

The Importance of Goals

Why everyone in your team should have them

Developing an understanding of the factors that can influence an individual's goal achievement, will enable you to drive bottom-line improvements to your business performance through effective goal setting.

SUMMARY

Individuals and teams that set challenging goals and hold themselves accountable will be more successful.

People like to be part of a winning team. This fuels the motivation and belief that drives further goal achievement.

There are 4 decades of research supporting the idea that effective goal setting has a positive impact on motivation and task performance. And yet many leaders and teams I come across seem to have lost sight of their most important goals.

Try this..

In your next team meeting give each team member a set of Post-it notes and ask them to write down the top 3 goals of the team, (one goal per Post-it) as they look around the room for inspiration, tell them not to confer. As they begin writing encourage them to be as specific as possible, goals like "make more profit" don't cut it. Stick all the post-its on a wall and count up how many Top 3 goals you have and whether they are clearly defined.

Focus on a Few Important Goals

It's at this point you realize the first

job to be done is to define and agree your most important goals with the team. The purpose of a goal is to provide clarity, direction and purpose, having too many goals has the opposite effect. When there are lots of goals we don't know which to focus on or believe that the goals are unachievable. To cope with this we focus on the tasks that are most urgent whether they help achieve the goal or not.

Agree Challenging Goals

People are more likely to buy-in to a goal if it is their own or they have at least had some involvement in its development.



“It is only by knowing your peoples capabilities well that you can agree challenging goals that have a galvanizing effect on performance.”



Steve Bussey
Business Coach

Be wary of any tendency to set goals without including the people who have to help deliver them. Or agreeing goals that are below what people are capable of. The perceived level of difficulty of a goal impacts directly on the action taken by the individual towards achieving that goal. Goals which are perceived as too easy can cause disengagement and low self-worth when an individual believes that little is expected of them. Conversely, Goals which are perceived as too difficult will result in disengagement. It is only by knowing your peoples capabilities well that you can agree challenging goals that have a galvanizing effect on performance.

Declare your Goals

When you have agreed the most important goals both at a team and individual level, you should be confident enough to share them with your significant stakeholders, i.e. those people who have an interest in the success of the team and/or the individual. Making a goal public will increase levels of commitment; a goal known only to an individual is much easier to abandon than one which has been made known to a significant other.

Encourage Belief

There is plenty of evidence that supports the idea that the more capable people judge themselves to be, the higher the goals they set for themselves and the more firmly they remain committed to them. You must not underestimate the role that support and encouragement plays in the achieve-

ment of goals. Encouraging an individual's beliefs in their own abilities and potential drives higher levels of self-motivation.

Report on progress

Now is the time for honesty, think about all the times you set goals or the team agreed goals that were never reviewed or were looked at just before the annual performance review, or were quietly dropped when they seemed a bit tough to achieve. If you truly want to achieve the goals then you have to create a culture of high standards and accountability. Break the goals down into manageable milestones. I quite often work with teams on 6 week sprints encouraging a focus only on what is achievable in that timeframe and insist on a team report out. This keeps motivation levels high and increases the accountability individuals feel when reporting on their progress on a regular basis.

Celebrate Success

Deliver some quick wins and celebrate them, people like to be part of a winning team. This fuels the motivation and belief that drives further goal achievement. When you have achieved what you set out to do share it publicly with those same stakeholders you were brave enough to declare your goals with.

One final thought, when you have achieved the goals don't be surprised if expectations of future success increase. Embrace the challenge...

Mindstrong Ltd.

Tel: +44 (0) 1733 252207

enquiries@mindstrongltd.co.uk

www.mindstrongltd.co.uk

©2012 Mindstrong Ltd.

