

Goal-Achievement System

From *The People Principle* by Ron Willingham

Preface:

The Goal-Achievement System is a process that you and your people can use to facilitate the reaching of any goal, objective, decision, or problem resolution. This Goal-Achievement System comes from the book, *The People Principle* by Ron Willingham. It's from Chapter 10, entitled; "The World Makes Way for People Who Know Where They're Going."

The Goal-Achievement System becomes a road map to follow for greater productivity. As you understand the stages you must go through in order to reach your goals, you'll naturally become more efficient and productive. The Goal-Achievement System helps harness all your mental and creative energies so you can then focus on your targets or objectives.

Introduction:

Goals may be simple or complex. They may be to complete a routine work function or to design a whole new strategic plan for your organization. The goal may be to solve a production problem, raise employee or customer satisfaction levels, or to increase profitability. Regardless of the objective, if you reached it, you followed basically the same process.

So, in sense, everything you do begins as a goal. The same is true for your people.

Then doesn't it make sense that if your people understand the goal-achievement process, they'll be much more efficient in getting results?

But what is the system?

A Goal-Achievement System:

The following Goal-Achievement System is a step-by-step process which, when followed, will help you define and reach specific goals. As I've said – this process isn't something you *intellectually learn*. Rather it's something you *emotionally experience*. There's a big difference.

The Goal-Achievement System has five parts. They are:

1. Setting goals
2. Planning strategy
3. Building belief
4. Developing strengths
5. Evaluating and managing progress

I've put this into a logical order so that, rather than experience goal setting as a hit-or-miss, stab-in-the-dark system, you'll learn a workable process.

Analyze almost any goal you've ever set and reached and you'll discover that you either consciously or unconsciously followed these steps. In this system, I've brought all the elements of goal achievement together. All you have to do is add desire and action in order to make it work for you.

Getting Into Action:

In order to get into action, I want you to get a pad of paper and a pen or pencil. Please read the following questions and write responses to the ones that are meaningful to you. Okay, no cheating now! Don't just read these and mentally answer or just think about them. Get a pen and paper and write your responses!

Here's the list of questions. Please read each one and write your response to the ones that suggest a desirable response. Some will be meaningful and appropriate; others won't be. Skip over the ones that aren't.

1. How much would you like to weigh?
2. How much money would you like to earn next month or next year?
3. What specific habit would you like to develop?
4. What specific habit would you like to break?
5. What personality trait would you like to develop?
6. What kind of home would you like to own?
7. What improvement would you like to make in your present home?
8. What would you like to do on your next vacation?
9. How would you like to communicate with family members?
10. How would you like to communicate with coworkers?
11. What new office would you like to enjoy?
12. What new position would you like to attain?
13. What new honor would you like to attain?
14. What specific person would you like to have as a closer friend?
15. What improvement in your physical condition would you like to make?
16. What professional or occupational skill would you like to strengthen?
17. What artistic or creative talent would you like to develop?
18. What kind of person would you like to marry?

19. What new hobby would you like to begin?
20. What new activity would you like to begin?
21. What one thing could you do to add more enjoyment to your life?
22. What one goal could you reach that would solve a specific problem you now have?
23. What one goal could you reach that would lessen tension or stress in your life?
24. What one activity could you do that would relieve pressure or worry?
25. What study habits would you like to acquire?
26. What grade-point average would you like to earn?
27. What additional education would you like to have?
28. What physical activity would you like to start?
29. How much money would you like to save each pay period?
30. What specific financial habit would you like to develop?
31. What debts would you like to pay off?
32. How much each month would you like to have when you retire?
33. How much money would you like to leave your family in case of an unexpected death?
34. What charitable contributions would you like to make?
35. How much merchandise, goods, or services would you like to sell? Each month, quarter, year?
36. What specific sales skills would you like to strengthen?
37. What would you like to do for your church?
38. What would you like to do for your community?
39. What civic interest or public service would you like to be involved in?
40. How would you like others to describe you?
41. What image would you like to communicate to others?
42. What specific actions can you take to build up your family members?
43. What family activities can you start doing?
44. What common interests can you plan to involve yourself with other family members?
45. What spiritual goals would you like to reach?
46. What spiritual qualities would you like to develop?
47. When people describe you, what three words would you like them to use?
48. What other things would you like to have happen to you in the next year?

Well, these do require some decisions. This is a very important step. Now that you've written answers to the ones that are meaningful to you, here's what I want you to do.

Step 1. Please review your written responses to the questions. Reflect on your answers. Check the six most important ones.

Here's a simple way to arrive at six. Look over all your responses and select the one *most-important* goal. Check it. Then the next most-important ... and so on.

Step 2. When you've selected the six most-important ones, look at each one and put a time limit or date of attainment beside each. Write down the date by which you want to achieve the goal.

Give yourself plenty of time to achieve your goals. Don't be unrealistic. Nothing happens overnight – although many of your goals will come into reality before you expect them to. But for now, be realistic about your target dates.

Step 3. When you've written target dates beside each of your goals, then comes a most important step. Now write your goals into definite statements like this:

“By (Date) I'll (Verb) (Goal) !”

Let me give you some examples.

“By May 15, I'll weigh 180 pounds!”

“By July 31, I'll average sales of two hundred thousand dollars' worth of life insurance each month!”

“Beginning January 1, I'll save 10 percent of my income each month!”

“By the end of this next semester I'll have a 3.0 grade-point average!”

You get the message don't you? Write your goals into a definite statement and put a time line on each one – write them the way I've suggested. Why? The main reason is that it puts your goal in the form of an active self-suggestion.

Step 4. When you have all six goals written like this, get six 3 x 5 index cards. On each card, write one goal statement on one side. Write them in exciting colors – maybe each in a different color. After writing them on the cards, put a rubber band around them. You're going to carry the cards with you and read them each day.

Goals Should Be Consistent:

Conflicting goals can create problems. To prevent this, look at your goals again, and then answer the following questions:

1. Are your goals consistent with your other goals?
2. Are they consistent with your spouse's goals?
3. Are they consistent with your values?
4. Are they consistent with your coworkers' goals?

These are important questions. Many people undermine themselves because their goals conflict with each other or the areas I've just mentioned.

Goals Should Be Statements of the Desired End Result:

Many people say they set goals, but upon analysis what they call goals are only vague wishes or hopes. For example, “My goal is to lose some weight!” Or “My goal is to make more money!” When you examine these statements you’ll see a common problem – they aren’t specific. They contain words like “some, more, better, larger.” These words keep their statements from being specific goal statements.

Remember, “*A goal is a statement of the desired end result!*”

Planning Strategy for Reaching Your Goals:

The second step of our Goal-Achievement System is planning strategy. Sometimes our strategy can be carefully planned; other times we have to spend time discovering the strategy.

Two Kinds of Goals:

There are basically two kinds of goals:

1. Where the strategy or steps of achievement are known, they just have to be taken.
2. Where the strategy or steps are unknown, they have to be discovered.

Planning is a left-brain logical exercise that requires some concrete organizational ability. But setting goals is usually a right-brain activity – dreaming, believing, and visualizing goal attainment. Often these dimensions don’t exist in the same person.

In my experience, people who get emotionally charged about new goals often have problems making clear plans. I’ve also observed that few people will actually sit down and initiate a goal strategy. Another interesting observation I’ve made is that those left-brain, detail-minded people who do plot out elaborate goal plans often enjoy *designing* the plan more than *working it out*.

All You Need to Know About Planning:

You learned to define goals, how to write them into a definite statement, and put a target date on them.

Let’s assume that your target dates are realistic – although it’s often hard to know what’s realistic and what isn’t.

Here are four simple questions that will help you get your planning job done:

1. What's my target date to reach this goal?
2. How can I break my goal down into sub-goals or incremental steps?
3. What activities will it take to complete each incremental step?
4. What activities can I perform today?

You'll see that they'll get you a long way down the road in goal planning. They address both the long and short terms. They also bring the reality of goal achievement down to today.

It's easy to fantasize about reaching distant goals and never address the responsibility for achieving them today. But to be successful, the pressure to reach goals should be a daily concern, not something for the future.

Breaking Your Goals Down into Incremental Steps:

In 1961 President Kennedy set a goal to put a man on the moon. At the time it sounded impossible, but the president was serious. So he formed a team of scientists to develop the strategy, and the rest is history. That may have been the most difficult goal that I've seen set and achieved in my lifetime – an incredible event! The team identified each incremental step, developed a strategy, and eight years later, the goal was reached.

Your goals can be broken down into incremental steps, or sub-goals. Then as each step is realized, you move toward you larger goals.

Building Belief in Your Goals:

If you are skeptical or if you do not believe in your goals – you will not achieve them. Having a positive attitude and belief in yourself and in reaching your goals is a must.

Developing Strengths to Reach Your Goals:

Often, before a goal can be reached, we must develop some personal strengths. And the same is true for corporate or organizational goals. Developing strengths is part of the price of goals.

Here are three kinds of strengths you may have to develop in order to reach your goals:

1. Attitudes
2. Habits
3. Skills

Attitudes:

Our attitudes are how we think – about ourselves and others. It's a mind-set, a belief system, a viewpoint. We commonly characterize attitudes as positive or negative. Of course, they can be either, but those are only two dimensions of the way we think.

Our attitudes, or our views toward people, situations, and circumstance, are the product of many things: our education, experience, culture, training, mentoring or modeling of others, heritage. How do we view things? How do we explain who we are and how we fit into the world around us? These describe our attitude.

Habits:

A habit is an automatic response, something you do unconsciously, instinctively, without thinking. We're all creatures of habits. From the way we brush our teeth, comb our hair, and put on our shoes in the morning, to the way we do our jobs. Good habits cause good results; bad ones cause bad results. It's cause and effect.

Success is usually the result of certain habits. Once a habit is formed, our automatic mechanism takes over and unconsciously causes us to perform in a habitual way in different situations.

Most successful people have developed good time-management habits. Procrastination, indecisiveness, and inaction are weak habits that can be changed. Let me give you an example. Years ago, when reading *Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude*, I was forced to confront my habit of procrastination. The authors recommended memorizing the self-suggestion, "Do it now!" and saying the words over and over until they became permanently imprinted on our minds. Whenever we see something that needs to be done, we can flash this mental command, "Do it now!" to ourselves.

I added another suggestion: "When I see something that needs to be done, I do it!" Then I repeated this to myself fifty times each morning and fifty times each afternoon. After this repetitive programming, every time I say something that needed to be done, this command would flash into my conscious mind: "When I see something that needs to be done, I do it!" I would then follow through with action. That's how I developed a habit.

All of our habits form the same way! Habits are formed by consciously doing certain actions repetitively, over time. It takes *practice* and *time lapse* for habits to form. It usually takes a minimum of twenty-one days of practicing an action before a habit emerges.

Habits are broken by substituting one action for another – repeatedly over time.

Remember – *Habits are formed or broken by consciously acting repetitively over time* – this is important to know.

What habits will it take to reach your goals? What habits will you have to break? What will you replace them with? As you review your goals, ask yourself these questions and record your responses. The process can open the doors to your new goals – and not doing it might keep the doors of your new goals permanently closed!

Skills:

Skills are developed abilities. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are skills. Playing golf, painting a picture, sewing a button on shirt, performing a root canal, doing laser surgery to remove a cataract, doing a heart bypass, riding a bicycle are all skills.

In order to reach your goals, you'll have to develop skills. A good question, then, is "What skills must I develop in order to reach my goals?" The skills that you define will then become sub-goals. As you ask this question of yourself (and, more importantly, as you get answers), you'll discover some important factors in reaching your goals.

Managing Progress to Reach Your Goals:

In order to manage your progress, here are four action guides:

1. Review goals
2. Proceed
3. Revise
4. Recycle

Let's consider each step. You'll see how easy they are and how they fit into our system.

Review Goals:

The first action guide for managing your goal progress is to *review your goals*. You can do this by reading your goals daily or weekly. Each time you read your goals ask yourself these questions:

1. Where am I with this goal – what is my progress?
2. Are all my goals still important to me?
3. How can I best use my time?
4. What sub-goals should I have already reached to take me to my main goals?

Until this process is internalized into your habits, I'd recommend that you go through it daily, then two or three times each week.

As you review your goals, you'll discover only three appropriate responses. For each of your goals, you'll want to:

1. Proceed
2. Revise
3. Recycle

Proceed:

You'll *proceed* with your goal if you still want to achieve it, believe that it's possible, and are willing to keep developing the strengths to reach it.

In other words, your goal is still important to you. You still want to reach it but haven't had enough time. So you proceed. You keep building belief and developing the strengths you need – realizing that when everything comes together you'll either see your goal within reach or have reached it!

Revise:

The second appropriate response after you review your goals is to *revise* them. I'm always amazed how fast some goals become realized. I often look back at goal booklets in which I've set goal. Most of them have happened – and often sooner than I expected.

Another discovery that strikes me is that many of my goals had to be revised. They had to be revised either *up* or *down*. Often I discover, after setting and working on goals for a while, that they aren't consistent with my values, priorities, or some of my other goals. For these reasons, I need to revise them, to change them. Rewrite them and keep working on the system – planning strategy, building belief, developing strengths, and managing your progress.

Recycle:

The third appropriate response you can take after you review your goals is to *recycle*. When you recycle, you redefine your goals and go back through your Goal-Achievement System. You do the following:

1. Begin with new goals
2. Plan strategy
3. Build belief
4. Develop strengths
5. Manage progress

You may also recycle when you've had a lapse of interest or have once set a goal and later stalled out. It's common to set a goal, be serious about it for a while, and then lose interest. Or maybe new events cause it to slip from your priorities. Then later you get excited about it again.

The Goal-Achievement System Is a System:

The Goal-Achievement System that I've presented is powerful and workable. When you follow the system and manage your progress, you'll be amazed at how quickly some of your goals materialize.

You'll find this system is just that – a system! It has build in checks, balances, and policing agents. It's fully functioning; all you have to do is punch the start-up button, activate, and maintain the system; and it'll work for you.

Practice This System Until You Do the Steps Automatically:

I'll admit this five-step system looks mechanical, with many rules and guides. I've designed it that way for a purpose. The reason is so nothing is left to chance, that we cover all of the bases.

What I know from experience is that if you follow this system to the letter – defining specific goals and then working through the steps – you'll experience success. When you do, you'll *emotionally* believe in the process. You'll only believe that it'll really work for you when you see it working for you. Then, with some time and experience, the whole Goal-Achievement System will become automatic. You'll perform many of the steps unconsciously.