



Setting Your Goals for 2006

It isn't too late to make resolutions for the New Year. Here are 10 goals that you should consider. The list comes from *2,600 Phrases for Effective Performance Reviews* by Paul Falcone. The book is designed to help executives and managers select the right words and phrases and objectives in order to get positive performance from appraisals, but these leadership goals can also be aspirational for you.

1. Strive to build alliances whenever the opportunity arises.
2. Identify and partner with key business stakeholders.
3. Build relationships within and across departments.
4. Engender trust and respect.
5. Build support for ideas through persuasion and consensus building.
6. Make others feel welcome to seek your advice and counsel.
7. Learn others' preferences and amend your style to accommodate their needs.
8. Appreciate that things can be accomplished in many different ways.
9. Encourage and support work/life balance for yourself and others.
10. Volunteer for leadership opportunities in industry and charity events.

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PROBLEM SOLVING Part Mechanics, Part Creativity

BY LARRY RICHMAN



Leaders who say, "Don't bring me problems, bring me solutions" are abdicating their role. It is the responsibility of leaders to solve problems that cannot be solved

by their staff members. But it is also the responsibility of leaders to provide staff members with the tools and techniques that will enable them to solve problems—and thus reduce the number of problems that are elevated for resolution.

Problem solving is part mechanics and part creativity. Mechanically, the process is to:

- State the aim
- State the problem
- Analyze the problem
- Create viable options
- Apply evaluation criteria
- Choose the best course of action
- Secure necessary approvals
- Implement the solution

Creativity is essential to the production of viable options. In some problem-solving models, you will find that solving the problem ends when the viable options have been created. In such models, the remaining steps are categorized as selection or decision making.

In making your selection of a solution, the one you are most likely to choose is that which is cheapest, simplest, fastest, least likely to fail and/or least disturbing to others. How can you identify such a solution? Bringing together a number of individuals usually

generates solutions that are more viable, workable, practical and successful than those you alone can identify. It is a matter of synergy; that is, bringing people

together to work on a problem increases the likelihood that the final solution will be better than any solution from each member of the group.

The probability of achieving synergy depends on the capabilities and characteristics of the individuals, their expertise, their willingness to work together, the size and structure of the group, the mechanisms of communication and collaboration and the manner in which decisions are made. When conditions are right and synergy is achieved, the result is rewarding.

An important part of the process is managing the meeting. Typically, meetings have three stages: planning, conducting

continued on next page

AMA Survey Results

The three factors that are most likely to cause people to compromise an organization's ethical standards:

1. Pressure to meet unrealistic business objectives/deadlines
2. Desire to further one's career
3. Desire to protect one's livelihood

For the other drivers of unethical behavior, see the *AMA/HRI Ethical Business Survey 2005* at www.amanet.org/research

PROBLEM SOLVING: Part Mechanics, Part Creativity *continued from preceding page*

and post-meeting follow up. The fundamentals of all meetings are the same, no matter the subject or participants.

Planning. It is important to plan for a meeting by doing the following:

- Establish an objective prior to bringing a group together.
- Write an agenda for the first session and each subsequent meeting. Describe the topics in sufficient detail and include estimated times for topics to be covered.
- Determine the start and end of each meeting.
- Determine who, aside from team members, should be present.
- Distribute the agenda and supporting documents to participants prior to the meeting. Give them sufficient time to review the documents and come prepared for discussion and action.

Conducting the meeting. Your role in conducting a meeting includes the following:

- Start the meeting on time, according to schedule. Do not delay the start for latecomers.
- State the objective of the meeting and briefly review the agenda.
- Follow the agenda items. Discourage discussion of items not on the agenda. If a new issue is raised, offer to hold a separate meeting to address it.
- At the end of the meeting, summarize the points discussed, decisions made and assignments given.

Post-meeting follow-up. After the meeting has concluded:

- Distribute minutes of the meeting and lists of assignments.
- Periodically, hold meeting reviews to evaluate the effectiveness of your meetings.

To test your skill in leading a meeting, see the checklist on page 3 of this issue of *Executive Matters*. To learn how to use project management to identify creative solutions to problems, check out AMA's list of project management seminars at www.amanet.org/seminars

This article is excerpted from *Improving Your Project Management Skills* by Larry Richman, PMP. Copyright, 2006, American Management Association. Published by AMACOM, AMA's book division. For more information about this book and other AMA titles, visit www.amanet.org/books

Ways to Rev up Your Company's Driving Force (Its People)

What makes a company great? According to Peter W. Schultz, former CEO of Porsche AG and author of the new book *The Driving Force: Extraordinary Results with Ordinary People*, it is the people within the company. "Motivated, passionate people make the difference between ho-hum mediocrity and extraordinary performance."

Where do you start? Here are some tips from Schultz:

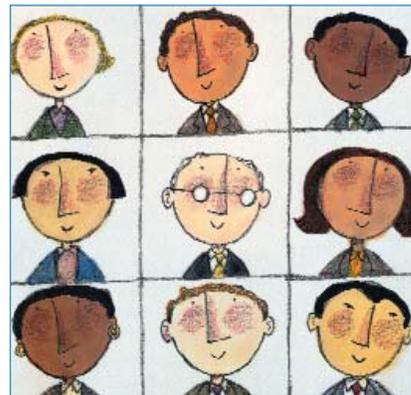
Remove the glass panes between people. "Often invisible barriers between people are the root cause of performance problems in business," writes Schultz. "The driving force is stifled."

Don't underestimate the power of icons. As a case in point, Schultz points to his decision to save the Porsche 911 despite many practical reasons—like it could barely meet upcoming noise and emissions regulations.

Looking back at the occasion he made the decision, he believes that doing otherwise would have damaged morale. When the Porsche 911, the company icon, was saved, he thinks that the company was saved.

Don't give your customers what they say they want. Instead, redefine customer expectations. Schultz points out that there was no customer demand for the transducer, the airplane, the automobile, the microwave oven or the Internet. Customers aren't always aware of what they need. So you must use your imagination and vision to help your customers. A prime example is the Porsche 911 Cabriolet. "Instead of responding to the customer request for a less costly and more trouble-free car," he recalls, "Porsche built a convertible with a price approximately 20 percent higher than the contemporary coupe. Dealers and customers loved it."

Pursue excellence, not success. Managers who are focused on success,



particularly short-term success, will frequently fail to mobilize the committed passion of people that can result in really extraordinary performance. Those who strive for excellence and quality and lead with quiet confi-

dence, on the other hand, gain the followers they need to win in the long run.

Decide like a democracy. Implement like a dictatorship. Most managers tend to do the opposite: they make decisions and then get stuck with democratic implementation although implementation is a time to do, not to talk.

The solution is to include all relevant people and groups in the decision-making process, even if it takes months to produce a flawed decision. The reason is simple: a flawed decision that people support can be implemented quickly, while a high-quality dictatorial decision may end up not getting implemented at all.

Make sure your people are building a temple for customers, not busting rocks for a living. It is not the activity that defines a job but how someone sees their activity in the context of an organization's culture and style that matters. "If people are working together to build a temple, the hammers are not as heavy, the rocks are not as hard and the days are not as long. It is no longer the same task. It is up to management to define the temple. If management cannot (or will not) communicate what sort of a temple the organization is building, the work ethic can easily be focused on finding the answer to the question, 'How can I bust fewer rocks for more money?'"

For insights into how to leverage your team, check AMA's leadership and management seminars at www.amanet.org

Rewards Take on New Importance

BY DONNA J. BEAR

With projected compensation budgets remaining tight for 2006, employers continue to seek other ways to recognize and reward employee behaviors that align with corporate goals.

Projections from both WorldatWork and Mercer Human Resource Consulting show salary increases for 2006 mirroring those of 2005, at around 3.5%. Employers know from experience that such lean budgets don't allow enough differentiation between star performers and their less-stellar co-workers to have much impact on engagement and retention. The most valued workers aren't going to feel adequately appreciated, so other pastures may begin to look greener. Meanwhile, the least-valued workers aren't likely to boost their performance for minimal compensation adjustments.

So, the challenge is to find other reward tools that support the accomplishment of business goals. Many organizations gear these rewards to top performers. The 2005 *Mercer SnapShot Survey* shows that managers tend to believe that the most important roles of a total rewards program are to attract and retain preferred employees and to differentiate high performers.

Some experts argue, however, that employers should be careful not to neglect the rest of the workforce. They note that it's often the identification and reward of small, everyday work behaviors that directly lead to the accomplishment of big corporate goals.

Making sure reward systems contain some variety is one way of reaching a broad spectrum of workers. After all, employees have different strengths, so it makes sense to recognize achievements in different areas, such as safety, job performance, years of service and sales. Employers can also use team awards, which allow recognition to be spread over a wider audience. This ensures that not just the "A" players but the dependable "B" players feel appreciated.

Scottish whiskey producer Glenmorangie is one example of a firm intent on breath-

ing new life into an incentive program that had become a little too repetitive. The introduction of its HEROES program, or Honouring Excellence and Rewarding Outstanding or Extended Service, freed bonus dollars to be used in new ways. Through an employee survey and focus groups, the firm discovered that workers craved timely management recognition even more than they did financial recognition. A cross-functional team developed the plan and got feedback from their respective groups, a process that encouraged buy-in.

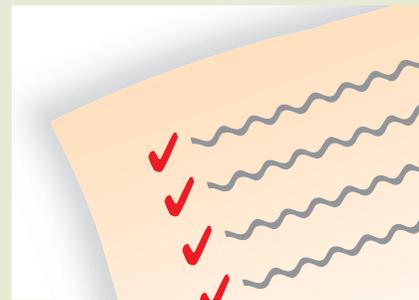
The plan honors achievements in training and development, service milestones, suggestions for improvements and colleague recognition. Reward recipients may be recognized through meetings, newsletters or postings or may redeem HEROES points for gift items. The recognition program has helped maintain morale even through an ownership change.

As the Glenmorangie case illustrates, non-cash rewards can be effective, which is why many managers are focusing on them. More than half of respondents to a 2005 survey by the National Association for Employee Recognition and WorldatWork said they consider recognition programs an investment, and 69% direct specific budget dollars toward such programs. The use of non-cash rewards is only expected to grow in importance, according to a panel of experts gathered by the Society for Human Resource Management.

Some companies sweeten the rewards package with employee discounts, which can be quite generous. Barnes & Noble offers employees a 30% discount on books, 20% on music and 50% on food. Talbots offers a 40% discount on clothing. And employees at General Electric can save on big-ticket appliances (Cullen, 2005).

Donna J. Bear is a research analyst with the Human Resource Institute. This article is published with permission of HRI (www.hrinstitute.info). Copyright 2005, HRI.

For more insights into rewards and recognition, check out AMA's *Fundamentals of Human Resource Management* at www.amanet.org



Meeting Checklist

The following meeting checklist is from *Improving Your Project Management Skills* by Larry Richman.

Before:

- ✓ Is the meeting's purpose clear?
- ✓ Could the situation be resolved without a group being formed?
- ✓ Who must be in attendance to achieve the objective?
- ✓ Where will the meeting be held?
- ✓ Who will take the minutes?
- ✓ Can the agenda and supporting documents be distributed early enough to give participants sufficient time to review them and come prepared for discussion and action?
- ✓ Have there been pre-meeting discussions with selected participants to address potentially contentious issues?

During:

- ✓ Is the meeting starting on time?
- ✓ Are the topics beginning and ending on time?
- ✓ When topics surface that are not on the agenda, are they being recorded for future action?
- ✓ At the end of the meeting, do you summarize the decisions made and the assignments given?

After:

- ✓ Are minutes of the meeting and lists of assignments distributed soon after the meeting?
- ✓ How often do you request feedback from the participants on the effectiveness of your meetings?

Excerpted, by permission of the publisher, from *Improving Your Project Management Skills* by Larry Richman. For information on this and other AMA books, visit www.amanet.org/books

If you want to run effective, efficient meetings, check out AMA's leadership and management seminars at www.amanet.org/seminars



Here's what you'll find on the
AMA Members-only Website www.amamember.org

LEADERSHIP

How to Create a Business That Reflects Your Values. As a leader, your vision—or lack of it—is reflected all around you. Here are some ways to make sure you like what you see.

MANAGEMENT

Making Conflict Work for You. A savvy manager can use conflict in a positive way to transform a potentially explosive situation into an opportunity for innovation and change.

HR/TRAINING

The Truth about Safety Incentive Programs. Rather than attempting to “buy” your employees’ commitment to safety with costly and often ineffective programs, try these simple techniques to encourage employees to take personal responsibility for safety.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Climb (or Blow Up) Every Mountain: Five Steps to Overcoming Obstacles. If you come up against a thorny problem on the job, think of it as a mountain. True, it's been said that you can't move mountains; but you may be able to find a way around them, through them or over them. If all else fails, blow them up!

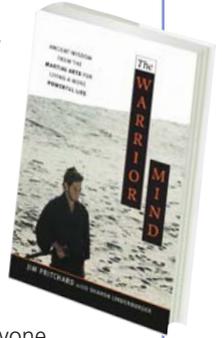
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Global Math and Science Education Trends. U.S. schoolchildren's math and science scores don't add up to much, according to a global study. In fact, U.S. children perform worse in math and science the longer they stay in school. Can the U.S. remain competitive?

Book of the Month:

The Warrior Mind—Ancient Wisdom from the Martial Arts for Living a More Powerful Life, by Jim Pritchard with Sharon Lindener (AMACOM, 2006). Pritchard, a disciple of legendary Ninjitsu and Taijitsu masters, identifies six essential “warrior” principles that can be applied to help anyone live a more powerful and satisfying personal and professional life.

For more information about this book and AMACOM's extensive catalog of business titles, visit www.amanet.org/books



AMA Conferences/Special Events Calendar

MARCH 3 WEBCAST • AMA/HRI Innovation Survey Results. The January 2006 results of an AMA/Human Resource Institute Survey will be discussed by AMA President and CEO Edward T. Reilly and HRI Executive Director Jay Jamrog. Free.

MARCH 7, 14, 21, 28, APRIL 4, WEBCAST • AMACOM Author Webcast Series. Five AMACOM authors will each host a one-hour Webcast highlighting his/her most recent book. See AMA Website for more details on authors and topics.

APRIL 21 • Senior Executive Teams: Achieving Breakthrough Performance. Conflict happens—but it isn't always negative. Learn how to achieve positive outcomes

from leadership conflicts and ensure high-performance teams through “rules of engagement.” Attend this half-day Executive Forum in Chicago with AMACOM author and consultant Howard Guttman followed by a panel of corporate executives who have gone through this alignment process.

APRIL 24-26, TORONTO • 7th Administrative Professionals Conference. Join Kate Davis, Conference Host, at our 7th Administrative Professionals Conference, Hilton Toronto. Register now and take advantage of our Early Bird Rate.

APRIL 26 WEBCAST • Administrative Professionals Day. On the day celebrating

administrative professionals around the world, AMA will host a Webcast highlighting the increasing roles and responsibilities of APs in the future.

APRIL 26-28, NEW YORK • AMA's Employee/Employer of the Future Conference (part of NY HR Week). By understanding the changing dynamics of the workforce and global competition, HR executives will be positioned as key players in developing both short- and long-term strategies for a growth-driven organization.

For details and to register for any AMA event, go to www.amanet.org or call 1-800-262-9699.

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