

Published TMG Articles

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GOALS AND GUITARS

Being SMART is Good Business!

It seems that just about everyone plays guitar these days. I used to wonder why, and then I realized something: guitar is one of the easiest of instruments to play; nearly anyone can pick it up and just start strumming. There's lots of room for error, and most people seem to learn to play "by ear". That's just a folksy way of saying, "I don't want to take the time to learn to read music".

This is vastly different from those who learn to play trumpet, clarinet, or violin, etc. These instruments are more difficult to figure out and are more frequently enjoyed when played in concert with other portable instruments - as contrasted with the guitar that is often played alone (say, around the campfire). A couple of guitar players can get together and start "jamming". You cannot easily do this with the other instruments mentioned. For a variety of instruments to make beautiful music together, there must be one common ingredient: sheet music. In other words, for an orchestra to succeed in making beautiful music, there must be a written plan for each instrument; the best way to predict the final result is to have the music written down for all the participants to follow; i.e., an agreed upon road map that specifies the desired goal and a plan for getting there.

Successful business leaders have learned this important lesson. The best way to predict the final result is to have written goals for all participants to follow. Sure, we all have goals. Who hasn't written a shopping list? If you ask the typical business leader, manager or entrepreneur if they have goals, most will answer, "Yes!" Too often, they will then point at their head, and say, "I have them all right up here". I must tell you that this approach simply doesn't work over the long haul. Why do some leaders achieve their goals and others consistently do not? Winning 'goal setting' is a skill that some have mastered while others simply aren't aware of there being any "technique". Creating written goals that motivate is a basic trait of great leadership. Often, goals can be very intangible; writing your goals on paper changes this and makes them become very real.

Last week, one of my clients, Robb Back, Property Manager of Bermuda Run Apartments in Statesboro, Georgia said, "A written goal creates a tangible item that allows you to measure an otherwise intangible goal". He's right. When you write your goal, you make it real.

Written goals:

- Ensure the realization of your vision.

- Remove the barriers between where you are and where you want to be.

- Create an organization in which personal and organizational achievement are balanced for the good of all.

- Remember this acronym when creating written goals: SMART.

Goals should be:

- Specific,

- Measurable,

- Attainable,

- Realistically high, and

- Have a target date

Writing "SMART" goals increases your chances of success. Leave the "playing by ear" approach to campfire guitarists everywhere. By the way, can someone teach me "Smoke on the Water"?