



4 steps to set your 2018 goals

By Jay Geier, DrBicuspid.com contributing writer

November 29, 2017 -- Goals give you a defined destination. Sometimes it may seem challenging to determine your goals -- and to commit to them. Following these few steps will help ensure you are setting the right type of goals to get you on the road in 2018.



1. Make a written list of clearly defined, specified goals

Vague, misty thoughts in your head are just ideas, not goals. Include some stretch goals. Decide to go for the so-called what if goals and have faith that you'll be able to figure out the how along the way.

2. Prioritize your list by quarter

Decide which ones will have the biggest impact if accomplished earlier in the year and which ones can wait or will take longer to accomplish.

3. Choose your most important goals

Choose your four most important goals for the quarter. Focus on the big rocks that, if accomplished would constitute complete success for the quarter. Commit to staying focused on these so everyone else's priorities don't get in the way of your goals.

4. Determine the critical decision

That is, what is the first domino that forces others to fall along the proper path? For example, if your goal is to build a new building, the first domino is the land purchase. Until you do that, it's premature to spend time and energy on anything else related to that new building.

What if you execute all the steps perfectly and yet don't achieve one or more of your goals in the desired time frame? If you make only 70% progress instead of 100%, will you feel like a failure? Give yourself a break. Learn to measure and appreciate progress, not just perfection. After all, you'll be 70% ahead of where you were at the beginning of the time period. Once the dominos start to fall, momentum will get you there the next quarter, or the next year, or may not until the one after that.

I'm an example

As disciplined as I am about preventing distractions, anticipating unforeseen circumstances, and building flexibility into my plan, I typically achieve only about 70% of the goals I write down for myself each year. That's because I always set stretch goals for myself. I want to be sure I'm pushing myself as far as I can go.

If I achieved 100% of my goals, that would only tell me I didn't set my goals high enough. I'm fine with 70% success, because I know the results I'll see down the road will be a by-product of the focus I put on these things now. I recognize and appreciate my progress, then keep working on them, confident that I'll get there soon enough and, when I do, I will know I gave it my personal all.

Don't be one of those people who get so discouraged when you miss a target that you stop setting goals altogether because you think you'll be judged or criticized for falling short. In reality, no one else cares. It only matters to you, so don't let you get in your own way of setting and striving for meaningful goals.

If increasing your new patient numbers is one of your 2018 goals, start strong by starting before the new year. Your key to achieving that goal is knowing how well your team is doing to get potential new patient calls converted into scheduled appointments.

Jay Geier is the founder and owner of the [Scheduling Institute](#), a dental training and practice consulting company. Take the 5 Star Challenge [here](#).

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