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LEADING THE WAY

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AIOP'S FRESH START

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ENABLING DEVELOPING PROMOTING

If it wasn't for the last minute, nothing

Look at how far through the year we are already.

So how are you going on your goals, your dreams, your challenges and your plans for this year? Are you almost half way there? I honestly believe that most of you won't be. For most people, time just passes and plans slide by. All of a sudden it is the end of another year and we have not accomplished what we wanted.

Too often we leave things until the last minute. It seems the hardest thing to do is START. Consider your days of study. I know in my first year of university I had one assignment that I did not start until the day prior to its due date. After pulling an all-nighter to complete it, I got a very poor mark and made the commitment to myself to never do that again. A commitment I met for the remainder of my studies.

The work environment and our home environment are no different. You cannot cram good parenting in to the few weeks you may spend with your child around their holidays. You cannot get eighty per cent of your project completed in the last twenty per cent of your time. If you do, chances are very high they will not be successful.

When working in IT, there was always the dreaded 'Death March' where the team worked 16 to 18 hour days to try and hit deadlines. Overtired workers made far too many mistakes, morale plummeted, blame was apportioned and the client was never happy. It is fantastic to see that IT has finally progressed with development methodologies like Agile and Scrum now ensuring that sanity prevails and progress is made.

That is great for IT, but what about how you and I operate our lives? How can we use some of these ideas to achieve our goals and desires?

Here are the top 10 tips to actually achieving your goals

1. Be flexible

John Lennon famously said, "Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans." Thank goodness for that! Sometimes what actually happens far exceeds the plans we have. So one of the secrets to achieving your goals is to have the flexibility to defer them, change them or even cancel them. Do not get so attached to the goal that you don't enjoy the present.

2. Decide what you want

It is not enough to have the goal to be better, richer or more successful. If I give you \$10 you are now richer, is that really what you wanted? What do you mean when you say you want to be successful in business? Is that by your measure, your parent's measure or your colleague's measure? Be really specific about what you want and how you will measure it. Consider also the impact of this goal. How will it impact not only you but those around you and your community? Sometimes you need to think bigger than yourself. This is Stephen Covey's 'Begin with the End In Mind'. How will you know where you are going without having some direction? This is particularly important in the non-work context. What sort of parent, friend, sibling, child, and member of community do you want to be? How do you want to be thought of by others? Without considering this, how will you know how to act or what to focus your attention on?

3. Break it down

The secret to eating an elephant is by taking one bite at a time. Even though Australian Media Mogul KerryPacker was heard to say "Take big bites and chew like anything" he was still only taking one bite at a time. So break your goals down into smaller manageable parts. Look at what it will take to achieve your goal and then break it down into

the components to set yourself up for success. For example, let's say you are a car sales person who wants to sell 200 new cars this year. That goal on its own may be daunting, but if you know that each sale will take 4 test drives and each test drive needs 2 dealer visits and each dealer visit needs 5 sales calls, then you know exactly what to do. You need to do 8,000 sales calls! (That's 200 by 4 by 2 by 5) Break them down into weekly and daily action lists. It is so much easier to measure and manage 28 sales calls a day than 166 sales calls a week or 667 sales calls a month or 8,000 sales calls a year.

4. Set check points

There will be some logical check points for your goal. It could be quarterly, monthly, based on certain actions or even events taking place. Having a check point gives you a chance to evaluate where you are at and what the next steps are. You may find that you want to change track, take into account new information or even take no further action.

5. Put actions in your diary

This is where most people fail. There have been planning sessions, strategic discussions, and goals broken down into smaller components, and then they forget to take action or even allow time for the action. It is imperative you allocate time for your goals. Put that time in your diary – particularly for your non-work activities. All too often work can take priority unknowingly because social and family events have not been allocated their due time.

6. Enrol others

Get others excited about what you are trying to achieve. It could be your family, your team, your management committee or simply your mastermind group. Sharing your goals means that they know what your focus is

would get done



and can support you when you need help or even show you some short cuts to achieve what you are after. As a leader, enrolling others means you are more likely to achieve your team goals. The best way to enrol others is to show them the big picture and share with them WHY it is important. Once they understand your WHY it is easier for them to share the why and be just as committed to achieving it. But don't just share your vision once, keep going back to it. Make sure all you do fits in with the vision that you have. Too often goals and visions are set at the start of the year and then they are put aside and forgotten. It must always be current. You nearly want your team to be sick of you talking about it! The frequent conversation will show your passion on commitment to the goal.

7. Measure progress

The management adage of What Gets Measured Gets Improved has never been as important. Measure your progress and share that measurement with others. If that means a big measurement thermometer, coloured graphs, or status updates on the noticeboard, then do it.

It will inspire others to keep going as well as keep them informed of updates. By the way, if you are a solo operator you still need the coloured graphs and charts to keep yourself motivated and focussed on what counts. Just because you may have a smaller team does not make your goals of focus any less important.

8. Celebrate success

For many years I have been a believer that if you make celebrating success a habit, you will make success a habit. It is almost Pavlovian. Knowing that you celebrate success your mind and body will strive in its endeavours to achieve the success to then celebrate it. So when you set your goals and your checkpoints, make sure you set how you will celebrate them as well. That way you can focus on the achievement as well as the celebration. One of my clients is a real estate agent. To inspire her team we set goals and sales targets for each month. As soon as they reached these targets they only had to work five days a week and not six. It was astounding the difference this made to the performance of the team.

9. Lead first – manage second

As a good manager, you need to take less than your fair share of the credit and more than your fair share of the blame. This is the same whether you are leading a team in business, social circumstances or the family unit. Too often people fall in to blame-storming rather than brain-storming. Look for what you can do to resolve an issue, solve a problem, obtain success and inspire your team. While you must manage the details and projects, the inspiration and leadership will payback far greater dividends than the management.

10. Have fun

The most important thing about having goals is to remember to enjoy the day. While you learn from the past and plan for the future, don't forget to live in the present. This is particularly important during the tougher times. The camaraderie and enjoyment that you have with your team, family and friends will be worth far more to you than the goal you achieve.

When it comes to achieving your goals, don't leave it until the last minute. While you focus on the goal, be sure to enjoy the journey. ■

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