



5 Five keys to successful goal setting

William Johnson
Division Vice President,
Sales and Channel
BIWORLDWIDE

Goal setting is a skill and an art: a skill in that it can be practiced and improved, an art in that everyone does it a little differently. Whether you are new to successfully setting and achieving goals or a seasoned pro, there is always room for improvement.

Use these 5 tips to improve your goal setting.

Goal setting tip

#1

Write down your goal and keep it simple

Research has shown you are 42% more likely to achieve your goal if it's written down¹. Write your goal in a clear, action-oriented way. It should start with a verb, state exactly what you are going to do and by when.

Example Goal:

- Make **20 new sales** by the end of November.

Goal setting tip

#2

Set your success criteria and leave nothing up to interpretation

Each goal you write should have clear success criteria. Define data points that clarify the intentions behind your goal and build a rubric for regular referral. Set a stretch goal—as they say, if you shoot for the moon and miss you'll still end up amongst the stars.

Set a baseline. In the example below, let's say we hit 16 sales last November. 20 sales is the goal and 25 sales is the stretch goal.

Example Goal:

- **Make 20 new sales** by end of November

Stretch Goal:

- **Make 25 new sales** by end of November

Improvement Goal:

- **Any scenario between main goal and failure**

Failure:

- **Fewer than 16 new sales** by end of November

Goal setting tip

#3

Align vertically and horizontally

Think about how your goal impacts others. It should align with your company and your team. Do you need support from other departments? Make sure everybody is on the same page and you have the necessary resources available.





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Consider:

- **From whom will you need help to complete this priority?**
- **Does someone on your team need a supporting priority in order to help?**
- **Do you need help from another department, and are they aligned on your timeframe and success criteria?**
- **Do they have the bandwidth to help?**

Goal setting tip

#4

Record milestone actions and visualize successful execution

Define how you will achieve your goal. Record milestone actions, including the owner and due dates. Start with at least three actions. Add more as needed.

Example Goal:

- **Make 20 new sales by end of November**

Due 10/1:

- **Hold internal kickoff meeting**

Due 10/3:

- **Establish client list and make appointments**

Due 10/15:

- **Create sale pitch and rehearse**

Due 11/1:

- **Make presentations and follow-up appointments**

Goal setting tip

#5

Track your weekly goal progress and make adjustments

Research shows those who set frequent progress updates hit their goal **40% more often** than those who do not². Success of every goal depends on strong weekly execution. You have to keep moving the ball forward every week. Pick a status update for your goal each week. Are you on track to achieve the goal by your due date? Have you hit roadblocks?

You are the advocate for your goal. If the goal needs help to get unstuck, you are accountable for getting the resources you need. Discuss at-risk goals with your team and come up with a plan to get back on track. No matter how great you are at goal planning, you'll need to make adjustments as you go.



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Following this goal-setting process will increase your likelihood of successfully achieving your goals. Solid execution of your goals comes down to starting with clear expectations, ensuring alignment, breaking the goal down into action steps, practicing weekly accountability and making adjustments to achieve success.

Learn more about how GoalQuest®, a rules design structure, addresses goal-setting, engagement and focus to drive your sales teams, whether they are top, middle or low performers.

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Sources:

- ¹Tabaka, M. (2021, January 5). *New Study Says This Simple Step Will Increase the Odds of Achieving Your Goals (Substantially)*. Inc.com. Retrieved October 7, 2022, from <https://www.inc.com/marla-tabaka/this-study-found-1-simple-step-to-practically-guarantee-youll-achieve-your-goals-for-real.html>.
- ²Harkin, B., Webb, T.L., Chang, B.P.I., et. Al., *Does Monitoring Goal Progress Promote Goal Attainment? A Meta-Analysis of the Experimental Evidence*, Psychological Bulletin, 2016, Vol. 142, No. 2, 198 –229, <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/bul-bul0000025.pdf>