

Setting Goals

Unit

2

Unit2

Setting Goals

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the importance of, and the most useful techniques for, setting and achieving goals.

The Dot Exercise

Read any self-improvement book and you will learn that hard work, focused goals, and persistence are important (very important!) in getting to where you want to go in life. Goals or targets are also an important part of managing your time.

Before you can develop plans, you have to know what you want to accomplish (your goals or targets); how you want to accomplish those goals or targets; what resources of time, money, and materials you have; and who will carry out the implementation. So set some targets for yourself, targets that you can see, and we'll start the journey to reaching them.

Many of us are full of ideas but short on taking constructive action to put those ideas into play. Maybe we try something once and then meet failure because we didn't think and plan the actions through. But you know what they say about the lottery: "You can't win if you don't buy a ticket." Well, the same is true in life: if you stop trying, you lose all chance of succeeding. Make a covenant with yourself that you will make an effort to put into practice the things we talk about today that will be of the most benefit to YOU. And to make that covenant even more of a commitment, share it with a colleague, your spouse, or your supervisor.

Today we are going to spend a bit of time talking about why you should set goals for yourself, and the best way to do it so that you have a good chance of reaching your goals.

Setting Goals with SPIRIT

Goals and objectives are the basis for planning. As the Cheshire Cat said to Alice, "If you don't know where you are going, then any road will take you there." And that is often how we approach life. We just live, and if we end up where we want to be, hey, that's great. If we end up where we don't want to be, hey, that's life.

We can do a bit better than that, if we really want to. The first element in planning is knowing what we want to achieve, and the way we word our goals is the biggest factor in helping us achieve them. Goals should reflect your SPIRIT!

Specific

Be specific about what you want or don't want to achieve. The result should be tangible and measurable. "Look gorgeous" is pretty ambiguous; "Lose 20 pounds" is specific.

Prizes

Reward yourself at different points in the goal, particularly if it's long-term. If your goal is to set up a home office, for example, you might purchase a new desk when the room is cleared out and ready.

Individual

The goal must be something that you want to do. If your spouse wants you to lose 20 pounds but you think you look fine, you're not going to want to work towards the goal.

Review

Review your progress periodically. Does the goal make sense? Are you stuck? Do you need to adjust certain parts of it?

Inspiring

Frame the goal positively. Make it fun to accomplish. You could make a poster of the end result, frame it, and post it on the wall.

Time-Bound

Give yourself a deadline for achieving the goal. Even better, split the goal into small parts and give yourself a deadline for each item.

Planning Tips and Tricks

Planning Tools

Guidelines for Efficient Planning

Life gets much easier when we have a plan and put it into action. Having a plan gives us a place to start, as well as being a way to remember what we are supposed to be doing at any given time.

Here are some guidelines for efficient planning that you can make work for you right away.

- Did you know that you can save yourself an hour each day just by **getting organized**? When you arrive at work or return home, take a moment to put your coat and keys where they belong. Put papers where you can put your hand on them quickly.

- Use your **workspace and personal space** (home, vehicle, garage, etc.) to their greatest advantage. There is no need to do a big clean up once a year if you can take a half hour once a week to file, sort, and keep things organized.
- It is important to identify and operate within **two time horizons**: short and long term. Anticipating events will help you to get things done in the short term which contribute to achieving long-term objectives.
- An **up-to-date master calendar** can be your most helpful planning tool. If you prefer an electronic version, make sure that it is backed up properly so that you don't lose your data.
- When things begin to get hectic, a "**Things to do Today**" list helps focus attention on the highest priority items.
- **Action planning worksheets, milestone charts, and PERT diagrams** (the types of diagrams used in project management) are excellent planning aids when properly used.
- **Planning contact** with colleagues and staff will help minimize disruptions. Keep a file for each person you meet with on a regular basis, with items to be discussed highlighted for easy reference.
- The most effective approaches to planning are those **tailored** to meet individual needs. Concepts, procedures, and worksheets should be modified to fit individual circumstances.
- Experts say nothing should be attempted without prior planning, although applying **flexibility** is also important.

A Planning Checklist

For every plan you make, cover all these points:

- What
- Where
- When
- How
- Who

Putting Plans into Action with Scheduling Tools

Some useful short term planning tools:

- A daily to-do list
- A planner with at least a week at a glance
- A monthly project list
- Project planning worksheet

Organizing Your Work Area and Your Paperwork

A clean desk is not a sign of an empty mind! Don't fall prey to the false notion that a messy work area means you look busy, and thinking that if you look busy, then you're productive. Being active is not the same as being productive!

Here are some tips for organizing your work area.

Do it now!

Anything that takes less than 30 minutes should be done as it comes up. If it will take more than 30 minutes, add the task to your planner.

Dump.

Throw out or take home all those things you have collected that you don't need or use. We're so used to holding on to things and sometimes are afraid to throw out the wrong thing. We like the same rule for work that we use at home: if you haven't used it for a year (or an entire business cycle), get rid of it, because you obviously aren't using it.

Sort and group.

Your desk should be organized logically; pencils and pens in one place, another place for letterhead and envelopes. Have a basket for projects and another one for priority items so that you can locate the things you need when you want them. You can use the same kind of system on your computer so that you can find your working files. Once a project is complete, move it into an appropriate folder for retention.

Set up a system.

Use a planner to jot down your daily to-do list and schedule in any tasks that will take longer than 30 minutes to do. Prioritize each item so that you know what to work on, and make sure that you stick to the list. (Maintain some flexibility for emergencies, but make sure you get back to priorities as soon as possible.)

Don't save papers that you can easily find somewhere else.

Don't ask yourself, "Is there a chance I will need this someday?" because the answer is nearly always yes. Ask yourself, "If I know I need this, do I know how to find it?" One of our biggest time-wasters is searching for papers we know we have but we can't find. If a piece of paper is important enough to save, it is important enough to file for retrieval.

Test Your Knowledge

Planning a Get-Together

Task	Time	Participant	Calendar?

Setting Up a Routine

Be dull in your everyday routine so you can be wildly creative where it counts. Routines simplify; clarify; and create order, symmetry, and familiarity in chaos and high stress. Routines are the foundation of success.

Top performers in every area of every industry have lives full of routine. Most of us have routines in the morning. Think about your morning routine and how, if you skip it (perhaps because you slept in late, or the dog threw up on the carpet!), you have a tougher time launching your day.

As you decide what kinds of routines will help you, you will need to simplify some things in your life. This is one of those things that is easier said than done, we know, but is well worth the effort. Consider your entire lifestyle. If you have an expensive lifestyle that consumes huge amounts of effort just to maintain, perhaps that time could be better spent doing more enjoyable things than maintaining homes, boats, cars, etc. Similarly, too cheap a lifestyle has a similar result. If you spend hours negotiating the cheapest and the lowest rates, airfares, gas prices, etc., or have to shop for groceries at six locations in order to get the best price on everything, ask yourself if that is time truly well-spent.

Routines include setting time with family, for eating, for sleeping, and for exercising. It means setting a clear time for all routine activities. The way to get routines to work for you

is to make sure you are setting them at times that work best for you and your biological clock. Your morning routines should be so good that when you walk out of your house, you feel ready to tackle any problems the world throws at you.

Remember:

- No activity is more important to ritualize than sleep. This lets your body know that it is time to slow down and prepare to shut off.
- By fixing mealtimes and planning in advance you'll become vastly more efficient. You'll save money on groceries too!
- Since exercise has such a powerful effect on brain energy and alertness, place your workout at times of day you most need them.

Doing it Right

Being Brave and BOLD

Sometimes we need to approach things with a bit of attitude in order to get things done, and do them well. We're recommending that you can be a bit playful with this, and to be BOLD.

Balance

Do you spend a lot of time looking for things? Productivity research tells us that the average person spends about 10% of the day looking for things. If that were so, you could gain 5 weeks a year just by getting your retrieval methods under control! If you tend to keep good track of things at work, consider things at home. Do you have a place for your keys, glasses, or lunch bags? Do you ever find yourself searching for things in the morning right before you leave for work? How long does it take you to find a particular file on your computer? (This is often one of the worst time suckers out there today!)

Sometimes you just need to handle the little things that reduce concentration and cause anxiety, like the clutter on your desk and the incomplete jobs. This is the opposite of prioritizing. Do the quick and dirty tasks NOW, even if you just do them for 5 minutes a day for the next two weeks. The crises in our lives are often the result of not handling the little things or not reacting to a nagging feeling that something is wrong. Ignore the little toothache and you wind up with a root canal.

While we talk a lot about balance, if we could accept the fact that each day is not going to be perfectly balanced, we'd probably be a lot more content with our work. Some days there will be nothing but fires to put out, but this can be balanced with days that are quieter and the phone isn't jangling off the hook. Balance can also come from setting your work aside and going for a brisk walk at lunch, or phoning someone that you care about. Achieving balance is not necessarily about spending equal time on the things you like versus what you don't like: it can be about the value of things. A big smile and a quick lunch with someone can balance out a morning spent in a frustrating meeting.

Test Your Knowledge

What are some ideas that might give you balance during your week?

Organize Your Time

If you are receiving tasks and assignments by e-mail, or your boss delegates assignments to you, make sure you organize these incoming items immediately. If something will take more than 30 minutes to complete, schedule it in your calendar and prioritize the items there. If the task will take less than 30 minutes, try to get it done right away so that you are not procrastinating over it, or don't forget that it needs doing.

Let Things Go

There is a rule we often follow at home that says if you have not used an item of clothing or kitchen gadget for a year, get rid of it. We need to apply the same thing to work: when you no longer need things, get rid of them. It's rare that we actually get rid of things we need, but if we do, it's not likely to be the end of the world. You can replace it if you need to.

If you are someone that has a hard time throwing things out, put them into storage first, and then set up an archiving date within 12 months so that they move from storage (which is usually very expensive) to the shredder or rubbish bin.

If you are going through a stack of paper or items, start out with three piles, and act on them quickly. Sort them into piles to: shred, store, or dump in the garbage.

Delegate

Don't waste your time doing things that somebody else can do, especially if they can do them better than you. Save your time for those things which you are uniquely qualified to do. In addition to easing up your workload, delegation helps your staff to learn new things and to take risks where they have you there for back up if needed.

Delegating does not mean that you "give away" work completely. As the owner of a task, you must remember that you are ultimately responsible for the results that are achieved.

If you are not in a leadership position, you may be thinking that you don't have anyone that you can delegate to, but that's often not the case. In many work teams, we can delegate

laterally to a colleague who has a particular expertise, who is looking for some skill development, or simply has some extra time.

In *The Creative Edge*, author William C. Miller defines five levels of delegation:

- **Tell:** “Based on my decision, here’s what I want you to do.”
- **Sell:** “Based on my decision, here’s what I want you to do, because...”
- **Consult:** “Before I make a decision, I want your input.”
- **Participate:** “We need to make a decision together.”
- **Delegate:** “You make a decision.”

You must find ways to delegate, no matter what your position is. Learn to clearly define who is to do what and let them show you that they can do it. Make sure your communication is clear so that they know what your expectations are and any limitations of the assignment (i.e. budget, time frames, or other resources).

There are five steps to the delegation process:

- 1) Explain why the job is important.
- 2) Describe what is needed in terms of results (not how, but what).
- 3) Give the person the authority they need to do the job.
- 4) Indicate when the job needs to be completed and get agreement.
- 5) Ask for feedback to ensure a common understanding.

The Story about Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody

There was an important job to be done and **Everybody** was asked to do it. Everybody was sure that **Somebody** would do it. **Anybody** could have done it, but **Nobody** did it. **Somebody** got mad about it because it was **Everybody’s** job. Everyone thought that **Anybody** could do it, and **Nobody** realized that **Everybody** wouldn’t do it. It ended up that **Everybody** blamed **Somebody** when actually **Nobody** blamed **Anybody**.

Putting an End to Procrastination

In some workplaces, it seems to be impossible to get everything done. This session will help you prioritize what does need to be done and sort it out from things that you could do, but may not have the time to finish.

Brian Tracy wrote a great little book called *Eat that Frog!* that helps people get over procrastinating. He also plays with a couple of quotes from the writer Mark Twain that help us to remember what we are meant to do, and how to stop putting things off. The idea is this:

“If the first thing you do each morning is to eat a live frog, you can go through the day with the satisfaction of knowing that is probably the worst thing that is going to happen to you all day long.”

We are often guilty about procrastinating, and this stops us from getting things done. And as you likely already know, when we procrastinate about one thing, it can also interfere with getting other things done.

As Mark Twain said, “The rule of frog eating is this: If you have to eat two frogs, eat the ugliest one first.”

This quote is about taking the frog – the thing we are procrastinating about – and getting on with eating it. Clearly, after you’ve eaten a great big frog, everything else you have to do that day is going to be easier than what you started off with.

By procrastinating, that thing we are putting off often becomes a bigger and more daunting task than it really is, and the more we think about (rather than doing something about it), the more space it can take up in our head.

This is a very simple concept that can have a profound impact on our results. There is no self-satisfaction in knowing that we are letting things get away from us, and we feel better and more motivated when we go ahead and get these things crossed off our to do lists.

Test Your Knowledge

Do you have a frog or two waiting for you at work?

What is standing in the way of eating that frog?
