



Goal Setting for a Productive and Meaningful 2020

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To hit the ground running in 2020, setting goals is essential. Goals are the roadmap for your life. They tell you where you are going and give you a path to get there. They may even warn you of any danger that lies ahead.

Goals are the fuel that powers you to your destination by increasing motivation. In other words, goals matter.

I was first introduced to the art of goal setting in the early 1980s while maturing as an account manager at Johnson & Higgins (now Marsh USA) in Philadelphia. Now, as I head into 2020, the art of goal-setting continues to give me direction to:

1. Decide what is important in my life.
2. Determine what I want to achieve.
3. Separate what is important from what is irrelevant.
4. Be motivated.
5. Facilitate my ability to benchmark progress.
6. Gain self-confidence as my goals become reality.

But goal setting is not just something I practice. Many top athletes, entertainers, and highly successful people also attribute their success to goal-setting.

In fact, there is a substantial body of research that shows that goals are directly connected to success and peak performance. For example, would you exercise more if you set a goal for yourself? Would your book of business grow more if you established a target goal?

The answer to both these questions is a resounding yes! Setting goals can increase your motivation and effort, resulting in increased achievement.

So how do you set goals that stick throughout the year? Make a plan using SMART goals.

Setting and Articulating SMART Goals

Every successful insurance and risk management professional has clearly set and articulated goals to attain specific objectives. Yet far too many risk consultants lack a focused goal. They typically reply that their rather fuzzy resolution for the coming year is to “Get more business.”

A better, more focused approach would be to set clear and achievable SMART goals. SMART goals will give you direction and show you whether you are getting closer to your desired objective.

SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. It is a simple tool that leads to successful outcomes.

S – Specific: Ask yourself what you want to achieve. Determine any roadblocks that could keep you from reaching your goal and make a plan to get around the obstacles. For instance, if you want to grow new business in 2020, try, “I plan to elevate my new business hit ratio to 90% in 2020 and obtain two new clients each month with revenues averaging \$10,000.” The moment you focus on a specific goal, it becomes a magnet that pulls you toward achieving it.

M – Measurable: A goal without a measurable outcome is like a football game without a scoreboard. Numbers are essential in business, and this step lets you evaluate whether your goal was achieved or not. Put concrete numbers in your goals so you can determine if you are on track. For example, your goal might be to improve client support by earning a 90% satisfied/very satisfied client satisfaction rate. Or you might want to grow your network by having at least one lunch each month with an external professional relationship. Consider posting a goals’ white board in your office as a daily reminder to keep yourself focused on the targeted results you want to achieve.

A – Achievable: Is your goal realistic? Do you have the ability to do it? Do you have the skills or tools you need to achieve it? If not, change your goal to something you can accomplish. This is where you dream big and aim for the stars, while keeping one foot firmly based in reality. For example, you may want to conduct a stewardship review for all clients with revenues above a

predetermined level. Or you may want to expand your knowledge earning a professional certification in 2020.

R – Realistic: Does your goal fit with your overall plan for yourself? Is this something you should spend your time doing? Take a good look at how realistic your goal is. A realistic goal might be to invest in and strengthen your knowledge about a more advanced risk management process. This is where you figure out what your “WHY” is. Why you want to do something is incredibly powerful.

T – Time-bound: Think of a goal as a dream with a timeline. Goals and objectives just don’t get done when you don’t set a time frame to them. Whether your goal is to increase your book of business by 20% or find five new clients, choose a time frame to accomplish your goal.

After you design **SMART** goals, make sure they are your goals, not someone else’s. The only way to succeed in goal-setting is to make sure the goal is your desire. Why? Because striving to achieve is not for the faint of heart. It can be tough to stick to your goal. And you will not have the drive to work toward a goal if you are not passionate about it.

On occasion, you will not accomplish a specific goal. Don’t get discouraged if you get off track. Everyone hits speedbumps from time to time. The failure to actualize a specific goal is not important as long as you learned a lesson from the process and gave it your best effort. As Thomas Edison once said, “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”

If you fail to accomplish a goal, take a moment to reflect and define the destination of your journey. Remember your big picture: What do you want? Think back to your WHY – it’s the foundation of your goals and will help you stick to them long-term. Ask yourself:

- Why did I choose my big-picture goal?
- What do I need to achieve in three years that will put me on the path to achieving my big-picture goal?

Hopefully, you are thinking that setting goals for yourself for 2020 is the right thing to do. Just remember, good intentions will not get you there. **You must have a plan.** Otherwise, your resolutions are just wishful thinking.

The Six-Step Plan to Goal Achievement

Building your roadmap is simple, but it takes a commitment or resolution from you to make the following steps a habit:

1. Every Friday before you leave work, review the upcoming week. Set your goals and priorities for the next week.
2. At the end of each day, reflect on how the day went, then set your goals, priorities, and actions for the next day. Put them on your calendar.

3. Review your goals the first thing each morning before you look at your emails or return any phone calls. Say your big-picture goal out loud. Commit to getting it done. Then review your calendar and make sure your goals are listed on it.
4. Align your daily, weekly, and 90-day goals and actions with your annual and big-picture goals. Break them down into short-term, specific tasks and actions that will ultimately lead to your achievement of your overall goal.
5. Find a goal commitment partner. This can be a spouse, friend, partner, colleague, or mentor. Share your big-picture goal with them. Research shows that people who write down, then share their goals are 97% more likely to accomplish them than those who do not have any accountability.
6. Review your progress every 90 days toward your annual goals. Each quarter, ask yourself, what do I need to accomplish over the next 90 days to achieve my annual goals? After you define it, write it down and commit to it. Put the action items on your calendar to ensure you make it happen.

Finally, goal setting should be a stimulating, energizing, and rewarding experience – not one to be ignored or put off. If you approach goal setting with a random mindset, the impact will be minimal. It is essential that your goal setting process is strategic.

So, be SMART! Stay focused on the end goal and keep taking steps to achieve it. You'll be on your way to making big life changes and seeing results in 2020!

About the Author

Scott Addis, CPCU, CRA, CBWA, TRA is the CEO of Beyond Insurance and is recognized as an industry leader having been named a Philadelphia finalist for *Inc. Magazine's* "Entrepreneur of the Year" award as well as one of the "25 Most Innovative Agents in America." Beyond Insurance is a consulting firm that offers leadership training, cultural transformation, and talent and tactical development for enlightened professionals who are looking to take their practice to the next level. Since 2007, the proven and repeatable processes of Beyond Insurance have transformed individuals and organizations as measured by enhanced organic growth, productivity, profitability, and value in the marketplace.