Now Is the Time to Set Cascading Goals

Seamless top-down flow and execution is the way to start 2020 on a successful note.

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Starting at the highest levels, every company strives to set goals, whether yearly, quarterly or monthly. But goals shouldn’t stop at the top. With research indicating that only 14 percent of employees understand their company’s strategy and direction, it’s clear that more is needed. For successful goal-setting, team activity should be aligned with the company’s wider aims, and individual goals with team ones. No matter the size of your business, keeping every employee aligned is essential, and your goal-setting practices will make all the difference.

Cascading Goals: Defined

Cascading goals are goals that flow from the top level down to the lowest, ensuring an alignment between overall strategy and execution. When carried out correctly, they ensure that everyday tasks and responsibilities at lower levels reflect overarching aims. They can be carried out either company-wide or team-wide, with goals flowing down from either the top level of an organization to the bottom, or from a manager to their reportees.

Cascading goals not only ensure that both teams and individual employees are striving towards the same ends, but also

foster a sense of purpose across the board, regardless of one’s position in the organizational hierarchy. Here are just a few of the benefits that come as a direct result of implementing cascading goals.

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Increased Transparency

In addition to generally feeling part of something bigger, it can be very positive for lower-level employees to be aware of what their managers are working on and how that directly relates to their job functions. Cascading goals are a great way to boost this awareness and establish the link between manager and employees’s job functions. They also encourage collaboration and enable team members to support each other during ongoing tasks and projects, making it easier to provide meaningful, ongoing feedback and celebrate milestones reached as a team.

Increased Sense of Purpose

By setting cascading goals, you can ensure everyone is aware of the wider purpose surrounding their daily work. It’s very motivating for people to see that they play an important role in the company and that they are contributing to its daily growth and success.

Employee Engagement

Nearly three-fourths of employees whose managers help them set performance goals are fully engaged at work. And with cascading goals ensuring that individual’s performance goals link to the team’s wider aims, they’re a great way to ensure that every employee is engaged.

While cascading goals are amazing to have in place, they’re

not the easiest to set up. Depending on the size and structure of your organization, cascading goals will likely take some time to implement, but in the long run they will save you time and energy. Once the system is in place and employees are made aware of how their goals relate to wider team/company practices, it will make the performance-management process far easier and more streamlined.

If your organization is large, cross-department communication can be an issue when implementing new practices. Even if everyone understands how their goals connect to upper management and wider-company aims, things can get lost in translation across departments, with goals sometimes not supporting or conflicting with each other. In introductory meetings, it’s good practice to make everyone aware of department-wide goals, so that everyone sees the bigger picture.

There are two important steps when it comes to introducing cascading goals into your company. Firstly, determine how far down you want the goal to cascade and at what level. Once this is established, the next step is deciding the logistics; how exactly are you going to delegate goals and the associated responsibilities from the top down? Here are a few tips.

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Set Quality Goals

Any kind of goal-implementing system is only as good as the goals being set. While cascading goals are an effective framework, it’s important to ensure that high-quality goals are being put in place or all your efforts could go to waste.

Keep Everyone Informed

It can be daunting for people to embrace change, especially if

your team’s goal-setting practices have been the same for some time. That’s why it’s crucial to make sure everyone is on board and fully understands the process and benefits. When introducing cascading goals, it’s good practice to hold team-wide meetings to explain how things will work and give people an opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

Keep It Personal

It’s worth mentioning that while cascading goals are great in terms of company success, you shouldn’t lose sight of individuals’s personal and professional development goals too. During performance reviews, one-on-ones and when you’re providing ongoing feedback, it’s important to still keep focus on individual employees’s growth and development, as well as wider company aims.

Keep Track

So now everyone’s goals are aligned, and everyone is aware of exactly what they’re working towards, on both an individual and wider level. Once this is complete, it’s key that there is an ongoing procedure in place to track progress. Using performance-management tools is a great way to assign the goals established, help managers check in with their team’s progress and provide real-time feedback to keep everyone motivated and on track, without interrupting daily workflow.

While they may take some time and effort to implement, cascading goals are an effective way to ensure company-wide alignment, where everyone from upper management to entry-level employees are working as part of a team and focused on a common objective. When combined with high-quality goals and consistent, effective follow-ups, cascading goals can make a world of difference.

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