

Here's how you sidestep second-rate results by using the science of goal-setting!

It can be so frustrating when your business achieves less than you think it should.

But are you doing enough to help yourself?

Are you making the most of the hard science of goal-setting to help yourself?

Ignore goal-setting and you'll achieve less than you could.

Use goals to give yourself focus and guide your actions, and you'll achieve greater success.

STOP treating goal-setting as just another annual planning exercise.

START using stretch goals to stretch your thinking, stretch your people and stretch your creativity, and do it regularly.

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1. THE GE ORANGE EXERCISE – PROVING STRETCH GOALS WORK:

GE's extraordinary success, growing from \$12billion to \$280billion in 20 years, is partly thanks to their focus on stretch goals. To demonstrate the power of stretch goals and to get the buy-in of managers, they ran an exercise at a series of innovation days.

Stretch goals often challenge people because it feels like they're 'unachievable'. People are reluctant to commit to stretch goals because they feel like they are committing to something that will fail.

You can use this simple exercise to help demonstrate the power of stretch goals.

1. Give a team of 6 or 7 of your people one orange
2. Challenge them to all touch the whole orange one at a time, as quickly as possible, and for the first person who touches the orange to also touch it last
3. Tell them they can pass it, throw it do what they like to achieve the task as quickly as they can
4. When they are ready time their efforts with a stop watch (on your phone)
5. Whatever time they achieve ask them to have another go but make it faster this time (this works even better if there are more than one group – suggest they are competing with other groups)
6. Whatever time they achieve ask them to have another go and tell them they should be aiming for doing this in less than 1 second (which is what other groups have achieved)
7. If they struggle with this ask them to review what has to change for things to speed up – distance between hands – speed of the orange – and ask them what they can do to influence these variables

Solution - the group stacks up their palms on top of each other almost vertically and lets the orange fall from the first person's left hand (top of the stack) to the first person's right hand (bottom of the stack), whilst passing over everyone else's hand in between – it should take less than a second.



Profitable Goals

Support tools and resources

2. SMART GOALS

The SMART goal concept is accepted as a practical and easy to remember mnemonic strategy for goal setting. The research from Locke and Latham supports the effectiveness of setting SMART goals.

However, one element of SMART can get in the way of your high performance!

- S** goals must be **Specific**
- M** goals must be **Measurable**
- A** goals must be **Attainable**
- R** goals they must be **Relevant** to you
- T** goals must be **Time** bound

Locke and Latham's research strongly suggests that the middle **A (Attainable)** is wrong, as a stretch goal is not attainable. So to keep stretch goals SMART, swap attainable for **Awesome**.

3. KEY INSIGHT FROM HIP AND KNEE REPLACEMENT PATIENTS

The researchers, Sheina Orbell and Paschal Sheeran, gave the patients a booklet describing their rehabilitation schedule.

The booklet also included 13 mostly blank pages with the following instructions:

“My goals for this week are...?”

“Write down exactly what you are going to do. For example, if you are going to go for a walk this week, write down where and when you are going to walk.”

The successful patients completed the 13 pages with written down goals and plans, often in mundane but very specific (remember SMART) detail. It was this group that walked again twice as fast as those who didn't SMART their goals.

Here are two typical SMART remarks found in the patient's booklets:

“I'm going to walk and meet my wife at the bus stop at 3.30 in the afternoon. If it's too painful I'll take extra painkillers, and I'll take my raincoat if it's raining.”

“I'm going to get out of my chair and walk to the bathroom on my own. I'm going to take two steps the instant I'm stood up so that I don't sit back down again because of the pain.”



stop doing; I'm going to commit to seeing all the games my daughter plays after school; I'm going to leave my laptop at work on a Friday evening

Thanks to the hip and knee replacement patients I know I need to anticipate challenges and have a solution ready.

- My work colleagues are also under work pressure and may be unable to take work from me – if so I'll investigate hiring a part time or virtual PA
- Customer pressures might prevent me leaving on time to see my daughter play – so I'm going to block off 90 minutes the morning after my daughter's games to deal with any pressing customer issues
- If I need to travel to a customer on Monday and need to take my computer home on Friday I'll give it to my daughter for safe keeping (she can hide it)

The goals wheel exercise will enable you to practice setting SMART goals



5. FEEDBACK IS THE FOOD OF CHAMPIONS...

It is said that feedback is the food of champions (Ken Blanchard). In sport when a goal is scored or achieved, it is very obvious from the roar of the crowd and fellow teammates.

During training in sport there's a constant flow of feedback from both coaches and colleagues. In business this can be less obvious, less transparent and less effective.

In the **Business Bitesize** report, one of the hip replacement patients acknowledged his success at getting to the bathroom alone by having M&Ms available as a reward. Recognition, rewards and feedback are all important. Think about how a baby is encouraged to walk, speak or eat by themselves. They get a constant flow of feedback and encouragement.

Use the SMART goals, the goals wheel and anticipate the potential difficulties. Prepare your solutions to those difficulties and also prepare your feedback, recognition and reward processes too.

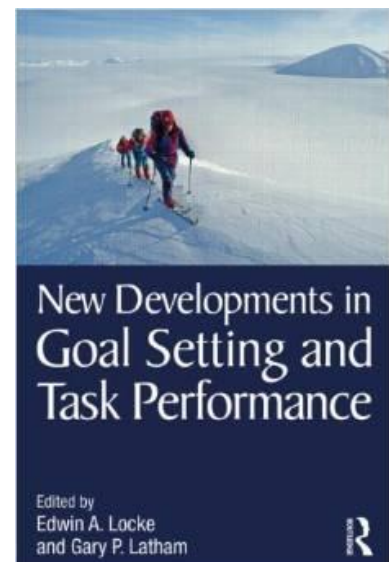
SMART stretch goals can be made even more powerful by working out your feedback, recognition and rewards.

6. THE BOOK

New Developments In Goal Setting And Task Performance

This book compiles 20 years of research and 1,000 studies into goal setting. It makes for fascinating reading.

You can [find out more about it here](#)





7. Sample Blank Goals Wheel



Instructions

1. choose your labels for your segments – create a 7, 8 or 9 segment wheel if you wish
2. draw a line that shows you where you believe you are now compared with you'd like to be
3. draw another line to represent where you want to be on one segment – your stretch goal
4. work out specific actions with timescales that you will take to achieve your stretch goal
5. work out what will get in your way
6. work out a possible solution to your anticipated challenges
7. work out your reward, recognition and feedback