

COACHING TIP

From Rex C. Houze

Goal Setting Principles and How to Apply Them

GOALS NEED TO...

Be WRITTEN. Writing crystallizes thought and crystallized thought motivates action. Also, a short pencil is better than a long memory. When your goals are written, you can refer to them, communicate them, and create a front-of-the-mind awareness.

Be SPECIFIC. The mind can focus on the concrete better than it can the abstract.

Be PERSONAL. You are more likely to take action on your own goals than you are someone else's goals. When setting business goals, make sure you tie your "ownership" to each goal.

Be POSITIVE. Set goals on what you want to happen rather than what you don't want. Focus on growth rather than just survival; retention rather than turnover; quality rather than defects; and safety rather than accidents.

Be MEASURABLE and contain a METHOD FOR KEEPING SCORE. Imagine that your goals are a sporting event. What will you put on the scoreboard during the contest or in the box scores the next day?

Be TANGIBLE and INTANGIBLE. Whenever possible tie a tangible goal to each of your intangible goals and an intangible goal to each of your tangible goals. For example, if your tangible goal is to increase sales and/or profit by a specific amount, your supporting intangible goal might be to become a better coach so your people will perform better. The intangible goal to be a better coach can be supported by tangible goals that let you know that you are a better coach – for example, giving more positive feedback and less criticism or negative feedback.

Be LONG-RANGE and SHORT-RANGE. Long-range goals give you direction and purpose. Short-range goals provide ongoing motivation and, many times, are steps toward long-range goals.

Have SOME STRETCH. If goals are too easy, they won't motivate you and you may get bored. If goals are too difficult, they could cause stress and discouragement. For example, during a ring toss game, those who stood close and made almost every toss, soon got bored and quit. Those who stood too far away and missed almost every time, soon got discouraged and quit. Those who stood at a challenging distance were the most motivated and played the longest. Your reach should exceed your grasp for optimum motivation.

Contain ACTION STEPS. Action steps become short-range or bite-sized goals and create motivation and momentum. The completion of each action step can be cause for celebration.

Have a TIMETABLE, including DEADLINES. Deadlines increase focus, concentration, and stick-to-it-tiveness. Use them to your advantage.