

CHALLENGE

A Herff Jones Impact Resource For Students

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JANUARY CHALLENGE: Redefining Goals for Second Semester

The beginning of second semester can sometimes be a slow time for student activity organizations. This is the perfect time to take a look at what was accomplished during first semester and get ready to move ahead. Remember that one of the most positive characteristics of a great leader is to have a set of clearly defined goals. It is a known fact that individuals and teams that set and achieve goals accomplish more, feel better about themselves, and are more confident about their abilities. Goals can be powerfully motivating.

Now is the time to assess your goals for the remainder of the year and also set some new ones. The accomplishment of anything great begins with clear goals. Remember that there is a procedure for setting and reaching goals. Leaders are great goal setters and goal achievers.

The Goal Setting Process

STEP ONE: Create a vision.

Before one sets a goal, a clear mental picture of what you want to achieve is needed.

This picture is your vision of success. This means seeing beyond what is to what could be. This vision should be truly meaningful. The visioning process includes quiet reflection by stepping back from your fast paced environment and relaxing. Use creativity and imagination. Picture yourself or your team achieving the goal.

STEP TWO: Decide on actions.

Now that the vision is clear, start deciding on the steps necessary to achieve the goal. These actions become specific goals to be accomplished. A goal is a target, an end and an objective. Accomplishing these goals moves one closer to the vision.

STEP THREE: Identify roadblocks.

Now that it is known what is needed to achieve your goals, roadblocks or barriers that could get in the way can be identified. Now solutions to the problems can be found if they arise. For each roadblock that is anticipated, develop strategies to get around them. Do not let a roadblock undermine your progress. Some strategies could include:

1. Changing your own thinking
2. Getting help from others

3. Committing to specific time blocks to do what needs to be done

STEP FOUR: List the benefits.

Make a list of the benefits when the goal is achieved. Are they worth the effort? If the answer is "yes" then move forward. Focus on the benefits.

STEP FIVE: Write the goal.

Research on high achievers shows that successful goal-setters write out their goals. There is something almost magical about writing down goals. If the goal is not written down, it is merely an idea or a wish.

Here is the simple and effective way to write goals. It is **S-M-A-R-T**.

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Specific - Good goals are specific. They detail exactly what is to be accomplished. Don't be vague or general.

Measurable - The success of the goal must be measured or one will never know if the goal has been achieved.

Attainable - Research shows us that high achievers set goals that challenge their abilities but that they are not realistically out of reach. When setting challenging but attainable goals one will experience success and increase self-esteem. Be realistic about your goals.

Relevant - Make sure that the goals are relevant to the vision. Keep the goals moving on track.

Time Bound - Good goals have a timeframe. Goals need a deadline so one is working in a specific time frame.

STEP SIX: Design your action plan.

Now there are goals and they are **SMART**, so it is known what will be accomplished and by what date. Design a specific action plan to achieve those goals. This is a step-by-step breakdown of the actions that will be taken to achieve each goal and when they will be taken. Each time an action is complete, check it off.

The secret to achieving goals is the willingness to do what it

takes to accomplish them. A goal setting action plan could include the following:

1. Is my vision clear? (can this goal really be achieved?)
2. Describe the goal
3. What problems could stop me from achieving this goal?
4. What are the benefits from achieving this goal?
5. What is the plan to overcome the problems listed in question #3?
6. When will the goal be completed (specify date)



7. What will be the evidence that I am getting close to completing my goal? (list what and by when)
8. How will the goal be measured?
9. Is the goal realistic and attainable?
10. What can be done so others will feel ownership in the goal?
11. If others are responsible for accomplishing this goal, were they involved in setting the goal?
12. What is the action plan to achieve the goal (List what and by when)

Let all members of your organization have input writing the goals. No one wants to be told that these are "our" goals when they had no voice in writing them. Everyone needs to

have a level of commitment and personal ownership in the goals. The key here, as with all good communication, is to listen to what others have to say.

Tasks that are not challenging are not motivating. Challenge creates motivation to achieve goals. Most people do not want to accomplish a goal just for the sake of accomplishing it. People want to understand its purpose and why they are doing a particular task. People will work harder if they see the importance. Make sure to celebrate and recognize the successes in achieving goals.

Setting and achieving goals can be motivating, both personally and for the team. Goals give one a well-defined purpose and a sense of accomplishment. Set goals and commit to the hard work necessary to achieve them.

Revisiting goal setting at the beginning of the second semester will help your organization have a successful spring and complete those great projects that are planned. Also remember that if there are new members in your organization, include icebreakers, energizers and teambuilding activities to make them feel that they are an important part of your organization.



Just a thought.....

"Your goals, minus your doubts, equal your reality."

~Ralph Martston

