

# How to Set Mindful and Obtainable Goals for Your Business

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## Part Two: Looking Forward

After reading every planning blog post in January and now February, you may have halted motivation right in its tracks. That's why I encouraged you to build momentum by first starting with a look in the rearview mirror in my previous blog. With that reflection from 2019, you're ready to plan achievable goals— no matter what time of year (Oh! Hello, March)! As we know, past business successes are a good indicator of your future successes. Let's begin planning actionable steps to build your business.

### Place Your Big Bets

This part of the process is where I have the most fun— go all in! Placing big bets are the choices you make for your business that 'move the needle' and have a strong or wide-range impact. They're the notable, high-value investments you put into your business. If making a bold move sounds intimidating or you're unsure where to start in identifying them, then consider asking yourself these 3 questions:

- What big picture goals do you see yourself achieving in the next 3-5 years?
- How would you best prioritize these goals? What if only three bets could be taken?
- If all the cards were stacked in your favor, how would the end of this year look?

Making significant moves in your business (or heck, in your own personal life) can feel risky, scary, or even irresponsible. However, your intuition may be the wisdom needed to tell you that a bold move is what is needed this year. Also, remember to look back at how you threaded the learnings from 2019 together and identified patterns and tendencies you want to carry into this year. Apply that same insight into these areas of uncertainty and hesitancy! The bets you are willing to make today could be the best move for your company to move forward. With your intuition and learnings from last year, make your move and go all in!

### Back Your Big Bets

You've identified where you want to ignite a fire for your business and placed your bets. Now let's back up these bets to get the pay-out! I've found the best way to do this is to think backward. For each big bet goal, place it on a timeline and then ask yourself, what are the little successes needed that lead to that moment your goal is actualized? Through this effort, you may realize you need more time or resources to back your goal. Through this exercise, I promise you'll end up with a roadmap to success. Or said differently, think on a macro level and envision the future then plan on a micro level to capture the achievements needed to build momentum, increase your odds and hit the payout. Now let's look at additional ways to support your goals:

- What business measures will you put in place to track successes towards the big goal? How will you know a goal is met during the process?
- What's the best business practices to implement that will bring momentum?
- Are these supporting goals (and the big bets) reasonable to achieve?
- Be sure to include some sure wins along with your big bets as everyone needs wind in their sails when setting and achieving goals.

## Systematize to Maximize

Every business knows to accomplish a goal, you need the proper systems in place to complete the work. With structure and discipline, you can keep your staff informed, coordinate and synchronize efforts and produce results. There is no shortage of tools to help you work more efficiently and be proactive. Yet, I've found there are three distinct areas that need a system to provide the necessary level of support to do the work and hit a big bet goal.

- **Project Roles and Responsibilities.** This is foundational for any project to succeed. There needs to be clear roles with explicit expectations to organize, plan, and complete efforts as well as make decisions. This clarity tends to be most helpful when a key member of a project is perhaps wearing a different hat than they're accustomed to— i.e. a new manager expected to drive decisions.
- **Communications.** This is a BIG one. It spans from having an infrastructure to send and store communications to an agreed-upon frequency of what info is provided, to whom and when. It's the support to get quick answers, escalate issues, communicate progress, facilitate meetings and everything in between. It's truly the glue in every project.
- **Task Management.** Every project needs a place to track and manage the work necessary to reach a goal— including reporting on the progress of efforts. It's a means to the end that drives direction, priority and focus across the team responsible to execute the work. It's the less-sexy-but-absolutely-necessary system needed for team members to get s\*\$t done while doing their 'day job's.

That said, it's important to have the right level of structure, discipline and systems that compliments your company's culture and personality. When you expand the project-based focus to daily business operations, consider other areas you may want to tighten up:

- What other systems, perhaps unique to your company, do you need to support you in achieving these goals?
- What tools or templates do you need to monitor progress and achieve your measurable goals? Does it need to be tool agnostic?
- What indicators, tell-tale signs were identified in the themes of last year's accomplishments? How can you highlight or circumvent them through a bit more structure?
- Which communications are delivered today that hit the mark and should be modeled for projects that support your big bet goals? Who delivers them? Using what means?

## Be Accountable

You trust your intuition and planned your 'big bet' goals by backing into the effort needed to obtain each one. You have the tools and systems to support you and back your bets. Now who holds you accountable so that you win big? Remember, some of the best work and biggest results occur when you have an accountability partner or team that holds you to your word and/or contributes towards your success. Start by listing your resources and staff— noting their superpowers and greatest strengths. Map your goals to each person's strengths and/or area of responsibilities before you determine how you plan to hold each other accountable. Now roll out the news and involve employees so that they

feel part of the process. Share context and color of the goal and then ask for their suggestions and recommendations on what's needed to meet the goal. Offer your accountability map to those you've associated with a goal and solicit their input. And, perhaps, you take these suggested questions into your next meeting:

- What is our greatest strength as a team? How can we play that to our advantage when it comes to our goals?
- When have you seen someone hold you accountable and it felt so good? What was that experience like?
- What indicators, tell-tale signs were identified in the themes of last year's accomplishments? How can you highlight or circumvent them through a bit more structure?
- How can we best support each other within the day to day work while we also hold each other accountable for delivering on these goals?

Keeping yourself and the team accountable will promote an exceptional workplace environment, and it's motivating in all forms. Having your colleagues keep you honest is equally beneficial and rewarding. Remember to praise good work (even when it's incremental) and offer ways to problem solve areas that need improvement. Celebrate and learn from each other and your collective successes!

Don't undersell your dreams; make them come true and trust your intuition, strengthen your path to success, and hold yourself and the team accountable! Most importantly, remember to report back and share your experiences of how this two-part planning blog helped (or not). I welcome you to offer your additions or revisions as I'm always interested in learning from you!



A passionate organizer of people and initiatives, Erica Smigielski brings over twenty years of experience in project leadership to financial software and SaaS companies who want to launch their next big idea. She leads large-scale, complex projects like product launches and company mergers and acquisitions as well as focused efforts to bring structure and process to fast-track businesses. Erica holds certifications as a Stanford Advanced Project Manager as well as a Certified Group Facilitator, making her a master orchestrator of strategic planning, as well as a skillful communicator who can expertly navigate complex group dynamics.