

## DEVELOPING A GAME PLAN

*Whether it is the start of a new financial year, or a new calendar year, there is something about a 'new beginning' that makes us sit back and take stock, revisit our goals and make resolutions. A game plan is an effective tool for achieving those well-meaning resolutions.*

By Tricia Reardon

Whether it is a plan for business, sport, or life in general, goal-setting and pursuit gives us a method by which to maintain motivation and take control of the journey towards our dreams.

It's one thing though, to have a vision or dream of what it is that you want: getting there is something else. This is where planning comes in. Commitment, determination and belief also play a big role. To have the level of commitment required means that your vision must be something that you really want; not what someone else wants or what you think others want of you. Your success will depend on whether the vision is based on your own values and desires: this may require some soul-searching, because if the path is not really the one you want to be on, then you will not stay true to its course.

Once your vision is known, it is important to set in place a number of steps or goals that will lead you toward your end objective. These goals must be realistic, measurable and have time-lines attached to them. Picturing the outcome of each goal will greatly assist the process of putting measures and time-lines in place. Write down these goals, their measures and time-lines - the very act of writing will help you to commit yourself to them.



Visualising is a key component of achieving goals. Seeing yourself successfully performing all the tasks necessary to achieve goals will keep you focused, fuel your subconscious mind and instil self-belief. Sports people are very adept at this technique. They actively visualise their performance, mentally going over every move repeatedly so that when the game begins, they know instinctively what to do at every turn. Greg Norman is one who uses this technique. When asked whether his putting had let him down during a tournament, he replied, "It has nothing to do with my putting. I just haven't been seeing the ball fall into the hole as clearly as I usually do."

Rewarding yourself for achieving individual goals is also important. Celebrating being that one step closer to the dream is what keeps motivation alive: it also fires up self-esteem.

Another key point to keep in mind is to review your goals on a regular basis and understand that certain goals may even change. Many things can happen as we move along our path that can

impact on how we see ourselves, our goals and even our vision. Making allowances for change is necessary. Sometimes we over or under estimate what we can realistically achieve and this may require goals to be revised, reduced or scrapped altogether. Flexibility is critical in a world that is changing so rapidly - this also applies to our own goals and dreams.

In Paul Hanna's book 'You Can Do It!' he quotes a US survey that found the true major difference between millionaires and billionaires is "Millionaires read their goals once a day and billionaires read their goals twice a day." What this tells us is quite simple: know your vision, clarify your goals, believe in them, write them down, and read them - often!

Hectic schedules and the heavy demands in business today can make it difficult to put time aside for planning and goal-setting. Many aspects of effective planning are commonsense, but we often take it for granted that we know where we are heading without actually writing down our goals and reviewing them regularly. Having a clear vision for your business, communicating this to your team and setting in place measurable objectives and goals is an important factor in achieving success and controlling the threats and opportunities that your business may face.

Goal-setting is also an important aspect of managing people. They need to know what contribution they can make to the overall objective of the business, how to make it, how it can be measured and in what time-frame it needs to be accomplished. It is fundamental to all individuals' self-esteem and growth that they understand the value of their contribution. This is the essence of what keeps a person enthusiastic, motivated and committed to your business. After all, nobody will dispute the fact that retaining good people has a positive impact on all areas of a business including the bottomline.

Successful people from all walks of life have in common an understanding that taking responsibility for their actions, planning and being focused brings rewards. No matter how hard things may get, they know that success will only come from their own efforts. Resilience, tenacity, flexibility and an unswerving belief in a vision are the qualities and principles by which these people operate. They create their own luck and sound planning ensures they achieve it.

