

Enemies Of Your Business Goals

We cannot grow a business without defining its purpose and assigning goals. What is life without a challenge? We have to be challenged by setting goals and then listing steps we can take to reach these goals. It has been told that Alexander the Great cried when he determined that there were no more worlds to conquer. The Romans became soft, complacent, and vulnerable at the peak of their power because there was no challenge ahead of them. I have heard that many elderly people retire, only to die prematurely when there is nothing to do.

Risking Another Bump

When fleas are captured and placed in a covered container, they immediately attempt to jump as high as they normally do. Of course, they strike the lid. After repeating this process a few times, they finally learn to jump a little lower to keep from striking the lid. After a while the lid can be removed, and the majority of the fleas will jump no higher than they did before the lid was taken off. They have conditioned themselves and adjusted to their imprisoned environment. Their desire to go any higher has finally vanished.

Some people are like those fleas. They hold themselves back in relation to their circumstances, thus impeding their progress and personal growth. Some compare themselves to others who are doing worse. We need to compare ourselves with those who are doing much better than we are so we have something to work toward. If we are not continually progressing toward our goals, we are probably slipping back into less than we could be.

Sometimes we like to make excuses for our personal failures. It's easy to blame others, our circumstances, our environment, or any convenient thing. If we fail to hit the bull's-eye, it is never the fault of the target. Most of the time a lack of success or accomplishment is not the fault of outside circumstances. The person who says "I can" and the person who says "I can't" are usually both right. Most of our battles are won or lost in our own imagination or mind. Some blame events, situations, and most often others for their failures. But the real cause is failing to really define their purpose and set goals for reaching specific objectives.

When one flea decides to risk another bump on the head and jump higher, he finds that he can do it and ultimately leaps to freedom. If one individual will strive to reach his full potential and set goals and objectives, he will reach it. Seeing this, others will be inspired to follow suit.

All entrepreneurs love to compete. The essence of any competition is that the outcome is uncertain. Hence there is an element of risk. It is probably an oversimplification to suggest that entrepreneurs do not fear failure with as much passion as they wish for success.

Bob Adams

Why Goals Are Not Set

Some people never set business goals because of the fear of failure. By determining just what our objectives are, defining distinct goals, and taking specific steps to reach those goals, we put into motion the very real possibility of achievement. We place attainment within our grasp. Taking specific action positions us for success instead of failure. But this takes time and effort. Deciding not to list our goals is the easiest way out. Our subconscious may be telling us, “No goals...no effort...thus no possibility of failure.”

Another reason many do not set business goals is the lack of determination to stay with the task until it becomes a reality. Many people never accomplish above the mediocre because they lack determination. They never stay with a project long enough to see their dream come true. If barriers appear, obstacles confront, or discouragement comes, they move on to some other unfulfilled goal. The result is a life not completely fulfilled and a person who has not reached his or her fullest potential.

Other people are professional business procrastinators. One newsletter writes about the following thoughts and ideas. All the experts on time management agree on at least one rule for getting results: “Do it now!” But tackling assignments now is not always as easy as it sounds. Sometimes you’re not in the mood for paperwork. Or you may be overwhelmed by the size or complexity of the project. When these tasks come up, you need the determination to forge ahead, the discipline to stay on track. Otherwise you may find yourself procrastinating and drifting toward a serious time bind. Procrastination in business can be the first step to business decline.

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That last phrase, “for no good reason,” is key, because sometimes there are excellent reasons for putting off a certain task. In fact, deciding to do one thing before another is what prioritizing is all about. However, if you

have organized your to-do list and are having trouble working through it in order of priority, procrastination may be the problem.

Most procrastination is the result of irrational thinking. You talk yourself into putting off a task, not because it is simply unpleasant, but because it is awful, horrible, unbearable! Of course, none of those descriptions is accurate. Convince yourself instead that the task is worth doing. Tell yourself, “I may not enjoy paperwork, but I can certainly stand it and may even feel good when it’s done.” Challenge your excuses for putting the assignment off.

For example, if you generally excuse yourself by saying, “But I work so well under pressure,” argue that, “Working under pressure really leaves me frustrated and tired, and I don’t have the time I need to be creative.”

“Challenge your excuses for putting things off.”

It is not good to succumb to the practice of procrastination in business or in your personal life. If your business talents lie in areas other than the area of immediate need, get some outside help—but get the job done!

Forcing yourself to do something uncomfortable or frightening helps to prove that it wasn’t so bad after all. Don’t let procrastination be a pleasant experience. If you usually procrastinate by socializing, just don’t do it! If you must procrastinate, do it in unpleasant conditions. Lock yourself in your office. No coffee. No visitors. When the fun goes away, the procrastination will also. Make a written promise to yourself that states a goal and includes a reward for accomplishing the goal.

You might keep a to-do list on your computer. Instead of deleting the completed items, you could cut and paste them under a “Done” category. This visible proof of progress

reinforces your efforts to stay on track and reminds you that doing it now—not tomorrow—can make your job less stressful and much easier to manage.

Dangerous Complacency

Perhaps you've read about the case of the complacent pelicans. Many years ago flocks of pelicans began to die on the California beach. Experts found no disease that contributed to the deaths. Yet many dead bodies littered the beach and created a problem for the Public Health Department.

An investigation found that the pelicans had gotten used to eating the refuse fishermen threw overboard when they cleaned their fish. In time, they became lazy. They ceased to fish and were content to live a soft life.

Then a law was passed that prohibited fishermen from dumping their refuse in the shallow water. These pelicans, equipped by nature to be expert fishers, were faced with a tremendous problem. They had lived so long on the food from the fishermen that they forgot how to seek their own food. They began to die by the hundreds.

So several hundred Alaskan pelicans were transported to the California beach. They quickly waded into the water and began to fish. In time, the surviving pelicans caught on. They realized that if they were going to live, they had to work. They had to be constantly challenged.

The Caterpillar Complex

Several years ago a scientist did an experiment with caterpillars. He placed them end-to-end around a saucer, with food and water in the middle, and began to watch the experiment. The caterpillars went around and around the saucer, following one another until all of them died of malnutrition.

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A Worthwhile Goal

Ask this question: “Is what I want worthwhile?” Your answer to this will determine if your want is greed or ambition. Goal-setting should bring out the best in a person, allowing him or her to stretch. It should be a sacrificial achievement that matures with time, effort, and service to others. Goals that don’t include service to others will eventually hinder, if not destroy, the person who has set them.

Earl Nightingale once said:

Human beings don’t have trouble achieving goals: They only have trouble setting them.

Marden says it this way:

Nothing can take the place of an all absorbing purpose. Education will not, genius will not, talent will not, industry will not, willpower will not. The purposeless life must ever be a failure.