

# GOAL SETTING: YOUR ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

by Glenn Williams



An idea you wake up with is unlikely to be achieved in a day. So how do you get to where you want to be?

Imagine waking and remembering that as you slipped into sleep the night before a great business idea formed in your mind.

You instantly throw off the bed covers and by the end of the day you see your idea come to fruition. Wouldn't that be nice! Of course, the chances of that happening are unlikely... it will no doubt remain a dream for some time!

The majority of leaders will tell you that to succeed takes a huge amount of effort. It's rare that an idea or objective can be turned into reality instantly, even if you spot an opening in a niche market. Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos famously said, "All overnight success takes about 10 years!"

Most successful entrepreneurs and leaders take a vision and then set to work on making it happen. That normally involves putting together a plan and setting goals on the road to achieving their desired outcomes.

## What are goals?

A goal is a resolution to achieve a specific result. Locke and Latham – two professors who have studied goal setting for almost 40 years – define goals as: "The object or aim of an action ... usually within a specified time limit." Goal setting is, therefore, similar to putting together a map: how do you get from point A to point Z? If you don't work out the journey, you may end up miles from where you want to be.

## Why setting goals is an important strategy

Summarising research on [goal setting](#), psychiatric counsellor Madhuleena Roy Chowdhury points out psychologists associate setting goals with a higher predictability of success.

She writes, "A person who is focused and goal-oriented is likely to have a more positive approach towards life and perceive failures as temporary setbacks, rather than personal shortcomings."

In a 2006 study, [Locke and Latham](#) highlighted a similar point, that there is a link between setting goals and higher levels of autonomy, motivation and self-confidence. The strategy of goal setting serves not only as a guide for action, but also as a motivational driver, especially when things don't go to plan.



## How to reach your goal

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success,” said Pablo Picasso.

Goal setting, like any successful strategy, requires a plan of action, belief in what you are doing and effort to achieve them.

But how do you reach a goal?

### 1. ABC OF GOALS

Frank L Smoll, a psychologist at the University of Washington, carried out studies on goal setting for athletes. He pointed out three essential features of effective goals:

- A - Achievable
- B - Believable
- C - Committed

If your goals are either not achievable or believable then you and your team will quickly become discouraged. Goals that are both achievable and believable are easier to commit to, and the higher the degree of commitment, the higher the chance of success.



## 2. SET GOALS IN WRITING

A study by psychologist Gail Matthews in 2015 showed that when people wrote down their goals, they were significantly more successful in achieving them. How many of us commit to do something in our minds, only to then forget about it when more pressing needs arise? Writing down your goals makes them more tangible, acting as a reminder because you can physically see them. Using phrases such as “I will” rather than “I want” increases the degree of commitment and therefore the chance of success.



### **3. STICK WITH IT**

An idea you wake up with is unlikely to be achieved in a day.

Even the world's best-known entrepreneurs have said that before they became a success, they experienced a number of failures. But a leader who believes and is committed to their short-term goals will eventually get to where they've been aiming.

What goals are you going after today?

---

#### References

Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task

motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *American Psychologist*, 57(9), 705–717

Chowdhury, M. R. (2021). The Science & Psychology Of Goal-Setting 101, *Positive Psychology*. Retrieved from <https://positivepsychology.com/goal-setting-psychology/>