Setting Goals That Will Last The New Year

With each new year comes our desire to make resolutions and goals for the coming year. Let's face it. Most of the time, we all fail. We will stick with our plan for a while, but, eventually, we quit because of lack of time, motivation, energy, or desire. In business, we also set goals for ourselves and our organization. So how can we ensure that we won't fail in these?

First, we have to understand what goals are. Goals play a vital role in all work environments. They are objectives, results, or achievements one desires to reach. Goals must be measurable and created with action steps for progress to bring about a desired result. The goals you make should be challenging. If you are not challenged, you will not be motivated to get the job done. Just maintaining the status quo is not a goal.

Over the last several years, research regarding goal setting and how it is affected by ability and task complexity has been quite extensive. Edwin Locke and his associates have developed the Locke and Latham model of goal-setting framework, which is summarized as follows.

Difficult goals are more likely to lead to higher performance than are less difficult ones.
Having high goals will keep employees on task and motivated. However, there is a fine line between difficult goals and unattainable goals. If a goal is seen as impossible to achieve, performance may well be lower than what it would be with a more realistic goal.

Specific goals are more likely to lead to higher performance than are no goals, vague, or very general ones.
All too often employees work with very general goals such as the encouragement to "do your best." Research indicates that more specific goals are much more motivational. Give as much detail as possible to give the employee direction and something in which to strive.

Task feedback, or knowledge of results, is likely to motivate people toward higher performance by encouraging the setting of higher performance goals.
Feedback lets employees know where they stand and whether they are on or off course with their efforts. It allows for adjustments to be made well before the task should be completed. This will save valuable time and resources.

Goals are most likely to lead to higher performance when people have the abilities and the feelings of self-confidence required to accomplish them.
An employee must be able to accomplish the goal and feel confident in his or her ability. If an employee does not feel confident in his or her abilities, they probably will not work hard enough to accomplish the task.

Goals are most likely to motivate people toward higher performance when they are accepted and there is commitment to them.
Allowing employees to participate in the goal-setting process helps build acceptance and commitment toward the goal. They will feel a sense of ownership. If it is not possible for employees to help set the goals, be sure that

> Setting a goal is not the main thing.
> It is deciding how you will go
> about achieving it and staying
> with that plan.
> Tom Landry (1924-2000)
> Professional football player and coach

The Mathis Group's
Messenger

you explain everything to them in as much detail as possible. The more they understand and agree with the goals that are set, the more likely they will be successful in achieving the desired results.

(Taken from <u>Organizational Behavior</u>, John R. Schermerhorn, Jr., James G. Hunt, and Richard N. Osborn)

Realizing your goals all boils down to being motivated enough to do them. There have been several models of motivation developed throughout the years. We will look at five of them.

Maslow's Model
Maslow points out that people are needs driven. Once a need is taken care of, it no longer is a motivator. Examples of needs are: food, clothing, and shelter.

Herzberg's Model
Herzberg points out that employees basically hate their jobs. Their needs are discussed as: salary, job security, working conditions, status, company procedures, and interpersonal relations.

Vroom's Model
Vroom examined the worker's output. Vroom felt that supervisory staff could motivate employees by giving hope of potential promotions. It did not matter if the promotions would actually happen, only that the thought of them happening would be enough of a motivation.

Porter/Lawler Model
Porter/Lawler's view is that satisfaction of workers depends on rewards. If rewards are fair, the worker demonstrates satisfaction and will strive harder to reach his or her goals.

McClelland's Model
McClelland examines achievement as a learned ability. He feels that it can be taught to less motivated people through a set of factors: the person likes to take responsibility for solving problems, the person tends to set moderate achievement goals and is inclined to take calculated risks, and the person desires feedback on performance. (Gibson, Invancevich, Donnelly, 1979, p. 111)

Finding the motivational style that works best with your employees may take a little time. Fortunately, it will be time well spent, for the goals of your organization will be met.

Mark Your Calendars!

St. Louis Spring Conference on Project Management

March 20-24, 2006

⇨ Proactive Communication and Interview Skills for Gathering Business Requirements
⇨ Project Performance Management
⇨ Project Quality Management

Check out our exciting courses at
www.keithmathis.com!!

☑ *Ready! Set! Goal!*
☑ *Mountain Moving Motivation*

Contact The Mathis Group today to receive their catalog of complete course listsings or to discuss your <u>customized onsite seminar.</u>

The Mathis Group, Inc.
Dr. Keith Mathis
106 Lakeview Woods
Eureka, MO 63025
1-800-224-3731
636/938-5292 voice/fax
kmathis@ix.netcom.com
www.themathisgroup.com
www.keithmathis.com
GSA Contractor- GS10F0383M
Project Management Institute R.E.P.