How to Set Business Goals That Are Actually Attainable

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Business leaders are constantly setting lofty, impressive-looking goals for themselves and their companies. But what good are those goals if they've been thrown out the window within a couple of weeks? It's time for business leaders to take charge and set intentions that can actually be achieved — not just high-minded ambitions that will fade away soon after.

Instead of settling for vague directions, they should strive to make their objectives actionable and attainable with the right activities. Now more than ever, it's essential for businesses to have tangible outcomes rather than empty promises.

Related: **The 5 Golden Rules of Goal-Setting**

Let your managers manage

Sitting in the C-suite brings its perks, but it also removes you from many of the day-to-day operations your company executes. Your team leaders, however, are in the trenches. While executives set the direction, they should require their team leaders to set the milestones. These critical front-line players have an intimate understanding of how their team performs and what attainable milestones are.

Without practical goals, employees risk simply shutting down or meandering aimlessly through flavor-of-the-month objectives. With realistic milestones, teams are fueled by purpose. Encouraging your team leaders to set these milestones

ensures they are realistic and translates to buy-in.

It bears repeating that your team managers require some direction. A clear, unbiased look at the last year can help set them on the right path. Executives should look at what was successful in that past year, determine why it worked, and figure out how to carry those same successes into the next year. Provide your front-line managers clear guidance on company goals and next steps, then step away. If you become a micromanager, you will squeeze your company to death.

Related: **8 Reasons You Should Give Your Employees More Control**

Hold regular Azimuth Checks

Once you've established realistic milestones for the year, it's time to hold your team accountable for meeting them. One way leaders can do this is with quarterly reviews. And look, I get it. These meetings seem like a time suck. In practice, if it's not ten minutes or less, I'm trying not to zone out on you. But at the end of the day, these quick check-ins can ensure that you and your team are on the same page and that everyone is clear on their expectations. Quarterly reviews vastly improve transparency as well as give leadership a chance to reinforce a united front.

Regular meetings provide a great opportunity for communication down to the lowest level and create a more personalized feel than the typical canned newsletter. Most people send those newsletters straight to their trash folder anyway. Your employees want to know what's going on in the organization and where they're headed, and they want to hear it straight from the top.

However, C-suite leaders can't be the only ones presenting these ideas and goals. During these presentations, the entire leadership team needs to bring their A-game; the rest of the company needs to feel their excitement. We don't have time to

be company cheerleaders at every given second. More importantly, most people who work for your company barely see the CEO, so the front-line managers need to take that vision and share it with the rest of the team.

Regular company-wide check-ins assure employees that their jobs are secure, that they're working for a company with an actual vision and supporting goals, and that their leadership is motivated to succeed. On the ground level, I tell my team leaders that I want every single presenter to come to that room with three things they're going to do this year to improve themselves as a manager, which helps them set personal goals that hopefully align with the company goals.

Related: The Real Secret to Entrepreneurial Success (That's Not What You Think)

Implement accountability to track progress

Organizations move by the minute, so you must monitor progress and hold your people accountable. Establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) is a must, and it can be good practice to make progress open knowledge throughout the organization. My company displays everyone's KPIs on centralized screens in our offices. This may cause many leaders to recoil in horror, but this transparency provides several key benefits.

First, it helps your team look out for teammates. I don't believe you should automatically eliminate your bottom 10% — you should motivate them instead. Displaying everyone's progress on KPIs lets your subordinate leaders notice if someone is suddenly underperforming so they can spring into action and figure out the issue.

One of our employees started missing KPIs, and our open tracking allowed her managers to notice. After some

investigating, we found that her mother had been diagnosed with a terminal illness, and she had tried to leave it at home to avoid burdening the rest of her team. You can't leave things like that at home, though, and instead of jumping to conclusions and terminating her, we were able to help her get through this trying time by letting her work remotely so she could care for her mom. With this accommodation in place, her KPIs skyrocketed back in no time.

The other benefit of KPI tracking is that it fosters healthy competition in your team. One of my companies had a banner year last year, and the top performers were able to double their salaries through bonuses. Peer pressure isn't necessarily a bad thing. By encouraging some competition among your team, you can help them reach milestones you wouldn't have thought possible. Your team may very well be capable of reaching new heights, but if you're not holding them accountable, they almost certainly won't.

Related: Fostering This Trait Is One of the Hardest Things for Leaders to Get Right

Your team deserves success

A key responsibility of a good CEO is to develop the next generation of CEOs. I want my employees to be CEOs someday, and I want them to be millionaires. But to do that, we need accountability measures. You will always have individuals trying to set the bar as low as possible; you have to hold them accountable.

The most important thing to remember is that you need to be self-aware when setting these goals and milestones. As a CEO, I have a BHAG. But that doesn't mean your employees have to have the same. Be fair, be realistic, but encourage them to push the envelope whenever possible. Treating your employees like future leaders can help them develop the maturity and sense to carry out your company's vision. Your team deserves

success, and you owe it to them. Crafting realistic and attainable goals is only one small way to do that.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/leadership/become-a-pro-at-setting-attainable-business-goals-with/443595