

Path to success

Go for the Goals

To reach your goals it's critical to define and measure your desired achievements every step of the way.

BY JOHN D. MAYFIELD

What would you do if you were planning a special dinner party for your spouse or friend and wanted to make sure it was a complete success? You'd probably start well in advance, making a list of the tasks you needed to complete for the party—send out invitations, order flowers, shop for food. You might even decide what must be accomplished a month in advance, a week in advance, and the day before the party.

The same amount of planning and foresight is necessary when it comes to your career. Setting and measuring your sales goals is essential for survival and success in real estate. Goals provide a road map you can follow, and without them you'll have trouble getting where you want to go. Set a goal, and you'll give yourself direction.

It's also critical to write down your goals and read them every day. In *What They Don't Teach You in the Harvard Business Schools*, author Mark McCormick found that only 3 percent of the 1979 Harvard Business School class had written down their goals and plans. Ten years after graduation, those 3 percent were making an average of 10 times more money than the rest of their class.

Another tactic for reaching your goals is to tie each one to a positive, emotionally-charged picture in your mind. For example, instead of saying "I want to increase my production by 25 percent," tie this measurable goal to a strong, positive emotional image. "I want to increase my production by 25 percent so I can buy a sailboat for my family." Then, when you get discouraged, envision your family standing on deck with the sails billowing against a clear, blue sky. How's that for motivation?

A key part of achieving your goals rests in the goals themselves. They can't be too lofty, or too simple, and it's smart to give yourself reasonable deadlines. Here are five guidelines to follow as you plan your successful career:

1. Set challenging, yet realistic goals. Setting attainable goals will build your confidence. But at the same time, don't be too timid in goal setting or you'll fail to reach your full potential. Ask your broker or a successful colleague to help you establish reasonable sales targets. Also keep in mind market conditions and any other factors, such as a family addition or illness, which may affect the time and energy you can devote to achieving your career goals.

2. Make sure results are measurable. It's too general to say you want to be a better real estate salesperson. It may be true, but it's not measurable. Instead, set more concrete goals, such as learning how to use wireless technology, getting three additional listings per month, or making five more follow-up calls to past customers.

3. Define your actions. Once you have a broad goal, such as getting three listings, you need to take the next step of defining detailed actions that you must take to meet this goal. For example, if you know that your conversion rate is one listing for every 200 postcards mailed, you'll need to set a goal of sending out an additional 600 postcards per month to get three more listings.

4. Set a timeframe. To achieve each goal, it's important to set interim milestones to help you stay on target. Then monitor your goals on a regular basis to be sure that you're making the progress you need. Also prioritize your goals, especially those you've set for each day and week.

5. Make compatible business and personal goals. Don't feel as though all goals need to revolve around your real estate career. Having personal goals such as spending more time with loved ones or exercising regularly are also important to a well-rounded life. Keep in mind, however, that your business and personal goals need to work together. For example, if one of your goals is to have dinner every night with your family, you may not be able to achieve this at the same time that you've set a business goal of increasing your sales by 50 percent.

Now is a great time to begin planning and setting goals for next year. I encourage you to start today with your goal planning, and I trust you will see the difference it will make in your life.