

Goal setting: turning dreams into reality

Laura Horton discusses goal setting and the steps required to ensure you achieve your goals

It is a known fact that the most successful people in the world are goal setters. This fact should inspire you too to set goals. Throughout my life I have witnessed friends and family set goals, achieve them, celebrate, and move onto repeat the process time and time again. In fact I would say that I am very lucky to be surrounded by inspiring goal setters.

In my professional life I have seen my peers successfully set goals and I have encouraged my teams to do the same. Goal setting can be fun. If that sentence surprises you do not despair. Goal setting does not have to make you feel like you are extracting your own teeth!

Ask yourself: how many of your peers set goals and do not follow through? How many times have you heard people say: 'I am going to work so hard at the gym— I will look great for my holiday this year.' The result: they go to the gym maybe 6 times and then slip back into their old routine and then complain when their bikini doesn't look good! Do you do the same? If so, you can change this pattern.

Why spend time setting goals that you are not going to achieve? It is de-motivating when others question you about the lack of results and you do not have an answer for them. There is a clear difference in setting goals and achieving them. Goal setting alone is overrated – Most people who set goals rarely achieve them. Follow the steps below to find out how your dreams can become a reality.



Laura travels throughout the UK bringing her unique programmes direct to you. The various training Laura Horton Consulting provides is bespoke to suit your practices goals and vision. All training provided is in-house and CPD verifiable. For further information contact 07912 360779, laura@laurahortonconsulting.co.uk or visit the website at www.laurahortonconsulting.co.uk for more details of the range of help at hand.



Setting your goals

The best way to set your goals is to write them down. It is important to add details. Exactly what is the amount that you wish your practice to gross per month in six months time? Does the new home you aspire to own have five bedrooms? Two bathrooms? A double garage?

Further points to note when writing your goals are:

1. Ensure your goals are positive.
2. Set goals of a professional, personal, and financial nature.
3. Make certain they are measurable – how will you know when you have achieved the goal?
4. Plan your goals for six months time.
5. Then continue for a year, two years, five years
6. Do not ignore steps 4-5 - these steps are encouraging you to make deadlines.
7. Make sure the goals are what you really want, not what sounds good.

The next important step is to make a record of your goals. Do not leave them on a note pad in your office to gather dust!

Reviewing your goals

Once they are typed place them in an area where you will see them daily. This way you are constantly reminded of your goals. When you look at your goals it is important not to only read the words. It is important to try to visualise the goal. What did that new house look like again? My goals are both written and visual. I have them printed and placed in front

of my desk in the office. I have a board that contains pictures of the goals I have created for myself.

This way my mind is ready to action my goals on a daily basis due to the gentle reminder I have given myself! It is important to revisit and amend your goals that are planned on the longer two or five years time frame – to make sure they are still realistic and what you want to achieve! I would advise that you regularly review and re-write your goals where needed. This is your plan and you do not have to stick to it. You are allowed to alter your targets. The vital part is accomplishing your goals.

Sharing

Have you ever shared your professional goals with your team? How can your team meet your practice goals – your bigger picture, if they do not know what it is?

Sharing your goals will enable you to achieve them quicker. Whilst lecturing for dental insight programme at The Dentistry Show in February 2009 I asked the delegates a question. Firstly I asked the team members in the audience: 'Do you know what the aims and aspirations of your dental practice are?'

Astonishingly I could count the number of those who thought they knew on one hand. I then asked the dentists in the room if their team knew of their aims - guess what? The result was the same! This is why so many dentists and practices goals remain as dreams, and do not become a reality.

Why don't dentists share their goals with

their team? Here are some typical answers:

1. 'I'm not too sure what my goals are'
2. 'I don't want to share my goals – I want to achieve them alone.'

And the most common answer:

3. 'I think I will lose my team's respect if my goals aren't achieved.'

Point number three is the most common answer so let's discuss this further:

We all know respect is earned. Respect is also quickly lost – that is the fear.

If you have had an experience where a team member has lost respect for you or maybe you have lost respect for them – the reason is down to the way the person reacted and dealt with a situation. There can be difference between a situation and a setback.

When you do not achieve a goal this is a setback. Your next step is to review and rewrite. How you deal with a setback speaks volumes about who you are. If you make your attitude count your team will only respect you more. Your attitude towards winning and losing is the key – be balanced, do not be too overwhelming when you have a good result and do not

despair when you have a poor one. When you have a poor result learn from it and quickly move on.

The prospect of losing respect should not stop you sharing your goals – if you share you are more likely to succeed, and in fact you win far more respect in the process. My advice when sharing your professional goals is to use the points below. You need to engage your team on an emotional level – dental teams are mainly female, and females respond to emotional discussions rather than factual ones.

- Explain to your team that you have something exciting you wish to share.
- Ensure there are no interruptions.
- Inform them that you are telling them as they all mean a great deal to you.
- Tell them you are about to share your goals with them for the future of the practice.

A good question now for you to answer is: have you ever asked your team their goals? If your answer is 'no' then I advise you to do so!

Action lists

Now that you have planned and shared your

professional goals it is time to take action. This is a crucial part of achieving your goals. To do this you will need to create action lists or to do lists, as they are commonly known. Again, ensure each action is typed, is measurable, and has deadlines for each point.

Completed goals

Celebrate! And more importantly celebrate each executed goal with the people who helped make it happen – for your professional goals this may well be your team.

Summary

Setting goals is vital if you wish to accomplish greater glory in all aspects of your life. However setting goals is not enough: It is imperative that you Action, Measure and Achieve your goals. Ensure you pay attention to detail. The day-to-day process of action, monitoring and observing will make the difference to your chances of success.

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