Writing Good Goals

Without goals, and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination. - Fitzhugh Dodson

People who set goals literally create a map to their target achievements in life; marking where they should begin, where to pause and where and when to stop. Once this map is created, it allows you to check where you are in the scheme of things and whether or not you are making achievements that will take you closer to your goals.

By setting goals, people will know how they are doing and what they should be doing to achieve their targets or dreams in life. Goal setting enables people to track their progress in whatever endeavor they have set out to do. It helps people become more confident and motivated to achieve their plans.

There are 3 main steps to goal writing; reviewing competencies, writing good goals, and following up throughout the year.

Competencies

Competencies are behaviors that we work on throughout the year to show that we have the skills, knowledge and qualifications for our position. These are normally adequate and not often considered exceptional.

Competencies are expectations for basic requirements from the team members. They break down into various categories: Culture, Initiative, Quality of Work, Technical Skills, Values and Ethics and lastly Work Environment / Safety.

How do competencies work with goals? After reviewing your competencies, determine any areas that you need to work on and consider how you’d like to accomplish it. Is it through taking courses? Is it through learning more about a different department?

Competencies have been set by position. Goals, and more specifically how to attain or retain the competencies are set by team members and their managers.

S.M.A.R.T Goals

SMART is an acronym for the five characteristics of well-designed goals. Setting SMART goals provides us with the best chance of achieving those goals.

Specific - A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six “W” questions:

1. Who: Who is involved?
2. What: What do I want to accomplish?
3. Where: Identify a location.
4. When: Establish a time frame.
5. Which: Identify requirements and constraints.
6. Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.
Measurable - Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal.

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as……

- How much? How many?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable – When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

Realistic - To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both willing and able to work. A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be. But be sure that every goal represents substantial progress.

Timely – A goal should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it there’s no sense of urgency.

Goal Writing

In addition to setting SMART goals, consider these steps when writing your goals:

1. Develop a desire to achieve the goal. Sit down and write out all the benefits and advantages of achieving your goal. Make sure the goal you are working for is something you really want, not just something that sounds good.
2. Write your goal down. Once something is down on paper, it becomes substantial and starts working in your subconscious. Write your goal in the positive instead of the negative. Write your goal out in complete detail. Be specific.
3. Identify the obstacles that you will need to overcome and what you’ll need to acquire.
4. Set a deadline on your goal. Be realistic.
5. Set development activities under each goal that will assist in completing the goal.

Follow Up

Progress of goals and development activities associated with each goal should be updated on a regular basis. Look at goals and development activities at least monthly and consider various ways to achieve each. If modifications need to be made, visit with your manager about making changes.
Putting it all together

For example: My competency is to follow and promote all safety policies and procedure and take personal responsibility for safety.

So I ask myself - how specifically do I do that? Perhaps your answer is:

1. By actively participating in all monthly safety courses.
2. Reviewing the SOP manual monthly for updates.
3. Training new team members with the SOP manual, not by short cuts.
4. Present one safety topic review quarterly to my team members at our monthly meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unclear goal</th>
<th>Clear goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want to learn more about POET.</td>
<td>I want to increase my knowledge of the location and our industry. I will develop a plan to learn about one new topic per month. I will do this by reading industry articles, participating in department meetings and volunteering in one of the committees at my location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to be more involved.</td>
<td>Every month, starting in January, I will present a topic at our department meetings. These topics will be on safety related items; near misses or hot topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to move up in the company.</td>
<td>I want to move from being a team member into a supervisory role. I will do this by actively asking questions to check for clarity. I will routinely ask my manager for extra responsibilities and will start taking management classes in August 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to work safely.</td>
<td>I want to have zero accidents within my control. I will do this by following SOP’s and not taking shortcuts. I will also participate in safety training and safety meetings as required.</td>
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