How to Set Business Goals for 2019 and Beyond

As we welcome 2019, business owners look into the future for growth and improvement beyond mere sales figures. Goal setting is a big part of business growth. Those who set specific and measurable goals are much more likely to succeed. If you want your business thriving in 2019 and beyond, write out your goals, and come up with a plan for reaching those goals.

It isn’t easy figuring out which goals to set and how to make them specific to your business. Here are nine precise steps toward setting your new business goals.

1. Collaborate With Your Team

Setting goals works better when company leaders and employees both offer their viewpoints – it becomes clear what’s possible and what isn’t. First, gather information from everyone on your team. Business goals should include the views of every department, from human resources to marketing. Each goal must mesh with the others, so the more input you receive from employees, the better.

The boss can set goals for everyone, but when your employees feel like they’re part of the process, they’ll work harder to help you achieve those goals.

2. Look at Broad Trends

Take the time to study internal analytics and trends in your business. If revenue falls by 50 percent every January, how can you increase income in the first quarter? Study both

positive and negative patterns to see what works and what doesn’t.

Set specific goals to overcome the negatives of your business as well as ones that take advantage of what works well. Brainstorm with department heads, and figure out ways to improve even a modest 10 percent each year.

3. Set SMARTA Objectives

Set key goals and objectives that are specific and measurable. SMARTA goals help you set goals and take the steps toward achieving them. SMARTA stands for:

- **Specific:** Create specific goals with a narrow focus.
- **Measurable:** Decide how you’ll measure success (sales numbers, subscriber growth, etc.).
- **Achievable:** Your goals should be possible, or you’ll get discouraged.
- **Relevant:** Goals must make sense for the next phase of a business’ growth.
- **Timed:** Set deadlines.
- **Agreed:** Consult with company leaders and get their input.

Simply setting goals isn’t enough – set them with a purpose and vision.

4. Create an Editorial Calendar

Publishing frequently results in more exposure – businesses that publish at least 16 posts each month get over three times the attention. However, business owners often get distracted by the many other aspects of running a business and forget to schedule new posts. An editorial calendar creates a plan for what to post and when.

5. Hold Daily Meetings

Creating a plan is a nice start, but if you don’t follow through with it, it’s worthless. When you first come up with goals, the excitement drives you toward achieving them. As the year goes on, however, the excitement fades.

Holding daily meetings provides an opportunity to get everyone back on the same page and look at what tasks were completed and what ones need more focus.

6. Break Big Goals Into Smaller Ones

In one study on New Year’s resolutions, researchers found that only eight percent of people achieve their goals. One reason for abandoning goals is that large ones seem overwhelming.

One solution is to break big goals into smaller goals, which are more achievable. Look at your broad goals and divide them into smaller tasks that you can check off as you complete them.

7. Make the Goals Visible

One way to keep your eyes on the prize throughout the year is to write out your goals where everyone can see them and make them as visible as possible. Create large wall hangings and send out team email reminders about smaller goals.

Once you achieve a goal, either add a sizeable green checkmark over it or replace it with a new one. Seeing goals in black and white prioritizes the most critical ones over less important tasks.

8. Find an Accountability Partner

Saying you'll do X, Y and Z is easy, but following through is more laborious. Keep your eye on the prize by finding a mentor or someone to whom you're accountable. Set up specific deadlines for check-ins to see where you're at with your goals.

A good accountability partner understands your business and cares about your success. For example, another executive in a different department has a stake in your success because it impacts the company as a whole. For small businesses, seeking out another business owner who is not your competition but is in a similar industry would be a great option.

9. Reward Small Successes

Make progress toward your end goal by rewarding the small successes along the way. If your big goal is to double sales in 2019 and you add 25 percent new revenue in the first quarter, you're a quarter of the way there. Go ahead and reward employees with a pizza party at lunch or a cake in the breakroom. Take a day off for team building or some other fun activity. When employees know they have something positive to look forward to along the way, they're more likely to keep plugging ahead.

Create Multi-Year Plans

Goals should go far beyond the next few months or year and on into five years, 10 years and even 15 years in the future. Sure, the ones so far in advance change and morph, but having them maintains focus. Write your business goals out and break them down into smaller tasks until your dreams become a reality.

How to Set Business Goals for 2019 and Beyond