

Use This 5-Step Process to Set and Achieve Your Sales Goals

Take your goal setting beyond the SMART framework by taking these three extra steps

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Now that it's 2019, sellers, managers and leaders are busy setting goals for the year. Many tackle this with the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) goal framework. Good start, but not good enough. And SMART can also lead sellers down paths that don't help.

Actually, achieving your sales goals requires taking it to the next step.

Step 1: Set *meaningful* goals.

People don't achieve goals unless the goals are *meaningful* to them. Sure, every seller has a quota for this year, but so what? If you want to maximize your motivation to achieve the goals, you must know why achieving it is important *to you*. To do that, go beyond your one-year quota-focused goal.

Set:

- A big picture goal: Do you want to join the fatFIRE movement at 47? Buy a vineyard? Define your destination. Make it one thing you yearn for. Then everything that helps you arrive at your destination becomes significant

and meaningful.

- Three-year goals: Set goals that put you on the trajectory to achieve your big picture goal. Get promoted to Senior Vice President? Move to the Enterprise Division? Get an MBA? You might have two or three of these goals.
- Annual goals: Set specific targets for one year. These are typically a mix of financial (make this much money or sell this much) and non-financial goals (win a major award). Limit these to no more than five.

Note that sellers at Top Performing Sales Organizations are more likely to have challenging goals. The A in the SMART framework suggests we should set goals that are achievable. In fact, setting a goal that feels achievable makes it too easy. And limiting. Instead, make your goal *barely achievable*. If the goal is challenging, you'll get more and get ahead faster.

Setting goals is the first step. Now on to actions.

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Step 2: Define *crystal clear* actions.

Outline exactly how you're going to achieve your goals. You can do this using a goal setting worksheet. Turn yearly goals that seem so far off into something you should do *today*. This makes all the difference. The best way to do this is to break down the annual goals in the following sequence.

- Quarterly: 90-day priorities are the linchpins that brings the goals framework together, bridging the gap between the long-term goals and today's action steps. Keep your quarterly priorities list between three to

five items.

- Monthly objectives: You can't work on every priority at once. Break them down further into what you will (and won't) work on this month.
- Weekly and daily actions: Break down your monthly objectives into what you will do each week, which will help you choose what to do *today*.

Do this and you literally break down your annual goals to what you should do today. Let's say you work in sales and your goal for the year is \$2 million. That means that you need to sell \$500K each quarter. You're confident 60 percent of your sales will come from renewals. That leaves \$800,000 in new business you need to generate this year, or \$200,000 per quarter.

How are you going to accomplish that? Improve your win rate? Increase your average size sale? Double your pipeline? How many leads do you expect to get from marketing? How many do you need to generate yourself?

What *exactly* will you do to generate them? Break down the numbers you need to achieve, and you can easily break them down to weekly and daily actions you need to take. Most goal setting stops here where the SMART process finishes. If you're serious about achieving your goals, it's critical to add three steps.

Related: The Tim Ferriss Approach to Setting Goals: Rig the Game so You Win

Step 3: Change your habits.

If you want different results, you have to do things differently, and do different things. This requires changing your habits – getting rid of bad habits and creating better ones.

You have to change the way you work.

Here are a few bad habits we see all the time that sap productivity and kill results:

- Checking email first thing, then getting sucked in.
- Mindless web surfing.
- Being reactive.
- Leaving your door open.
- Checking messages as they arrive.

Better habits:

- Starting your day with your greatest impact activities.
- Saying no to others when their requests will derail you.
- Becoming impossible to distract.

Easier said than done to make the changes, but *not* difficult to figure out what throws you off. Most of us know what habits keep us from achieving all we could. Even if we don't see them ourselves, someone else is often able to point them out. (Hopefully we are ready to listen.)

Once we are ready to listen, difficult as it might be, change our habits we can.

Related: Sun Tzu: How to Use Military Strategy to Build Better Habits

Step 4: Obsess over TIME.

Achieving goals means spending time on the right things, not the wrong things. It's as simple as that, but most of us *don't do it*. To do it, it's not enough to focus on our time. Not enough to be careful with time. Not enough to prioritize our time.

We must obsess. When you obsess over TIME, you become ruthless about how you spend it. To help you think about your time and where you're spending it, consider the 4 levels of TIME:

Level 4 – Treasured: This is the time you hold dear. The key to maximizing happiness and fulfilment is taking Treasured time.

Level 3 – Investment: This is the time you allocate to getting the right things done to achieve top performance. You get an outsized return on your Investment time as it pays dividends to drive priority initiatives forward. The key to achieving your goals is maximizing your Investment time.

Level 2 – Mandatory: This is the time spent doing things you feel you must do. Commuting to work, shaving, mowing the lawn, filling out expense reports or attending certain meetings. The key to Mandatory time is minimizing or converting it into Treasured or Investment time.

Level 1 – Empty: Time spent, nothing gained. Activities like scrolling through social media or watching excessive TV fall into this category. The key to Empty time is to eliminate it.

To understand how you're spending your time, track it for a few days. Start from the moment you wake up until you go to bed. Track it to the minute. Categorize each activity with the four levels above. This is an eye-opening experience. Many people find hours, or entire days, of time each week they can reallocate to Investment activities.

Related: How Time Tracking is Different from Time Policing

Step 5: Be impossible to distract.

If you want to achieve goals, *you must focus.*

Let nothing take your focus away. Few will argue with this, but many of us allow ourselves to get derailed. Most distractions are avoidable. First identify them, then eliminate them. Here are a few ways you may be getting distracted and how to put a halt to them.

- Alerts: Text messages, chat, email, social media, news sites, etc. Turn them off.
- Meetings: Do you need to be at all of them? Are they crucial to your success? Are the required ones really required? Do you really need to be there the whole hour, or will giving a five-minute update at the beginning do? Can you cancel them? Will twice a month work instead of every week? Pare down your meeting time ruthlessly.
- Open door policy. Maybe you need to be approachable at times to help your team. Make it known this time is between noon and 2 p.m. When you need to concentrate, close it. If there's an emergency, they'll come in. If not, they'll come by at noon.
- Workspace: Open office distracting you? Too much noise? Do what you need to tune everything out and signal to everyone, "Please do not disturb me." And if you need total concentration, work someplace else.

These are just a few examples. Complete a few days of the TIME tracking exercise and learn which distractions derail you most.

Everyone has serious intentions to achieve when they set their goals. Then people fail to achieve them. Why? Because they fail to work on them. Literally:

- They don't pick the right activities (thus by definition they're not working on achieving their priorities)
- If they do pick the right activities, they then get derailed, stop and work on something else
- Even when they stay focused on the right activities, they get distracted too often and don't make sufficient progress

Be different. Set meaningful goals. Define crystal clear actions. Change your habits. Obsess over TIME. Be impossible to distract.

Do so and nothing will stop you from achieving.

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