

Setting and Achieving Powerful Goals

Introduction

In January of 2007, Shane Gibson spoke at the Vancouver Board of Trade's *Leaders of Tomorrow Conference*. Mr. Gibson is an author and speaker on the subjects of social media and sales performance. Mr. Gibson is also President of KBI International Systems, which provides sales training programs globally.

During his keynote seminar, "Setting and Achieving Powerful Goals," Mr. Gibson speaks about how defining goals helps to shape a leader. Additionally, he states that it is essential to have the appropriate process in place to attain those goals. When discussing entrepreneurs, Mr. Gibson suggests that business owners tend to have powerful goals and generally have the courage to develop those goals. During the process of developing and ultimately achieving goals, entrepreneurs learn a great deal about themselves.

Mr. Gibson begins his presentation by quoting Zig Ziglar, an author, salesperson, and motivational speaker: "You've got to be before you can do, and do before you can have." He mentions this quote to remind us that in order to achieve the goals we set for ourselves, we must first believe in ourselves and take action. Only then, will we be able to attain success.

In this reading, we will explore the ideas presented by Mr. Gibson in his speech and the ways in which leaders can be effective in their goal-setting processes.

The Five Elements for Setting & Achieving Goals

Mr. Gibson says that there are five elements for setting and achieving goals. These steps are clarity, focus, esteem and belief, follow-through, and commitment. We will now discuss each of these steps.

Clarity

The first step in goal attainment is the need for a clear mission. Mr. Gibson believes that when you have a clear mission, you will be able to achieve it. If your mission is not clear, then you do not know where you are going. Once you have clearly stated your mission, you will be in a position to take advantage of opportunities that come your way.

To identify the tools necessary for defining your mission, clarity requires that your goals be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. When you are *specific* in your goals, you are able to identify the assets you will need to get there. You can only know if you have achieved your goals when you have set up ways in which to evaluate what you have done against a *measurable* set of

criteria. *Achievable* goals are aligned with our values and not the values of others. *Realistic* goals are those that you can produce. Finally, creating a sense of urgency will ensure that all activities are connected so that you can achieve your goals in a *timely* manner.

Focus

Mr. Gibson emphasizes that we must focus on what we are trying to achieve and not focus on any obstacles we may face. By focusing on what we want, we will become empowered.

Mr. Gibson gives the example of when he participated in a demonstration where he was asked how long it would take him to learn how to break a thick wooden board with his bare hands. He said that it would take him several weeks to learn the technique. The instructor, however, said that if Mr. Gibson followed the proper set of instructions, he could accomplish this goal within minutes. Mr. Gibson did not believe this was possible and used his own method when attempting to break the board. Not surprisingly, the board did not break. A small woman, who was part of the group, followed the leader's instructions and was able to break the board on the first try. When Mr. Gibson tried again, this time by following the given set of instructions, he was able to break the board. Mr. Gibson uses this example to illustrate the importance of ensuring that the mind focuses on the right solution and implements that solution.

Mr. Gibson also suggests that individuals write down their goals to enable the mind to create a picture of what success will look like. We should define our goals in writing, visualize them, and then prioritize them. By having a real awareness of our goals and defining where we want to go (i.e., focus), we will come to the right decisions, which will lead to better results.

Esteem and Belief

Mr. Gibson thinks that we are already capable of accomplishing our goals. In order to accomplish our goals, we need to allow ourselves to believe that we can achieve these goals.

Esteem is the belief in who you are and the clear picture, or sense of certainty, about yourself. If you are unhappy with that picture of yourself, then you can create a better picture. By creating a better picture, you will attract even greater things. For example, if we have a strong belief in ourselves, we will be better and stronger leaders. As a result, we will attract better workers. This will ultimately result in a better and stronger organization. Additionally, when we repeat tasks that reinforce success, we tend to feel better about our abilities.

Furthermore, Mr. Gibson recommends that we give ourselves permission to celebrate our successes. Too often, we focus on our failures and do not take the time to enjoy our accomplishments. We should not obsess over our failures, and we should let go of them after they occur.

Mr. Gibson believes that by feeling powerful, we can set powerful goals. We should have powerful conversations with ourselves and be honest about what those conversations tell us about how we can improve our esteem. To feel powerful about ourselves, we should also listen to what others have to say; we should take the time to measure our progress; we should contribute to the successes of others; and we should take the time to read and gain more knowledge.

Follow-Through

One of the most important aspects of being able to stay the course when achieving goals is to share those goals with someone who has high expectations of you. In this way, you will be accountable for your actions.

Another important aspect of follow-through is to revisit your goals often. Do they need revising? Are they on track? Answering these important questions will enable you to continue on your path to success.

Finally, Mr. Gibson points out the power of failure. We must understand that failure is part of the process of achieving success and that feedback we receive from failure is essential. Mr. Gibson points out that the only failure we experience is if we don't get back up. In essence, giving up should not be an option, rather we should take the lessons learned from failure in order to readdress how to achieve success. He concludes this part of his discussion by stating that experience comes from making the wrong decisions. Our wisdom comes from our experiences.

Commitment

Mr. Gibson concludes his presentation by citing the importance of having the commitment to see our goals through to their completion. Many times, people will accomplish a part of their goals, feel that they have made progress, and then lower their standards. This may occur because of complacency, laziness, or fear of not being able to attain the original set of goals.

By having firm goals and committing to them until the end, you will be successful. Additionally, by changing goals in mid-stream, you are giving a poor message to those you work with and others who are participants in attaining these goals. Showing a lack of commitment will impact those around you, who will lose trust and faith in the leader and who will lower their standards as well.

Conclusion

Leaders must own the destination for their goals. Strong leaders must be able to visualize their goals, share them with others, and commit to these goals until they have been accomplished. Strong leaders will attract similar-minded people, they will be able to create a better picture of desired goals, and their organization will become a stronger one.

Summary:

- Shane Gibson, author and sales performance motivator, says leaders must have a process for reaching their defined and specified goals.
- The five elements in the process for setting and achieving goals are clarity, focus, esteem and belief, follow-through, and commitment.
- Clarity requires us to define our goals and ensure that they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.
- Focus requires us to define, visualize, and prioritize what we are aiming to achieve.
- Esteem and belief require us to have faith in ourselves and to recognize that we already have the capability of being good leaders who can accomplish our goals.
- Follow-through requires us to be held accountable for the goals we set for ourselves and to recognize that failure is part of the process for achieving success.
- Commitment requires us to stay the course and maintain the high standards we have set for ourselves.
- To be effective leaders, we must demonstrate the commitment and high standards we want those around us to adopt.

Reference:

Gibson, Shane. 2007. "Setting and Achieving Powerful Goals." *Leaders of Tomorrow Conference*. Vancouver Board of Trade.