

Enjoy the goal planning process

By Gleba & Associates

“If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will get you there.”

It’s true; If you don’t know where your journey should end, you can do whatever you want along the way and never get accused of being off track. However, that doesn’t mean you’ll get where you want to go.

There may be no better example of this than goal planning. No one can fault you for not having a “successful” year -- however you define it -- if you don’t determine what you want to achieve ahead of time. Yet if you feel like you should set goals because it’s “what business owners are supposed to do,” then don’t bother. Goal planning shouldn’t be a task you just grind through every year because you’ve been told you need to do it.

Do it for one simple, powerful reason: to identify what matters most to you. Only then will it become something that’s critical to your vision and your business growth.

9 CLEVER TRICKS

Here are nine ways to make your goal planning process more enjoyable again:



1. Be timely. I see so many owners start the goal planning process in January. That’s not good enough: The year starts in January, so you should know the morning of Jan. 1 what you’re striving for. Schedule meaningful, secluded time to plan for the coming year BEFORE the year begins. However, the old adage “better late than never” is very true. Just because it’s now May doesn’t mean that you can’t still be setting goals.

2. Be specific. Use numbers. “Grow my business” is foggy. “Bring in \$10 million of new sales” is crystal clear and measurable.

3. Think broadly. You have more to accomplish this year than bringing in new clients. Include anything business or personal that matters. (I’d bet that some of your personal goals are just as compelling as your top business goal.)



4. Get granular. High-level, outcome-based goals -- like hitting \$500,000 in production -- are great, but they're not ultimately controllable. You **can** control activity, however, and good activity often produces desired results. So supplement those outcome goals with activity-based goals -- for instance, "make an average of five calls a week to A+ clients." Even if you don't get the desired results, you can feel good about making the right efforts.

5. Post them prominently. Keep your goals in front of you. The act of looking at them regularly will affect your activity. Review them no less than weekly (and preferably daily). And by the way: If that seems like overkill, then your goals don't truly reflect what matters most.

6. Monitor your progress. Measure your achievements as often as is useful. If it's not practical to measure monthly, then do quarterly. Determine what percentage of the goal you have achieved at each checkpoint throughout the year.



7. Hold yourself accountable. Even better: Find a coach or partner who will challenge you. Just like going to the gym, it's a lot easier to do if someone is there to hold your feet to the fire.

8. Reward yourself for progress. Advisors tend to congratulate themselves for achieving one goal simply by moving on to the next. Take time to celebrate. Remember that results are not rewards in themselves. The result of bringing on four A+ clients is more revenue. A reward, however, is taking the team to dinner or taking your family for a weekend getaway.

9. Stay true to your vision. There's a reason you pursue goals in the first place -- and it's not just the fun of hitting them. What's your longer-term passion? Articulate it to remind yourself. There will be days when your goals lack inspiration. A sincere vision never lacks inspiration.

If the thought of traditional goal planning doesn't excite you, then remind yourself of what it really is: the insightful recognition of what matters most. It will determine where you want to spend your time, how you'll invest your resources, and what you'll pour your heart and mind into.

Take time to thoughtfully consider where you want to go. You may just start enjoying it.