

## Goal Setting

*"A leader looks upon his organization and sees it not as it is...but as it can be"*

### Introduction

Goal setting is important for both organizations and individuals. When you set goals, you make a plan for the future. You are keeping an "eye on the prize" by moving forward. As a leader you will need to be a visionary. You have probably heard that word many times but what does it mean? Having a vision means you have a plan for where you or your organization is going in the future. Having a strong, clear vision is like having a good road map.

Once you have your vision, you must try to get your team to share your vision. By having a clear vision, talking about it plainly, and always attempting to be honest and fair, you will be on your way to gaining your teams' trust which is important when working toward your plan. People want to know that their efforts are not for nothing--they want to contribute to a larger cause or goal.

A good plan isn't enough, though. You must be able to talk about your plan with enthusiasm and lots of positive energy--no one wants to get on board with Ms. or Mr. Negativity. Having a good team on board with you and working toward your goals is key to success.

### Lesson Objectives

At the end of the lesson, a learner should be able to:

1. Discuss characteristics of goals
2. Talk about how you go about writing goals for individuals or teams
3. Know the difference between goals and visioning

### Lesson Content

The key to setting goals is to jump in and get started. Don't put it off another day. . . the sooner you start thinking about your goals, the sooner you will be on your way to reaching them!

### Setting Your Goals

You are sitting down, ready to set some goals for yourself and your organization. But how do you get started? Don Clark of Big Dog Leadership has some things you should keep in mind:

1. Goals should be REALISTIC and REACHABLE.
  - a. Don't set goals that are unrealistic because of time, resources, or people on board.
2. Goals should make you or your organization better.
  - a. You should be improving in a variety of ways.
3. If these are team goals, the team should be involved in setting the goals.
  - a. Don't keep the team in the dark if the goals will be for them.
4. A plan should be developed to achieve each goal.
  - a. By making a plan to reach each goal, you take a step toward reaching that goal.

## **Creating a Vision**

Visioning is different than goal setting. When you think of goal setting, you might think of personal situations. You set goals for your 4-H projects, for school, or for your job. While you can create a vision for yourself, visioning is often talked about in terms of clubs, groups or whole organizations.

As a leader, you will want to create your own vision. When you think of visioning, you want to think about the future. This could be 10, 15, 20, even 50 years down the road. What would the future look like if you had unlimited money or time? What about if the opposite were true? The answers to these questions might be very clear, or very cloudy depending on where you are at right now in your life. To go from first thinking about the future to actually putting your plan into action you can use the following steps:

### **Step One: The Vision**

As a leader, you will need to have your own thoughts or plan for what the future should look like for your organization. Maybe you are working on a vision for your local 4-H club or your county council. Remember that your vision needs to support the larger goals of the organization (the 4-H program). You want to make sure there is a clear connection between your vision for your club's future and the larger 4-H program. Does your larger group or organization have a mission statement? This statement will be key in developing your vision because a mission statement is the larger picture of the organization. Your vision should be talked about in very general terms that can be understood by everyone on your team.

### **Step Two: Goals**

Once you have a vision, it is time to turn to your team. Your team will take your larger vision and turn it into goals, the ways you will go about making your vision a reality. Goals, should also be talked about in easy to understand terms. For example, a goal for your local 4-H county council might be to "increase club participation in county council."

### **Step Three: Objectives**

After getting your goals down on paper, measurable objectives can be created. These objectives help you measure your progress toward making your vision a reality. You want to be able to talk about the objectives in specific terms that you can evaluate, and that all of your team members can agree on. An objective for your county council might be: "By midway through the coming program year, we will increase club participation in county council to 75 percent of all clubs sending at least one representative to meetings."

### **Step Four: Tasks**

Now that you have measurable objectives, you need to come up with a list of tasks to help you accomplish your objectives. Just like objectives, tasks are very specific, measurable, and concrete statements of action. One task for our county council example might be: "A committee will be formed to develop a promotional flyer to go into the next 4-H newsletter to promote our monthly meetings."

### **Step Five: Time Lines**

Developing a time line will help to put your tasks in order. Time is one thing that teams never have enough of, so prioritizing will help make sure that you know what needs to be done in what order. An example of a task on a timeline might be: "The flyer will be done 2 weeks prior to the newsletter being published. It will be due to our county extension office September 15."

### **Step Six: Follow Up**

Just like it sounds, this is when you see if the team is working toward their vision. By doing follow-up, you show that you support the tasks that are happening and that you believe the effort is important.

### **Reflection Questions**

- Think of times when developing a list of goals would be important. List different places you might set goals for yourself. Why would goal setting be important in these circumstances?
- Select one of those times where setting goals might be important and begin to think about the goals you would set for yourself. Write three goals following the formula listed above. Once you have those done, post them in a place where you can see them often. You will be surprised at the progress you will make!
- Think of the ways that you are a leader. As a leader, having a vision is important. Where can you begin to formulate a vision? Is it in your club, within your county, or your region? Maybe you are part of a state-level group and you can begin to formulate a vision there. Make a list of the places where a vision could be very valuable. Select one of those places and start to brainstorm about what your vision would look like. Write down some of the ideas you come up with.
- Take the vision you formulated above and turn it over to your team or group. Ask them to start thinking about how to get to the place you want to go. Work together with your team members to put this plan together using the steps that are listed above.
- Did having a vision and following the steps above to develop a plan help your team think about the future? Did you find it helpful in planning for different things? Did you follow the steps as they were listed above? How easy was it to go through the steps? Was one step more challenging than another? If so, which steps were the more challenging for your group? How can you ensure that as you revisit your progress you can make the challenging steps, less so? Have you posted your vision and the steps to achieve it in a place where your team can see it and be reminded of it? Does each team member have a copy of your plan?

### **Reference**

Clark, D. (1997). *Big dog leadership*. Retrieved electronically from [www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leader.html](http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leader.html) on October 5, 2003.