

## GoalTrak® User News #12

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Our clients are wondering, as are many of us, “what's next”? “How are we to behave under these difficult circumstances”? One thing is certain; if we do nothing, nothing will happen. That is, without action there can be no results. If we sit around wringing our hands, lamenting the “lousy economy, sick credit situation and housing slump”, it will just get worse. The old adage, “don't get mad, get even”, seems to apply here.

There is no panacea, no one answer. However, we can do something. And, as cliché as it may sound, goal setting can come to our aid.

Our role as consultants is to help our clients improve organizational performance. The people in the organization are the engine that drives that performance. It follows then, that improving the performance of the people will have a direct impact on the performance of the organization as a whole. Just how can we generate and recognize improved organizational performance? And how can we use goal setting to help us?

Let's start with something I learned early in my consulting career: “Without a system of goals, our only motivation is survival”. A system of organizational goals includes both the organization's goals and the people's goals. Together, they are the “system”. One without the other will yield less than optimal results; or no results. We all know this. I submit to you, however, that knowing is not doing. Peter Drucker said, “Decisions are only good intentions until they degenerate into work”. Interesting use of the word “degenerate”. Simple examples may include, “we're going to increase sales” or, “let's reduce waste” or, “we need a higher return on our investments”.

Until these three “decisions” are converted, or degenerate into executable goals that are specific, measurable, tangible, realistic and controllable, they are “just good intentions”. There is no denying that it is hard work, mostly mental and emotional work, to create meaningful goals. In an organizational setting, the process is most effective when it is collaborative, meaning that differing points of view must be taken into account. This may lead to confrontation. Many people avoid confrontation because they equate it with negative conflict. With the confrontation of issues there can be resolution. With resolution consensus can be reached. Without at least consensus, if not agreement, forget it. The outcome of the process will likely be vague. This is the painful truth about effective, collaborative goal setting.

What does all this verbiage have to do with “getting even”? Everything! If you can set some short term, realistic goals, say 6 to 12 months, you can get results that will produce results for yourselves, your suppliers, your customers and your people. No guarantees! Doing nothing, however, does carry a guarantee. . .no results!

Regards,  
Rich & Steve