define too many goals. Be realistic. Properly done, this process will allow for continuous improvement and will be well worth the time spent on it. It ultimately will establish the culture of your business and help you to succeed when others are failing.

Adapted from concepts used in "The FMI Management Newsletter," August 1996, and University of Wisconsin Business Management Coursework by Kirk Grundahl.

Traits for Good Leadership

Be someone who **LISTENS** to one's customers, staff and peers, always searching for a better understanding of the business you are in, and personal behavior, and how to make both better. Take this information and develop a **VISION** of the future. Reinvent the present based on dreaming about what could be. Methodically and creatively develop business and marketing **STRATEGIES** to reach realistic business and marketplace objectives. When obstacles show up, create new products, processes or methods to provide better solutions to meeting your customer

needs - be **INNOVATIVE** and seize the **OPPORTUNITY** . Continuously search for additional **KNOWLEDGE** about the business that you are in through participation in your industry's trade associations, seminars, workshops, industry publications, etc. Be **CREATIVE** and **ANALYTICAL**. Stay focused on your **CUSTOMERS** by filling their specific needs first and foremost. Those that do this well will enjoy business success. Help someone else learn from your experience and expertise - become a **MENTOR**. Always remember that business is a commitment and there are effective roles for everyone in the business to fill. Always be encouraging to others when the going gets rough. If the customer wins and the business wins, the **TEAM** wins.

Adapted from University of Wisconsin Business Management Coursework by Kirk Grundahl.

Motivating Technical Employees

KEY ELEMENTS IN MOTIVATING TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO:

- Be recognized regularly for competence and contributions
- Expand their technical knowledge
- Help make company improvements
- Participate in projects that allow them to interact with owners or management
- Have increasing freedom to make technical judgments
- Provide input in developing the company's technical policies

MANAGERS OF TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES MUST:

- Help them understand their path for advancement
- Recognize their effort and their potential
- Help them understand how they are a key part of the organization and that the organization cares about their welfare

Technical employees are generally smart and highly educated, but communication does not necessarily come naturally to them. Many of the best minds have trouble externalizing their thoughts, even though they have much to offer any business they are working in. All businesses should recognize this and work on ways to bring out ideas and thoughts. Everyone will benefit from this exercise. The best managers of technical employees are people who sincerely care about others, do what they say they are going to do, give credit where credit is due and consistently demonstrate this approach in all areas of their lives.

Adapted from concepts presented by William F. Peck, P.E. in the April 1993 issue of "Civil Engineering" magazine.

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