**An Indepth Study on Goal Achievement**

***“10 steps to 5thlevel goal setting success”***

By Jon Bartos

It’s that time of year again, where all of us start to think of setting goals for next year. We are looking at what we want to do with our business as well as personal life. If you are like most people, your life didn’t change measurably in any direction. Oh you had the best intentions, but once you take stock in where you are today versus one year ago, except for a few minor changes you are about the same.. You might have a little more or a little less money, you may have gained a little more or lost a little weight, but all in all – even with visions of grandeur, you stayed about the same. So if you take this past year and times it by 50 – that pretty much where you are going to end up. Don’t feel bad. Most people are in the same boat. The reason? Most don’t understand the commitment and the process that to make life impacting changes and attaining goals. So how to do people really make massive changes in their lives to insure they reached their desired state of business, living and life? Lets look at what the research says on how people attain goals.

In “*Building a Practically Useful Theory of Goals Setting and Task Motivation*”1, Gary Latham from the University of Toronto and Edwin Locke from the University of Maryland summarize a 35 year study of empirical research on goal setting theory. Much of their research has been focused on goal setting in business in hopes of finding out what works and what doesn’t. After 35 years of studying -here is what they found:

* The highest level of success was moderate difficult goals
* Most Difficult goals produced the most effort, but not success
* Self Efficacy was critical in goal attainment (Believing they could achieve it)
* Feedback on progress was critical to success (How am I doing)
* The more specific the goal – the higher level of achievement
* The level of importance of the goal effected their outcome

What this means to us, is we need a process that take in account the necessary components to increase are chances of achieving every goal. After years of research, the 5th level process has just came out – so if you are ready to make life long changes for the better, buckle your seat belts, keep your hands and feet inside the ride at all times and let get this party started!

*Word of Caution: Change is hard. If it were simple, everyone would be living in Mansions and having servants to do the stuff we don’t want to do. Success takes personal sacrifice. It takes the ability to overcome adversity. I takes an enormous amount of REAL discipline. That’s right.. discipline.. Success doesn’t care if moma didn’t love you, hugged you enough or you grew up on the right street. Success and goal attainment are about taking full responsibility for where you are in life and your ability to do wha ever it takes to make the desired change. If you are willing to put your personal baggage and self doubt on the back burner, then read on, you may have an opportunity for REAL change and potential living your dream….*

**Step 1. First things first.**

 Before jumping in and setting goals to change your life for good, we need to evaluate where we are and what is most important to us. Here are five questions to ask your self and answer honestly in order to make sure we have the best chance to achieve our goal or set of goals. Take some time to really think about these. Reflect, remember, celebrate and experience a little remorse.

1. What were my Success in 2010 – *personal and professional?*
2. What were some of my Shortcomings in 2010?
3. What three things could I change professionally and personally that would have a significant impact on 2011?
4. What am I truly grateful for?

**Step 2. Set Smart Goals**

Now that we understand where are, where we have been and what’s most important to us, we need to focus on setting the right goals. In just setting each goal, keep in mind they be SMART. Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely. When setting goals insure you put them through the SMART test. For example.. Lets say you want to bill 500K in revenue. Your goals should look like this:

“ I Fred Flinstone am committed to bill 500K in 2011. I will do this by billing 100K in Q1, 125K in Q2, 125K in Q3 and 150K in Q4. In order to do this I will am committed to 5 First Time Sendouts per week, 4 plus hours of phone time per day, 2 New accounts per month and improving my Major account development skills. “

Pay particular close attention to the language. Fred is not going to try, or attempt or even work hard to achieve 500K in billings. Fred is “Committed”. Also Fred is very specific on how he will achieve this 500K in billings per year and the activities he needs to focus on DAILY to achieve them. Not only do you need to set Smart Goals, but you need to use the right language and back it up with how.

**Step 3 . Define the obstacles and how you get past them**

There are always obstacles in the way for achieving goals. Life happens fast. Kids need to go to soccer practice, the house needs to be cleaned, dinner needs to be made, etc… There will always be things that vie for your time. Make sure you define the obstacles in business as well as in life that will be hinders to your goal achievement. Once they are defined on things that would detract you from your goals, then determine how you will overcome them. Kids have to go to soccer and we all need to eat, I am not saying stop doing the things that are important to you and need to be done, just adjust schedules, get up earlier and do what you need to do to address the obstacles.

**Step 4. Develop the Action plan**

Without a plan of making your goal happen it is all but a wish or a dream… that most likely will never materialize. An action plan is the detailed steps on what needs to be done to achieve the desired outcome. The more detailed the plan with time, dates and specific actions needed, the better. Your action plan is your road map from where you are now, to where you want to go. It should be just as detailed.

**Step 5. What are the Critical Mile Stones**

Milestones are like measuring points to compare your progress to. If I need to go visit my parents in Corunna, Michigan from Cincinnati, Ohio – the important milestones are getting through Lima in about an hour, Toledo in about 2.5 hours and hitting the Cabelas store in Dundee Michigan in about 3 hours.

Milestones measure your progress and tell you if you are ahead of plan, which is always good, or behind plan and we may need to change our action plan to catch up to attain our time frame goals. In recruiting setting yearly goals are great. But backing them up with Quarterly, Monthly , weekly and daily targets are even more important. If you don’t ever hit your daily goals, nothing else will matter.

**Step 6. Get an Accountability Partner**

It’s tough to do this stuff alone. While you doing your best to be as disciplined as possible and facing the adversity that the world has thrown at you, it can be difficult. Having someone there to keep you on track and give you a little encouragement can make all the difference in the world. Find someone who knows you , will be honest with you if you to get off track, but also someone who can encourage you when the chips are down.

**Step 7. Believe**

In Claude Bristol book, “The Magic of Believing”2, he spells out the power of belief. In studying miracles all over the world that have occurred in different religions, the finding were staggering. It didn’t matter what the religion was that affected the outcome. It was the strength of the Belief – that was the major factor in the miracle actually happening. Your personal belief in that you can achieve your goals is critical to you success in goal attainment.

I had my third left knee surgery at toward the end of 2008. As some of you may know I compete nationally in the Masters track and field series every year in the field event Pole Vaulting. It gives individuals over 30 to keep competing. Three times a charm right? After work had been done on my knee, where they did 4 different things, my orthopedic surgeon strongly suggested I never run again. That’s right.. Never. For those of you who don’t know the sport of Pole Vaulting, running is kind of important. Needles to say I was devasted by this news. The Dr. said, “Jon if I could make you stop walking, I would.” Not exactly what you want to hear if you have a passion for something. After feeling sorry myself for about 10 minutes, I started doing research on techniques to strengthen my left knee and began an intense workout program filled with plyometrics, strength training and speed excercises. Progress was slow at first, but I kept the faith. I had to believe I could do it. In 2010 I won the Pole Vault Indoor National Championships in Boston and took third at the Outdoor National Championships in Sacremento in July. My sights are firmly set on winning the World Outdoor Championships set for July 2011. Your belief in yourself and your passion for your goal can help you overcome any obstacle.

**Step 8. Define your Why?**

If there is one thing that you could do to insure you reach any goal you set, its developing a powerful why. Your “WHY” is the reason you do what you do. It’s what will motivate you to climb any mountain or even walk through a brick wall in the face of adversity. It could be a person or even an event that happened in your life. It could an experience that you never want to experience again, or something that you feel so much for, you will never ever let them down. By defining your why, and truly letting it become part of your soul, you can become unstoppable in achieving anything you put your mind to.

One of my whys in life was a time when I couldn’t afford my little baby girls 6 month innaculations. I was 23 years old at the time and had just taken on a new job, two new car payments and a mortgage that was bigger than I thought. The thought today, 24 years later of not being able to afford my little girl her shots – still brings tears to my eyes and a rush of addrenaline to my heart – which was one of the things that helped me with the ability to overcome any type of adversity that has came my way for years.

**Step 9. Dream Big and Set the Bar High**

I know that Locke and Latham said don’t make the goals too big. We as humans are capable of achieving great things. Every year, world records are broken for speed, strength, intellect and how many hot dogs someone can devour. We have no idea still of the potential of any human being. The only thing we know is this. We are far from reaching it. The same goes for you. You have no idea of what your true potential is – in recruiting, in business, in sports or in life. I don’t know why we were put on earth, but I do know that it wasn’t to be average. It wasn’t for us to sit home and watch Jerry Springer or to be lost in the crowd or to be a sheep that follows the one in front of us. We were put here to do something extraordinary. I encourage you to set the bar high and see what potential can be in your life.

**Step 10: Reward yourself… Celebrate**

To keep you passionate and motivated, a reward systems works wonders. When you reach a milestone, you need to celebrate. When you over an obstacle - celebrate. You need to develop a habit of rewarding yourself for a job well done. When you hit your metrics for recruiting – you need to celebrate and reward yourself. Achieving a goal is like climbing a mountain. At each new altitude you reach, stop for a second and celebrate where you have came. On the other hand, if you come up short, ask yourself why it happened, make the corrections needed and keep going. Don’t get to down on yourself if you had a shortcoming. Its not about a specific ball game we are playing. Yes, be disappointed. But make the needed changes and practice harder. In then end, it’s not about that game, it’s about being on top at the end of the season.

My goal of writing this article was to help anyone who is kind enough to read this, in achieving any worthwhile goal they want in life. If you are like most people – there is probably a few things you would like changed in business and other areas . This process of 5th level goal setting can be used in all areas to improve any situation. Keep in mind the potential you have as well the important questions that need to answers before you goal set. Then set smart goals and really establish Milestones and understand how to over come your obstacles. If you develop a good action plan and back it up with a strong why, you will be 99% of the way to achieving what you want. I look forward to celebrating your success with you in 2011.