Best Practices for Helping Employees Set Goals

If you're in any kind of management position, you're charged with helping each and every one of your employees do their job and fulfill their potential. Anything short of this can be detrimental for your team, and the entire organization.

Goal setting is widely lauded for its merits of building morale, bringing about continuity and motivating employees. Unfortunately, goal setting in practice often resembles something entirely different. All too often, managers call in employees for their 30-minute quarterly or yearly reviews and go through a prepared list of questions and metrics that fall short of addressing individual needs and performance. To many employees, meetings like these are seen as laughable attempts from higher-ups to check in from 30,000 feet.

If you're serious about getting the most out of your employees and taking your team or organization to new levels, effectively helping employees set goals is an essential part of the process.

1) Know Your Employees

Every employee is different. Each of them listens, learns and produces in their own way. As a manager it is your job to adapt your communication and teaching style to each individual. In order to get to know your employees taking a personality test can provide tremendous insight to who they are as people. If you don't have access to a personality test, simply spending some time talking to your employee and getting to know what drives them, what interests them, and what they would like to achieve in their business and personal lives can give you great

insight.

Not only will this help you communicate with your employees, but they will be better suited to communicate with co-workers and customers as well. When it comes to goal setting, arming yourself with knowledge of your employees as people only helps you to set goals that are tailored for them.

2) Make Goals the Employee's Idea

No one likes to be barked at and told what they need to do better in their job. This approach to goal setting is often viewed by employees as meaningless and scathing. Instead, invite your employees to take part in a two-sided conversation about their performance and objectives. Asking probing questions is a great way to steer the conversation in a certain direction while also allowing employees to think for themselves. Give them an idea of what needs to be accomplishes and ask them what they can do to help achieve it. This helps them participate in the process and take early ownership of their role.

If your employees feel that they have been heard and that goal setting was a collaborative experience, the results will surely show in the workplace.

3) Set Goals that can be Measured

We set goals for ourselves all the time. They usually are something like, 'I'm going to lose weight" or 'I'm going to make more time for my family.' These goals usually aren't attained for a simple reason. They lack measurability and accountability.

When you're working with employees to set goals, make sure they are attainable, measurable and have accountability and incentives tied to them as well. When employees are readily able to track their progress and feel a goal is within reach, they are increasingly motivated to hit the target. Once a goal is attained, employees will be all the more excited to reach the next one. This spells good news for the entire organization.

4) Align Goals with Company Objectives

It's human nature that we are more inclined to put forth our best effort if we feel like we are part of something great. The best companies to work for know this and make it a cornerstone of how they do business. They take every step necessary to get each employee on board with the company's mission. Setting individual goals that are in line with company objectives and culture goes a long way in motivating employees to reach their full potential. Don't expect your employees to be excited about working with blinders on, allow them to see their part in the bigger picture.

5) Be Consistent and Transparent

While it's vitally important to curtail goals to each individual, they should be similar for all employees with a certain level of responsibility. People talk and if one employee's goals are vastly different from another's of the same stature, you are sure to incite jealousy and angst which are toxic in the workplace. It could also lead to accusations of favoritism, which could undermine the management of your team.

6) Take a Step Back and Look at the Entire Picture

All too often managers are quick to bring down the hammer on employees that aren't meeting expectations. The truth is however, yelling and punishing rarely solve anything and more often than not make employees more disengaged and unmotivated. When setting goals for employees that fall short, it's important to take a step back and look at the entire situation. Did this employee receive proper training? Were expectations clearly spelled out? Do they feel they are part of the team striving for a greater good? Did they have the resources or equipment they needed to succeed?

Looking at the bigger picture to identify shortcomings often reveals easy fixes that can be communicated constructively in a nurturing manner. Make these employees a priority and help them create an action plan to achieve desired results. Ask them what they feel they might need from you to be able to reach their goals. It lets them know you are supporting them and also puts the

responsibility on them to succeed. If the proper steps are taken, these employees often become top performers.

As a manager, you're only as good as your team. Checking in regularly and collaboratively setting clear and measurable goals for each individual under you is paramount to achieving desired results. Setting aside appropriate time to meet with employees on a human level lets them know you care. It doesn't take much, but simply knowing you want what's best for each individual goes a long way in increasing productivity, efficiency and morale in any organization.

How-To Optimize Your Learning Process at Work

Every job industry fluctuates. New technology develops and revolutionary ideas change job processes. In the life sciences industries, regulations and requirements can change relatively frequently. The most valuable employees research and learn the new trends. Doing so, improves the likelihood of a raise or promotion.

For many, the problem is optimizing learning practices. This article explains how to learn faster when job industries are quickly changing. Fast learning can be a valuable method to achieve your professional goals.

Determine Your Ultimate Goal and Objective

You will stay motivated when you discover your "why".

To clarify your "why", write down your goal and objective. The terms are often interchanged. According to Diffen, a goal is "the purpose toward which an endeavor is directed". Goals are long term. To accomplish your goal, you must find your objective which is "something that one's efforts or actions are intended to attain or accomplish; purpose; target." Objectives are short term and refer to specific actions.

In business, your goal could be to get promoted. The objective is to complete trainings which will allow you to lead a project and earn the promotion. Objectives are the steps to complete your goal. Remember your objective and goals as you study.

Build a Healthy Learning Environment

It will be impossible to succeed in unhealthy learning environment. One of the most important functions of a healthy learning environment is eliminating distractions. This allows you to focus and implement strategies to succeed.

Another priority is a clean and comfortable setting. Find a room that has sunlight. You may also want a standup desk or comfortable furniture, and work equipment.

Get Your Sleep

Sleep should not be a luxury. It is mandatory for healthy cognitive skills. According to Harvard's journal, Healthy Med, "sleep plays an important role in memory, both before and after learning a new task." This occurs from two key ways. First, a sleep deprived person cannot focus attention to learn efficiently. Second, sleep helps consolidate memories.

Rather than staying up late to learn a new business technology, the better choice might be to go to sleep and return to the task when you are well rested. The time to learn the task could reduce dramatically.

Learn Information in Multiple Ways

What works for one person to learn, does not work for everyone. Try multiple methods to learn a new task. This includes videos, textbooks, seminars, interactive classes, and podcasts. Different learning techniques interconnect various parts of your brain.

According to Judy Willis of Loma School of Medicine, "The more regions of the brain that store data about a subject, the more interconnection there is. This redundancy means students will have more opportunities to pull up all of those related bits of data from their multiple storage areas in response to a single cue. This cross-referencing of data means we have learned, rather than just memorized."

Learning is necessary in every job industry. I am a Specialty Quality and Regulatory Recruiter that can help motivated employees find high quality jobs. Contact me, Jeff King, at jking@rqfocus.com or (541) 639-3501.

The Importance of Employee Happiness for Retainment

All employees are aware of the struggle to find quality jobs. However, many employers do not understand how difficult it can be to build a top-notch team. The job market is tight for both parties. If you are leading employees, it is important

to keep them happy so they do not move on to another company.

Many leaders do not treat employee happiness as important as they should. According to an Aflac Employee Happiness report, 36% of business leaders treat employee happiness as somewhat important and 55% of business leaders treat employee happiness at very important. I bet the 55% of business leaders that prioritize employee happiness have a much higher retention rate! If you want to grow your company, it is important that you make employee happiness a priority.

The methods outlined in this article can help you build a company culture with highly satisfied employees.

Offer Benefits

It's no secret that health insurance is expensive. Nevertheless, accidents happen and we all need coverage. A benefits package, including dental, health, and retirements, is incentive to attract and retain employees. Paying insurance out of pocket can cost hundreds of dollars every month – thousands with a family. By providing benefits you are investing in your employees. They will feel more secure and appreciated.

Benefits can be tax deducible for employers. Speak with an experienced CPA to write-off as much as possible.

Provide Opportunity for Promotions

Nobody wants to get stagnant in their career. When your employees see no opportunity for advancement, they are more likely to look for a new job. If you do not have a new position open, allow your employees to tackle creative, challenging projects. Their hard work could earn a bonus or promotion when a position opens.

Take an Interest in Your Employees

Most office workers spend 40+ hours together every week. For many of us, we spend more time with our coworkers than anyone else. Get to know your employees.

How is your family? What are you doing for the holidays? Did you catch that sports game?

If you care, your employees will care.

Provide Continued Education

Job industries are always changing. This is often due to technology or regulation changes. It's important to stay informed to be a top performing employee.

Continued education can help employees stay aware of trends, news, technology, and discoveries that alters their performance. Provide your employees with training. They will be happier when they are doing a good job and not learning an important advancement a year after the change occurred.

Tools for Continued Education

- Webinars
- Conferences
- Online Classes

If you have a low retention rate, it is important to analyze whether you have made employee happiness a priority. If not, it is time to start. I am a Specialty Quality and Regulatory Recruiter that can help you build your team. Contact me, Jeff King, at jking@rqfocus.com or (541) 639-3501.

Odd But Effective Interview Questions

Most candidates are prepared for the cliché questions.

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

What do you enjoy most about your job?

If you stick to predictable interview questions, it can be hard to find the right person for the job. Asking strange, and what might seem irrelevant questions, can show interviewers how candidates react to pressure, especially when there is no "right" answer.

Using effective interview questions can help you weed out the fakes and find candidates with not just the skill set but personality that you need to get the job done. As a specialized Quality and Regulatory Recruiter, I have developed critical thinking questions that are appropriate for most businesses. Please use the comment box below to let me know other critical thinking questions that work well for your interviews.

Tell me about a risk that you took outside of work?

This question is especially useful if you are looking for someone with an entrepreneurial mindset. For example, a manager or team leader.

Investor, Steven Cohen, made money on risks and people. He asked candidates about risks they took during interviews. Doing so, helped Steven decipher if candidates could take a risk in a controlled way.

What didn't make it on your resume?

Some of our best life accomplishments are not on our resumes. Candidates might answer in a variety of ways, include educational, personal, or volunteer accomplishments. This helps you understand what is important to your candidate outside of work.

How would your colleagues describe you?

Great team members are self-aware. The skill improves communication and creates a higher sense of empathy. Asking how colleagues describe themselves is a great way to determine self-perception. Compare their thoughts to references.

Name as many uses for a brick in one minute.

Almost every job requires you to think on your feet. If you use the cliché interview questions, it will be impossible to capture spontaneous, creative thinking. Naming the uses for a brick is similar to the "sell me a pen" technique.

Tell me a joke

We all know at least one joke, right? Even if it's a knock, knock joke. This question is not to see how funny candidates are – unless you are hiring a comedian! Jokes help us determine if the candidate will fit into company culture. If the candidate tells a racist or sexist joke, politely smile and move onto the next candidate. Asking to tell a joke also shows how a candidate acts under pressure and problem solves.

What type of animal are you?

If you are uncomfortable with having them tell a joke, or if they just can't come up with one, another option would be to ask them what type of animal most closely resembles their personality and why. You can get some pretty good insights as to their personality and if they might fit in with your group if they describe a very

passive animal, a very aggressive animal, or a more "middle of the road" animal.

Finding the right employee requires interviewers to not ask traditional questions. Most candidates will be rehearsed for the typical interview questions. Instead, be creative and ask questions that show their personality. If you need help through the hiring process, contact me, Jeff King at jeff@rqfocus.com or (541) 639-350. I serve job seekers and employers in the biotech, pharmaceutical, and medical device industries.

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4 Methods to Prevent Employees from Leaving Your Company

Hiring is not only a pain but can be expensive for your company. As a business leader, it's important to find ways to prevent your employees from leaving. If you do not, you will spend hours training. Most new employees do not become profitable for a year in the job.

Maintaining your employees requires more than a raise. You must be aware of the lifestyle, culture, and management style that people desire to be happy in their jobs.

The Workplace Institute Claims that 42 million people quit their job per year and 77 percent can be prevented.
As a Life Sciences recruiter, I have seen people quit for a variety of reasons. This article explains common reasons employees leave their jobs.

Micromanagement

As a business leader, we usually have time and emotions invested in the company. Delegating tasks can be difficult when we know how we want a task completed. Unfortunately, this leads to micromanaging. Many leaders who micromanage focus so much on the tiny details that they cannot see the big picture. Give your employees that opportunity to create their own path to solving the problem. Different does not always mean bad.

Lack of Vision

To accomplish a goal, you must have a vision. Many business leaders lack strategic vision.

Forbes defines strategic vision as the ability to;

- Envision the longer term
- Adopt a broader view of the organization, seeing it in the context of its competition and the current economy
- Define a distinctive, unique mission for the organization
- Define the path by which the firm can grow in the long term
- Repeatedly move the organization forward in creating greater value

Unfortunately, if you do not have strategic vision, your employees could feel like they are only checking tasks off the box. Make sure that they know the end goal of their work.

How is the work going to make a difference? How is the work going to change a person's life?

To form a great company with happy employees, your employees must know that they are working for more than a paycheck.

No Feedback

Imagine this – You spend 3 hours writing an extensive report. It includes statistics and evaluations. You turn the report into your manager.

Silence. You never receive feedback. Two weeks later, your manager asks you to write another report. Wouldn't this be frustrating?

Most people want to do well. Feedback allows for correction and communication. Your employees are able to develop their skills to succeed. Your feedback could be as brief as asking your employee to add an additional summary paragraph to a report or a "great job" email.

No Opportunity for Career Advancement

Nobody wants to be stuck in a "dead end job". Career advancement is one of the most important factors of employee satisfaction and retention. Provide the opportunity for employees to take additional responsibilities that lead to changing of their roles and raises.

Continuing education courses can increase your opportunity for career development. If you give people the opportunity to learn and evolve within your company, they have less motivation to find a company with a more dynamic position.

You will also save valuable time by promoting within your company. Your current employees know company procedures and support the strategic vision. When internal staff is not available for promotion and you need to look externally, that is when I can help. I am a Regulatory and Quality Recruiter in the pharmaceutical, medical device, or biotech industries in the San Francisco Bay Area. Contact me, Jeff King, at jking@rqfocus.com or (541) 639-3501 to discuss your needs and determine some options to help you build the team you need to succeed.

Why Focusing On Being Likeable Can Sabotage Our Work

Work is a social environment. Our coworkers can be the people that we socialize with the most. In this situation, it is natural to want to feel liked. However, you can sabotage your work by trying too hard to be accepted.

You may put yourself at risk in some of the ways outlined in this article:

We Develop Unrealistic Expectations

Not everyone is going to like us. That is impossible. If you think so, you are going to be disappointed and stressed at work. Rather than focusing on your coworker's approval, strengthen your relationship as a team.

Solution:

There are more productive ways of building a friendship than small talk at the water cooler. Nurture meaningful relationships that helps reach company goals. Working together as a team can promote positivity that builds strong relationships. There might be a company goal that has been pushed to the side for the past year. Communicate with others in your team with numerous skill sets to complete the project. Besides, people tend to like people they work well with and can get things accomplished to make themselves and the team look good.

You Become Over Critical

We are our own worst critics. If we are constantly comparing ourselves to others it is easy to think that we are not smart, fast, or strategic enough. Self-criticism often occurs if you are focusing on being liked.

Solution:

Everyone has a unique skill set. What is yours?

Now, set boundaries according to your job description. You do not have to do favors for co-workers just to earn approval. This does not mean that you will not have to do hard work or can't be flexible. The difference is compromising your needs to do someone else's job, which earns you approval, but may derail your own work. Go above and beyond in your own position.

We Dread Work

You may have landed your dream job. The salary is enough to support your family and vacation, and the commute is only a few minutes from your house. This is the job that you have been waiting for!

However, any job can be ruined if your energy is focused on being liked. We become uncomfortable around our coworkers and experience social anxiety.

Solution:

Focus on collaboration instead of being liked. Collaboration empowers us to solve work issues together. If you focus on being liked, you will probably feel alone and dissatisfied. To accomplish collaboration, you must have an openness to learning. If you collaborate successfully, you may be able to solve more work issues and end up being more liked in the process.

If you need help building a company with a healthy company culture, contact me, Jeff King at jking@rqfocus.com. I am a life sciences recruiter in the Bay Area.

The Importance of Professional Development Programs for Employees

When budgets are tight, continuing education is often the first item to be diminished from a company's resources. After all, it does not bring in direct revenue.

Continuing education might not affect your revenue immediately. However, you are investing in employee development that can increase your employee's happiness and build a more creative, sustainable company.

As of 2018, Millennials are the largest generation in the workforce at 1 out of 3. A recent study by Gallup shows that "Millennials are not pursuing job satisfaction — they are pursuing development… Giving out toys and entitlements is a leadership mistake, and worse, it's condescending. Purpose and development drive this generation."

If you want to retain Millennials then invest in their professional development. Trophies and bonuses don't work for this generation.

5 Tools for Professional Development

Conferences

Book your employees to attend an industry-related conference. These conferences often are held by industry-leaders. They can be inspirational for your employees.

TedTalks

[TedTalks](#) are inspirational videos to "stir your curiosity". The videos range in topic including science, creativity, business, and tech.

Creative Live

[CreativeLive](#) provides "1,500+ fundamentals to advanced techniques". The classes range from Adobe software, money and finance, business modeling, cooking, writing, and more. The classes are all online and can be completed at a flexible pace.

Meetups

[Meetups](#) are designed for more than building friendships. Meetups have evolved into professional education seminars. If you have a small budget then Meetups could be a good option for you. The classes are typically free to attend.

Webinars

Webinars are a live, web-based conference that can be viewed around the world. Users are able to interact among online forums in real time. There are thousands of webinars available online for professional development.

Invest in your employees and they are more likely to build a loyal relationship with your company. You will also improve their skills to help meet your company's goals. I am a [Life Sciences Recruiter for the Bay Area](#). If you are looking to hire in these areas, please contact me to discuss your needs and possible solutions. Contact me, Jeff King, at jking@rqfocus.com or (541) 639-3501.

What Millennials Want in a Job

In today's job market, Millennials are the largest generation in the workforce. By 2025, Millennials are predicted to be 75% of our work force. Employers need to prepare for what makes Millennials happy, therefore improving company culture and retainment.

Millennials are different than any previous generation. Their focus is more on values and lifestyle, rather than receiving a fat paycheck. No more 60-hour work weeks.

As a recruiter, I try to educate employers on how to keep their high-quality employees. This article outlines my experience with keeping Millennials on the team.

Millennials Want Strong Company Values

Millennials have a low tolerance for lack of authenticity. They want to work with a company with social causes and personal values. As an employer, you must demonstrate your values with concrete actions.

For example, project feedback, Employee of the Month, and company parties. Your company is more than just a place to work. It is a supportive community.

Millennials Want Social Impact

Along with company values is the desire to make a social impact. Colleagues with a shared goal can have a positive impact on the workplace.

Every job is going to have stresses. When a company is working toward a purpose, Millennials feel more positive about difficult work tasks. You do not have to be a non-profit to be philanthrope. You can donate 1% of your profit to charity

or have volunteering opportunities.

Chris Martin, President and CEO of President Bank, encourages all his team members to give back. Each employee receives two paid day per year to volunteer.

Millennials Want Flexibility in Work Hours

The 9-5 work day is slowly disappearing. Millennials want more flexibility with their work hours. A study by Bentley University reports that 77% of Millennials claim that flexible work hours would make them more productive.

Millennials Want to Work Remotely

Working remotely is the dream for many Americans. It is becoming more realistic as more technology and software becomes available.

With the capability, Millennials desire to work outside of the office. According to the PwC's NextGen study, 64% of Millennials would like to occasionally work from home. If your employees are able to work at home then allow them. See *When Is Telecommuting Right for Your Business* for my experience recruiting for companies with different types of flexibility. Remote work can lead to an increase in employee happiness and productivity.

Millennials Want Opportunity for Growth

Nobody wants to work in a dead-end job – especially Millennials. Provide opportunity for growth for your employees. Allow them to take on new responsibility which could lead to another position. Make these opportunities clear during the hiring process to create a more desirable work place.

Change is hard. There is no doubt about it. However, Millennials are the future of our workplace. If your company has not adjusted ideals for the new generation, you could hurt employee retention.

Embrace change and start utilizing these tips into your growing business.

When Is Telecommuting Right for Your Business

Telecommuting is the dream. You get to work where you want and when you want. For many businesses, telecommuters can work great. They maintain happy and productive employees with a low turnover rate. Other businesses do not have the flexibility for telecommuters.

As a specialty recruiter for Regulatory and Quality professionals, I have seen when telecommuting works in extremely professional settings. Regulatory employees have more success telecommuting. The majority of their work is research and document generation and review which can be completed at home with the proper tools. On the other hand, Quality employees need to be onsite more to support manufacturing and product development. Each employee has their part to ensure that products meet FDA standards but the different tasks assigned to their profession prevents telecommuting for many of the employees.

When Is Telecommuting Appropriate for Companies?

Research Positions

If your employee's research project requires only a computer and internet connection then they can probably work remotely. In the industries I represent,

this applies to Regulatory employees but can, to a more limited extent, apply to some Quality professionals as well. You may choose to start your employees in the office to prove that they are responsible. With time, give them the telecommuting option to improve employee happiness.

Little Interaction with Coworkers

If your employee's job requires a physical presence then a telecommuting job is not efficient for your company. For example, office manager, product testing, or supervisor. However, telecommuting works well for project-based, data analysis or computer programming work.

Already Working Considerable Amount from Home

Does your employee bring their work home? Employees that bring their work home are usually stressed and overwhelmed, which could lead to their resignation. This can also be true if their commute into your office is a difficult one. If your employee can work remotely half of the time or even full time, let them. The best remote workers depict responsible work ethic. You may want to call your employee into the office for an occasional meeting, but if the work is getting done when they are remote, allow the option.

When Is Telecommuting Not Feasible for Your Company

- Position requires high amount of supervision
- Position requires a lot of live interaction with co-workers
- Employee deals with sensitive or confidential information
- Employees must attend meetings

A large part of building a great company is making your employees happy. Now, more companies allow employees to work remotely. You can increase productivity and avoid high turnover. If your employee is asking to work remotely, evaluate their position and whether it would fit your company's needs. A great employee can be hard to find. Do your best to make them happy and you will draw more forward-thinking workers.

Do You Really Need Us?

YOU DON'T NEED US if the position(s) you have to fill are not considered critical, AND you can take whatever time is necessary for the right person to see your job posting, AND you have the time to review all submitted resumes to find the ones you want to interview. If this is the case traditional methods of recruiting may work for you.

BUT, YOU MAY WANT TO CONSIDER US if filling the position(s) quickly and with the right person is critical, and you need someone with the experience and understanding to do the first level screening to weed out all but the top 3-5 candidates for you, AND you are not getting much response to your current recruiting efforts. Top caliber candidates are NOT scouring job postings. They're too busy getting their work done. They also take less time to get up to speed.

WHAT MAKES US ANY DIFFERENT OR BETTER THAN OTHER RECRUITERS?

- I worked for 4 years as an Engineer designing new medical devices, and 5 years as a Marketing Product Manager developing and launching new products to the market.
- I've spent the past 20+ years filling critical positions in the Bay area with experienced, top performing Regulatory, Clinical, and Quality professionals.
- I'm also a career counselor to several local Regulatory, Clinical, and

Quality professionals and understand what they're looking for in their careers, and know how to approach them to have them consider your opportunity.

- I am a certified Facilitator for Everyday Engagement methodology for building High Performance Teams.
- I take the time to get to know the "personality" of my client companies so I can better match the personalities of the candidates for a better and longer lasting fit.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

- I will take the time to understand what problems you are trying to solve and what type of person would perform best in that role and send you the top 3-5 pre-screened candidates to consider.
- Weekly updates on the status of your search so you KNOW it's being worked on.
- I have a 74% accuracy rate on submitting candidates you want to interview.
- I have a 93% success rate on getting your offers accepted and having the candidate ready to go on day one.
- Periodic follow ups with the candidate and the hiring manager during the first year to ensure a good fit.
- A 5 year replacement policy to ensure you're happy with the outcome.

TESTIMONIALS

"...I know that Jeff is not in the business to make 'a quick buck'. He is a reliable, trustworthy resource who has my best interest in mind. In my fifteen years of experience, the proof is always in the end result. Candidates represented by Jeff have gone on to become key contributors and successful team members. When staffing needs arise, Jeff King is the first person I contact." – **J. Cook QA/RA Director**

"...Jeff is thorough in understanding the requirements of each open position. He is

considerate of my time, as well as conscientious in his follow up. He is a pleasure to work with." – **M. Ashburn HR Manager**