

Seven Simple Steps for Setting and Achieving Your Goals

by Brian Tracy

The number one reason some people get more work done faster is because they are absolutely clear about their goals and objectives and they don't deviate from them.

A major reason for procrastination and lack of motivation is vagueness, confusion, and fuzzy-mindedness about what you've supposed to do and in what order and for what reason. You must avoid this common condition with all your strength by striving for greater clarity in everything you do.

Here is a great rule for success: Think on paper.

Only about 3% of adults have clear, written goals. These people accomplish five and ten times as much as people of equal or better education and ability but who have never taken the time to write out exactly what it is they want.

There's a powerful formula for setting and achieving goals that you can use for the rest of your life. It consists of seven simple steps. Taking any one of these steps can double or triple your productivity if you're not currently using it. Many graduates of my training programs have increased their incomes dramatically in a matter of a few years, or even a few months, with this simple, seven-step method.

Step 1: Decide exactly what you want. It's amazing how many people are working away, day after day, on low-value tasks because they've not decided what they want.

Step 2: Write it down. Think on paper. When you write down your goal, you crystallize it and give it tangible form. You create something that you can touch and see. On the other hand, a goal or objective that's not in writing is merely a wish or fantasy. It has no energy behind it. Unwritten goals lead to confusion, vagueness, misdirection and numerous mistakes.

Step 3: Set a deadline with your goal. A goal or decision without a deadline has no urgency. It has no real beginning or end. Without a definite deadline, you'll naturally procrastinate and get little done.

Step 4: Make a list of everything you can think of that you're going to have to do to achieve your goal. As you think of new activities, add them to your list. Keep building your list until it is complete. A list gives you a visual picture of the larger objective. It dramatically increases the likelihood that you'll achieve your goals as you have defined it and on schedule.

Step 5: Organize your list into a plan. Organize your list by priority and sequence. Take a few minutes to decide what you need to do first and what you can do later. Even better, lay out your plan visually, in the form of a series of boxes and circles on a sheet of paper. You'll be amazed at how much easier it is to achieve your goal when you break it down into individual tasks. With a written goal and an organized plan of action, you'll be far more productive than someone who's carrying his goals in his mind.

Step 6: Take action on your plan immediately. An average plan vigorously executed is far better than a brilliant plan on which nothing is done. For you to achieve any kind of success, execution is everything.

Step 7: Resolve to do something every single day that moves you toward your major goal. Read a specific number of pages on a key subject. Call on a specific number of prospects or customers. Engage in a specific period of physical exercise. Learn a certain number of new words in a foreign language. Never miss a day. Keep pushing forward. Once you start moving, keep moving. Don't stop. This decision, this discipline alone, can make you one of the most productive and successful people of your generation.

Clear written goals have a wonderful effect on your thinking. They motivate you and galvanize you into action. Goals are the fuel in the furnace of achievement. The bigger your goals and the clearer they are, the more excited you become about achieving your goals, the greater becomes your inner drive and desire to accomplish them.