

LMI® Journal

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Master Goal Setting to Be Successful

To gain full mastery of your attitudes, your time, and your life, immerse yourself in a total program of personal and organizational goals. Many personal goals involve items money can buy, and your career is the means for earning that money. Other personal goals focus on satisfying such intangible needs as security, ego satisfaction, and self-fulfillment that are inevitably tied to the work environment. When you recognize this relationship both intellectually and emotionally, you realize that productivity leads to the satisfaction of both your personal needs and your professional success.

Reaching business goals requires the cooperation of everyone in the organization. Ideally, everyone plays an appropriate part in choosing business goals, planning for their achievement, and working out the action steps. Few organizations, however, are ideal. Some business goals may be handed down to you with little opportunity for your input. You may find it easy to be wholeheartedly committed to the achievement of these goals, but it is possible that you might find yourself in partial disagreement with a particular goal or plan. At this point, carefully examine your priorities and values to determine exactly how you can contribute to the achievement of the stated goals and

how you can grow personally by doing so – even though you might have preferred to see the organization move in another direction. Express your ideas about particular organizational goals and plans to the right person at the right time. Only in the case of a serious clash between your personal values and those of the organization will you find it impossible to contribute appropriately. With careful consideration, you can gain insights into ways to contribute to the productivity and long-term success of the company.

One element to consider in both personal and organizational goal setting is the time investment required. Most organizations develop more ideas for profit and expansion than they have the resources to carry out. Consequently, some criteria must be established for choosing profitable ventures. Traditionally, these decisions are based on projected return on investment of capital. Obviously, though, some projects that promise high financial return require more time on the part of team members than others. In strategic planning, organizations must consider not only the amount of capital required for undertaking a new project and the expected return on investment, but they



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must also plan realistically for the amount of time required of key people to implement and supervise the project. Some projects that promise a high return on the investment of capital are impractical when the amount of time required by certain team members is considered.

To ensure adequate time to undertake exciting new projects, all members of the organization need to practice time-proven goal-setting principles of effective personal productivity. This is one strategy that always pays big dividends!

How the Goal-Setting Process Works

Goal setting is the most powerful process available to improve your personal productivity. Without planning and goal setting, all the desire that can be aroused in the limitless potential of the human spirit is wasted like the random lightning of a summer storm. It squanders its force in one flash across the heavens and is lost in the void of space without utility, purpose, or direction. It goes unharnessed and unused, its potential power wasted. Ironically, the contrast resulting from its sudden brilliance seems to leave behind an even darker future once the momentary glare fades.

In striking contrast, goal setting – supported by careful planning – provides a sense of direction to keep you focused on the most important activities. Goals serve as a filter to eliminate extraneous demands. Goals bring to life order, meaning, and purpose that sustain interest and motivation over a long period of time. Goals evoke your noblest qualities; they express your desire to achieve, to improve your life, and to be more effective, more productive, and more successful tomorrow than you are today.

Goal setting is the most powerful action you can take to improve your personal productivity. Simply defined, the goal-setting process is the process of:

- Developing a mission statement for your life.
- Writing a specific goal(s) that supports your mission.
- Listing the benefits of achieving the goal.
- Anticipating possible obstacles and solutions.
- Writing detailed action steps and deadlines to achieve the goal.
- Integrating the action steps into your planning system.
- Determining a method of tracking your progress.
- Writing affirmations to support your belief in your ability to accomplish the goal.
- Developing a visual representation that effectively reminds you of your goal.

Although success carries different meanings to different people, there is a definition that fits your dreams as well as

those of everyone else:

Success is the progressive realization of worthwhile, predetermined personal goals.

Success does not come by accident; you cannot buy it, inherit it, or even marry into it. Success depends on following a lifelong practice of goal setting and continuous growth – the process of “progressive realization.” Success also depends on seeking predetermined goals. Although many worthwhile achievements come as side effects of some other activity or purpose, they are, nevertheless, a



direct consequence of the pursuit of predetermined goals. The full, ultimate effect of reaching a specific goal is not always clearly visible now, but the important point to recognize is that achievement and increased personal productivity invariably arise as a direct consequence of striving toward predetermined goals.

The sole purpose of the goal-setting process is to guide you on the entire journey from wish to fulfillment. The steps in the process are simple but not simplistic, comprehensive but not complex. Be patient and keep an open mind until the overall pattern of activity begins to unfold. Just remember that you are what you are today because of events that unfolded over time and your choices in response to those events. When you wish to change, to alter attitudes or habits, or to develop new personality traits that will increase your effectiveness, that, too, takes time. Individual pace may vary, but the sequential process of goal setting does not; so follow the plan as outlined. When you internalize the goal-setting process, your goals create a magnetic attraction that draws you toward their achievement.

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The Productivity Challenge

Take charge of your time and productivity. As a leader with exciting dreams and a promising future, place high priority on your time. Time is your most important possession because your time is your life. In your efforts to continuously increase your productivity, keep in mind your purpose in maximizing your time in every activity: to reach your goals and enjoy them! With that purpose, choose to work smarter, not harder. Handle stress and urgent demands by establishing priorities for your time and the time of your team members. Use your increased available time for creative dreaming and planning, adequate rest, and physical fitness. These considerations, so often overlooked in the frantic pursuit of productivity, are essential to lasting productivity and effectiveness. Healthy, productive living is the result of effective time management and provides the fuel for long-term personal and professional achievement.

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Building Trust and Respect

Trust enables you to encourage other team members to use their skills and abilities to help move the entire team toward reaching its goal. When you display trust in others, showing them that you believe in them and that you have confidence in their skills and abilities to contribute to the team's success, they will trust and encourage you to use your skills and abilities to help reach the goal.

Mutual trust among all team players creates congruency in thought, ambition, desire, and action. Teamwork bolstered by trust minimizes stress, eliminates misunderstandings, and saves time as you do more. When you have team members who trust each other, you do not need to have lengthy conversations. Rather, you can almost speak in shorthand. These qualities create synergy – the phenomenon that enables team members working together to accomplish much more than if they worked solo.

Trust develops respect among team members. Respect is required for any healthy relationship whether it is personal or professional. Teams are frequently made up of people who bring very different skills and abilities to the work group; their differences contribute to the strengths and capabilities for reaching the assigned goal. When all the team members assume their appropriate responsibilities, mutual trust and respect develop.



The team leader is responsible to recognize the skills and abilities of each team player well enough to know who would be best in each position. The team members must have confidence in the team leader to make team assignments and to ensure that the right players are in the right positions. In a band, the leader assigns responsibility for playing the drum to the person who can best play the drum. The leader assigns a trumpet player the responsibility of playing the trumpet. The band members in turn trust that the leader knows best and goes along with his or her direction. This kind of trust creates harmony, respect, synergy, and, ultimately, success.

Working in a climate of trust reduces stress and enables energy to be used more constructively. If two people in a rowboat paddle randomly, they expend twice the energy to get half the results. But if they paddle in sync, they double their speed with half the effort. The exact same principle applies in any organization when team members work together with a high level of trust. They work together more efficiently and effectively because they know they can trust the other team members to do their part. Their loyalty grows, and their level of job satisfaction increases. When workers are doing their best to contribute to the success of the team and they are enjoying their jobs, the result is always a higher level of success.

Trust is essential to reach the goal, to get the job done. Like any worthwhile accomplishment, there are no shortcuts to establish trust:

- Developing trust takes time, effort, and commitment.
- Building trust means doing what is right even when it is difficult to do.
- Trust means encouraging other team members even when you do not feel like it.
- Trust means always doing your best and not letting the team down.

These increased levels of synergy and success are not limited to the work team; they expand into every other area of the organization. Customers come to believe that your organization keeps its promises and genuinely cares about their needs. Expanding business is the ultimate result. Your organization makes a profit, you have job security, and you enjoy the personal satisfaction of having contributed to it all.

Keeping Track of Your Performance

A good tracking system is one of the most useful tools for helping individuals grow. Progress can be demonstrated only by comparing the past and the present. Tracking is the only method of evaluating both the quantity and the quality of performance for individuals, for a department or work group, or for the overall organization.

Every goal – organizational or personal – needs a deadline or target date. Without a deadline, there is no pressure to perform at top capacity. Deadlines provide a motivational “push.” Once people discover what they can do, that new level of productivity becomes a constant challenge for achievement.

Choose a tracking system that meets these criteria:

- **Appropriate measurement.** Make sure the tracking tool measures each important aspect of the activity. If your goal

is to reduce the number of days between the receipt and shipping of orders, you won't be happy to discover that the time interval was cut from three days to one if you also learn the error rate rose from one percent to eight percent. In this case, a tracking plan should include both speed and accuracy.

- **Easy to use.** The measurement tool should not add significantly to the workload. If every worker must spend an hour a day just filling in the report, you lose valuable time that could have been used in more productive efforts.
- **Easy to interpret.** Tracking tools should present the facts visibly in a form that quickly reveals the pertinent facts. Charts, graphs, and reports with side-by-side comparisons to the last reporting period are easy to read and interpret. What you learn from the reports helps you decide what to do next. Make sure tracking information is used to advance the goals.

Providing Feedback on Performance

Because attitudes and behavior are so closely associated, it is often possible to change attitude by first changing behavior. When people try out new behavior patterns and discover that they are more satisfactory than established patterns, they gradually change their attitudes to match the new behaviors. Even when attitudes are favorable for success, employees sometimes do not know just what behaviors are appropriate expressions of those attitudes.

One of the best teaching tools is giving feedback on performance. Generally people respond to praise and recognition, but when they continue negative behavior, you

might need to use a negative injunction. The purpose of a negative injunction is to stop negative behavior that creates an obstacle to reaching organizational goals or is counter-productive to getting a job done well.

For instance, if someone is consistently late to meetings or late turning in reports, a negative injunction lets that person know that promptness is important and you expect a change in behavior. When team members know immediately whether their behaviors are adequate or lacking in some way, they more quickly establish the desired habits and make desired attitude changes.

As you provide feedback on performance to employees, you will achieve the best possible results by following some simple guidelines:

- ◆ **Make feedback specific.** Focus on the result of an action or decision rather than on the person. For example, you may tell a supervisor, “The production report you give me does not always provide the information I need. Let's go over the last one and agree on a form and schedule that give me the information I need to coordinate our work with that of other departments.” Focus attention on the report instead of on the person. It not only produces a change in behavior, but also increases the likelihood new behavior is what you desire.

- ◆ **Give positive as well as negative feedback.** Reserving feedback for correction of errors produces discouraged team members. Feedback should include praise for jobs well done, for innovative ideas pursued, and for extra effort expended to meet a deadline. Employees who are praised and recognized for good work are less likely to become defensive when correction is necessary.

- ◆ **Regard feedback as coaching for growth.** Feedback is a coaching opportunity in disguise. Your job as leader is to achieve organizational goals through people. While short-term goals may be reached with people at their present level of productivity, long-term goals can be achieved only when individual employees are encouraged to grow and increase their worth to the organization.

- ◆ **Welcome feedback on your own performance—both positive and negative.** Let the person you report to know that you want immediate, specific feedback. Avoid defensiveness when you receive suggestions for improvement. Learn to listen both to the person you report to and to your team members. You will hear ideas and information that you can use for your own personal growth.



Create an Atmosphere for Success

Understanding the reasoning behind certain actions – why people act as they do – can help you deal effectively with people when they seem completely irrational to you. All behavior is designed to satisfy some need, and even unproductive behavior in the workplace usually arises from some unmet, internal personal need. With physical needs, it is easy to see how difficult it can be for people to sustain satisfaction of needs.

The satisfaction of psychological needs is just as important but frequently more difficult. A series of life experiences often contributes to personal problems, making them more complex. People usually first try to satisfy needs by direct action. They work hard to appear successful, exercise to look stronger and more confident, or read books to increase knowledge. For most people, the direct approach works.

Some individuals, however, grew up with so many unsatisfied needs that they now feel generally inferior, guilty, or unworthy. A negative self-image makes the need for self-esteem extremely difficult to satisfy. A direct approach is usually only temporary and insufficient. As a result, people with low self-esteem build defenses.

Some of the most common defenses are easy to recognize. Learning to recognize defenses will help you refer people for help to find alternative ways of satisfying their needs. As you direct employees to resources for addressing their problems, you not only help them improve their quality of life, but you also prevent defensive behavior in the workplace. Recognizing these defensive behaviors helps you know how to best respond:

Aggression. An aggressive person strikes out in an attempt – often subconscious – to destroy the source of frustration. Aggression is a sign of inner fear – not bravery. Because in our society an actual physical release of hostility is generally unacceptable behavior, people may resort instead to gossip, slander, or ridicule as a means of venting hostility in a more socially acceptable fashion. Regard any new surge in aggressive behavior or attitudes as a warning of underlying problems. Using the “tell me about it” method, confront the behavior or negative attitudes.

Daydreaming. In spite of adequate training and above average ability, some people persist in escaping from the drab world of reality into a dream world where life is a bed of roses. Team members who persistently daydream rather

than work are exhibiting behavior more characteristic of adolescence than of adulthood. You can often cure daydreaming by helping individuals learn to set short-term goals and gradually establish a pattern of success.

Repression. Repression protects the self-image by rejecting thoughts that are unpleasant or cause guilt. Some repression may be positive, but an overdose results in intense fears and feelings of inferiority. Some repressed experiences produce feelings of guilt expressed through self-criticism – or even an apparent desire to provoke punishment. Because they desire to think well of themselves, people with severely repressed feelings attempt to bring suffering upon themselves to atone for their imagined shortcomings. Help team members exhibiting excess guilt, inferiority, or negativism to begin believing in themselves more. Give praise for successes whenever possible.



Rationalization. Rationalizers explain failure by making excuses. Why is production down? The raw materials were bad. Why were they not promoted? It was strictly favoritism! Rationalization is an attempt to boost the self-image by “lying to oneself.” Rationalizers must learn to admit their faults and overcome them. A

good system of feedback – positive and corrective – helps establish a climate in which team members feel secure enough to acknowledge weaknesses and grow.

Compartmentalization. Compartmentalizing is a way of controlling anxiety and guilt feelings by separating contradictory ideas in the conscious mind. Employees who firmly believe it is wrong to steal might use compartmentalization to justify carrying off company property to make up for salaries they believe are too low. Reasoning with compartmentalizers is wasted effort. But appealing to their emotions will bolster their egos and more likely nurture a commitment to desired behavior.

Following these principles will help you become sensitive to defensiveness and turn it into cooperation:

- Recognize defensiveness for what it is, and don't become defensive in turn.
- Reduce the perceived threat and help the team member feel self-approval and self-respect.
- Gain acceptance for ideas by appealing to an employee's desire or need for satisfaction.
- Demonstrate subtly that seeing things in a more positive way is advantageous to the employee.
- Create an atmosphere of security, understanding, and success rather than constant threat, negativism, and failure.

Prepare for Achieving Your Goals

Perhaps the most difficult problems people encounter in the process of achieving their goals are those that come as a surprise. It is much easier to deal with problems when you know in advance to expect them. Because of the disruptive power of unexpected problems, anticipating them and planning for their solution should be an integral part of the goal-setting process.

Once you have written down your goals and dreams, ask yourself this question: "If this is what I want from life, why do I not already have it?" Consider one goal at a time and list the obstacles that stand between you and its achievement. Some of the obstacles you list might be conditions in the environment over which you have little control. Others will almost certainly include some of your own attitudes and habits that prevent the achievement of your goal.

Suppose you have a goal to become more productive in your work so that you may gain a desired promotion. You may identify obstacles like these:

- ◆ I have so many interruptions that there is not enough time left for creative planning and development of new ideas.
- ◆ I tend to procrastinate until deadlines are too close to do my best on a project.
- ◆ There are two of my colleagues with whom I have difficulty communicating effectively. Sometimes this harms the productivity of the whole group.

For some goals, you will find only one or two obstacles. For others, your list will be considerably longer. It is important to realize that you are not likely to reach a goal until you know everything that stands in the way of its achievement. As you proceed with the development of your plan and take the action steps necessary to reach the goal, you may find that some obstacles are unimportant. You can easily mark them off the list. The real hazard, however, is failure to anticipate some problem that needs to be faced and solved.

Once you know what

problems stand between you and your goals, finding the solution is relatively simple. You will probably find multiple solutions for each of the obstacles you list. If, for example, you find that you are interrupted too often, you might list these solutions to overcoming this obstacle:

- ◆ Review your delegation practices to discover whether some of your people should be making decisions instead of seeking your approval so often.
- ◆ Provide better training for your people so they will be more self-sufficient in doing their work.
- ◆ Reserve a block of time for planning and creative work and take steps to protect that time from interruption.



Whatever obstacles or roadblocks you have listed, the solutions come from within. Almost any obstacle can be overcome by the actions that you take – by changing or improving your behavior or attitudes, by acquiring new information and skills, by developing additional talents, by broadening your outlook, or by cultivating new habits of personality or character. When you approach the solution of problems in this manner, you are using personal leadership to shift the emphasis from outside circumstances to your own responsible action in developing your potential. In other words, you quit

thinking about things you cannot control and concentrate on those you can.

As you go a step further in the development of your plan for achieving a particular goal, you will have at your fingertips all of the various strategies you can follow to overcome obstacles and bring your goal into reality. Not all of the obstacles you list will actually prove important. Some of the anticipated difficulties may never materialize. That means you will reach your goal with greater ease than you

had hoped. Use creativity and imagination in devising possible solutions for all of the obstacles you might encounter. The vast untapped potential you possess is available for your use.

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Pursue Goals with Power of Visualization

The mind is like a highly efficient computer. It controls emotions, attitudes, and actions according to the information it has been given to work with. If you feed your mind negative ideas, it can only respond negatively. But when you give it constructive, confident directives, it responds with positive motivation for productive action.

A second useful technique for focusing your creative power on your goals is the practice of visualization — the force that transforms your dreams into reality. Visualization is the act of mentally picturing ideas, events, circumstances, and concrete objects. The importance of visualization in goal setting is its effectiveness in enhancing your ability to achieve.

Visualization is exercised by successful, high achievers in every profession. The visualizer clearly and distinctively “sees” the results that will come from the persistent pursuit of goals. When you see a vivid picture of yourself in possession of your goals, the picture stimulates desire, sparks creativity in planning action steps, and fuels motivation to take action. In the majority of situations, vision gives more accurate knowledge than any other sense. This truth is reflected in the fact that we customarily think in pictures; in other words, we visualize.

- ▲ An inventor visualizes when mentally picturing a new device to accomplish a specific job.
- ▲ An advertising executive visualizes when planning a graphic layout to present the unique quality of a product or service.
- ▲ An artist visualizes by mentally forming the completed picture before the brush ever touches the canvas.
- ▲ A salesperson helps the prospect visualize by painting word pictures of the benefits a product or service provides.

You can, by conscious practice, refine your skill in visualization and turn it into a forceful habit that improves your personal productivity. Practice the creative ability to visualize, and support your visualization with concrete action. Once you begin to use visualization regularly and according to a plan, you will find it one of the most helpful tools you have ever used for harnessing the power of your imagination. Visualization affects every part of the goal-setting process.

- ▲ Visualization focuses your attention on your goals. You achieve a goal only when you know exactly what it is you want. Visualization brings a goal into sharp focus so you take only actions that move you in the right direction.



“Whatever you vividly imagine, ardently desire, sincerely believe, and enthusiastically act upon must inevitably come to pass.”

- ▲ Visualization increases desire. When, through visualization, you experience how it feels to be in possession of your goals, desire grows by leaps and bounds. Without desire there is no life nor excitement in your goals. Enthusiastic desire sustains motivation throughout the entire process of setting and achieving goals.
- ▲ Visualization intensifies beliefs and commitments. The saying, “Seeing is believing,” has more than just a grain of truth. When you visualize yourself in possession of a goal, you believe in your ability to achieve it. You know what it looks like, how it feels, and what you must gain in the way of knowledge and skill to possess it.
- ▲ Visualization sharpens concentration. Because visualization shows you the exact path to your destination, you are not distracted by outside circumstances or the urging of others to leave the path you have selected.

▲ Visualization relieves stress. Anxiety and stress creep in when doubt, uncertainty, and fear are associated with the future. Visualization

prevents and relieves stress about the future.

- ▲ Visualization fuels motivation. Visualization generates intense interest and a sense of urgency that keep you motivated. Procrastination, inertia, and indecision disappear. You are energized and eager to keep moving toward the accomplishment of your goals.

“Take charge of your life. You can do with it what you will,” said the Greek philosopher Plato. These words are still true today. You can do with your life whatever you will when you make the most of every minute. Take responsibility for your productivity by managing your time more effectively. You will be astonished at the results!

Bridging the Gap Between Potential and Performance

Since 1966, Leadership Management International™ has been bridging the gap between potential and performance by helping organizations and individuals evaluate their strengths and opportunities through implementation of the unique and proven LMI Process™.

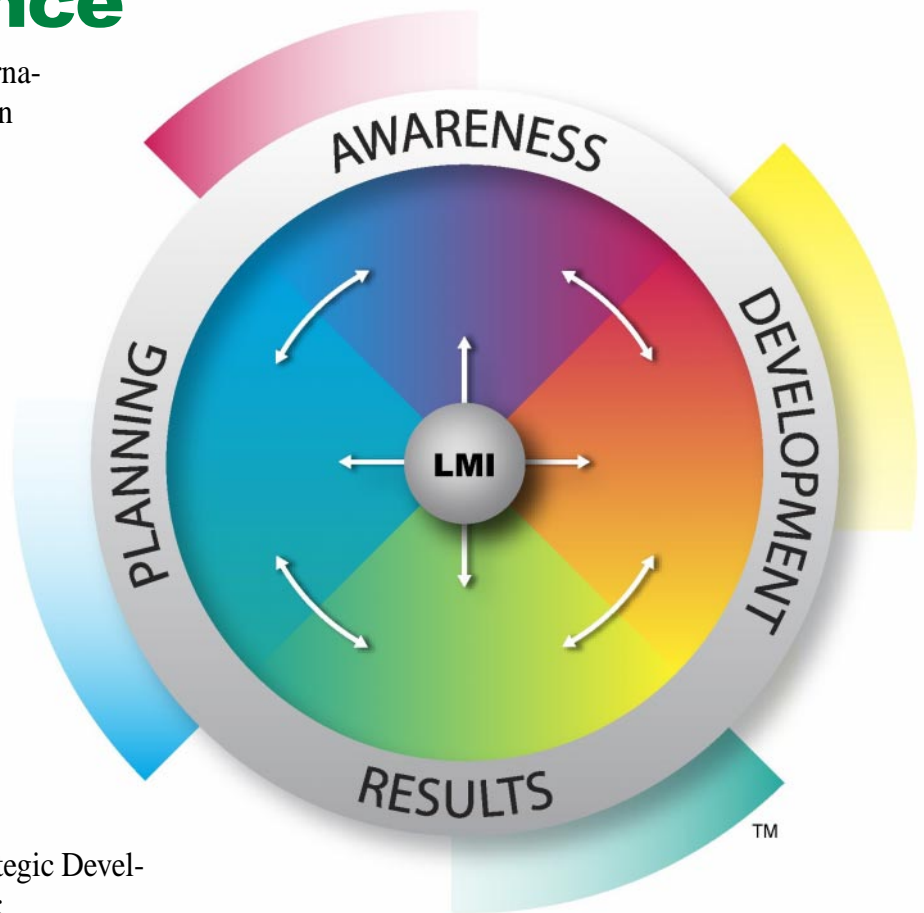
The LMI Process™ ...

- Develops leaders who, in turn, empower their people to use their untapped talents and abilities.
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