

Top Ten Business Motivators

By Ramona Creel

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Setting goals is the easy part -- but sticking with them over the long run can be a major challenge! Some people think that motivation requires will-power and dedication. Actually, staying motivated is all about setting up an environment that is conducive to you accomplishing your goals. Here are ten "tricks" for giving your business goals staying power past January 31st:

BREAK YOUR GOALS DOWN

Do you know why 90% of us don't keep our New Year's resolutions? Because our goals are too big and too vague. Instead of telling yourself that you want to "double your client load," try breaking that goal down into something smaller and more concrete. "Send 50 marketing letters" or "visit 5 new networking events" gives you a solid place to start -- then you can move on to another small goal that will take you one step closer to "doubling your client load."

PUT IN 15 MINUTES A DAY

Some people think that you have to commit hours of uninterrupted effort if you want to accomplish a goal. But the greatest advances are often the sum total of a series of **SMALL EFFORTS** -- a phone call here, a letter there, maybe a meeting. Once you have set your goals for the year, commit to spending 15 minutes each day doing something that will move you closer to accomplishing that goal. You will be amazed at how quickly you progress!

PAINT YOURSELF IN A CORNER

The worst deadline you can set for accomplishing a goal is "over the next year" -- too vague, too broad, and too much room for slacking. Sometimes it's best to paint yourself into a corner if you want to get a project done. If your goal is to publish a company newsletter for your clients, make a **COMMITMENT** to someone else. Start looking for advertisers or people to submit articles -- tell them when your first issue will hit the presses. Just knowing that other people are counting on you is often just the little "push" you need to get moving.

WORK WITH A "BUDDY"

This rule doesn't just apply at the gym! Do you have a colleague or business associate with whom you enjoy working? See if that person wants to team up with you on a few projects this year. Agree to spend some time each week focusing on one person's goals -- your goals one week and your buddy's the next. Even if all you do is brainstorm, you've moved a step closer to success!

TELL YOUR COLLEAGUES ABOUT YOUR PLANS

The best way to make yourself accountable for accomplishing your goals is to tell other people about your plans. The minute you spread the word that you are working on a project, people become interested in your progress. "Hey, how's that new book coming along?" Every time you hear those words, one of two things will happen. Either you will feel inspired to dig back in and get to work -- or you will feel lousy because you haven't made any progress. Option A gets you moving, while Option B tells you that something is out of alignment and you need to re-evaluate your goals. Either one is a step in the right direction.

PUT IT DOWN ON PAPER

You've heard it a million times -- if you write a goal down, it is more likely to come to fruition. There is something about the act of putting your thoughts (any thoughts) on paper that makes you more committed to the outcome. You have invested time and energy writing your goals down -- what a waste if you didn't actually go through with them!

REVIEW YOUR GOALS REGULARLY

The best thing about writing your goals down is that you have something physical to hold in your hand and refer back to when you need a boost. But reviewing your goals doesn't just mean skimming the page and counting up how many things you haven't done yet. You must also ask yourself some questions about each goal -- why haven't I made more progress on this goal? What's getting in my way? Is this goal still important to me? If your priorities have changed, drop it from your list. You have enough important things to do -- you don't need to sweat over not accomplishing an unimportant task.

DEVELOP A "MANTRA"

Repetition is the mother of success, so you need to remind yourself of your goals everyday. Pick your most important goal this year, and turn it into a one-sentence "mantra." Your mantra should be in the form of an affirmation -- a statement phrased as though you have already accomplished your goal ("I am a successful author" or "I am confident about my speaking abilities.") Repeat this mantra first thing when you get up, last thing before you go to bed, when you are driving in the car, as you take a shower. Post sticky notes with your mantra on it around your home and office. Pretty soon, this will become your natural way of thinking -- keeping you going when you run into a roadblock.

ENJOY YOUR SUCCESSES

When was the last time you really acknowledged the fact that you accomplished an important goal? Too often, we simply charge into the next task on our list without really appreciating our achievements. Next time, spend a few minutes reflecting on what you have accomplished -- remembering the time and effort you invested and savoring the feeling of completion. This will refresh and renew your enthusiasm to continue on with your next goal. Without that moment of pause, you will eventually burn yourself out and lose all sense of motivation.

PAT YOURSELF ON THE BACK

Do you reward yourself for a job well done? Lets go one step further -- do you plan ahead of time what reward you will give yourself when you complete a task on your list? There is a lot of wisdom in the old idea of a "carrot and stick." As you plan out your goals for the next year, attach a REWARD to each. It could be as simple as a walk around the block, or as grand as a two-week vacation -- just

make sure that your reward is commensurate with the amount of work you will have to do to reach that goal. And be consistent about rewarding yourself for every accomplishment, no matter how small. You deserve it!

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