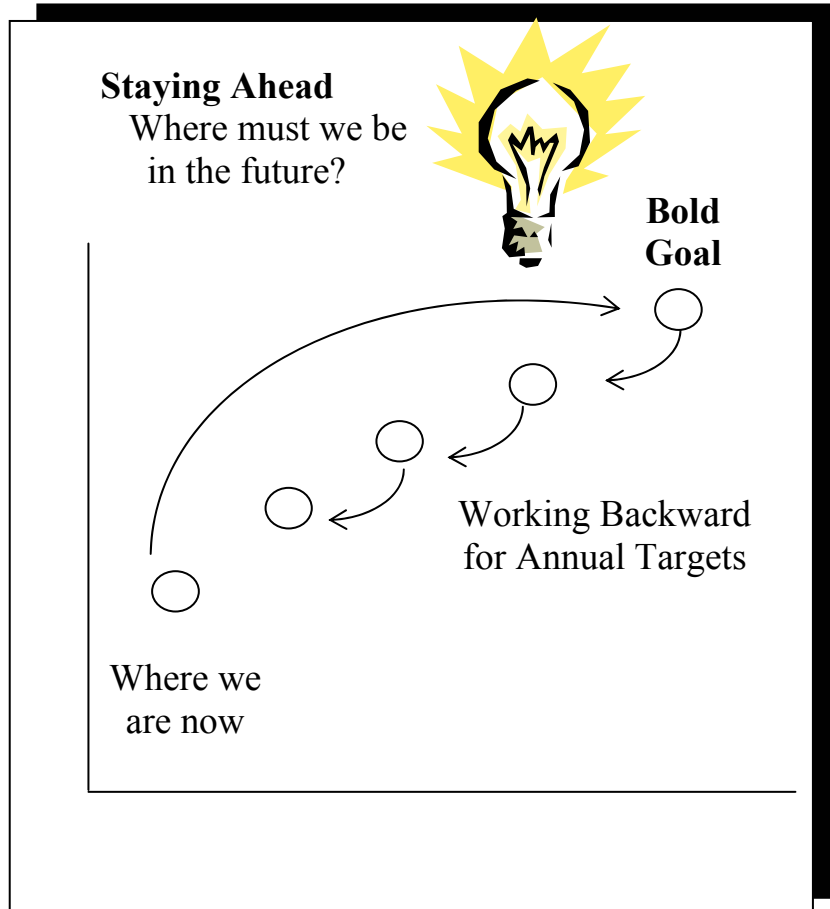


Achieving Bold Goals



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***The journey doesn't start with a strategic plan. It starts with an
EXPECTATION of success, and a BELIEF in your ability to
cause and make things happen!***

The term “Bold Goal” as used in this document refers to a goal that is far reaching, and the steps required to achieve the goal are unknown. If the steps to achieve a goal are known at the time the goal is set, it is an incremental improvement goal. It may be viewed as a stretch goal depending on the degree of difficulty required, but it is still an incremental improvement goal. Most companies in the past have pursued annual incremental improvement using the concept of stretch goals. However, today the market forces are causing companies to rethink their approach to goal setting to remain competitive, or to establish a new position in the market place. Benchmarking is being used to determine what other competitors are accomplishing, and bold goals are then established so that when achieved, the desired position in the market place will be obtained. These goals may be so far from current reality that many within the organization will have trouble believing that it is actually possible to achieve the stated target.

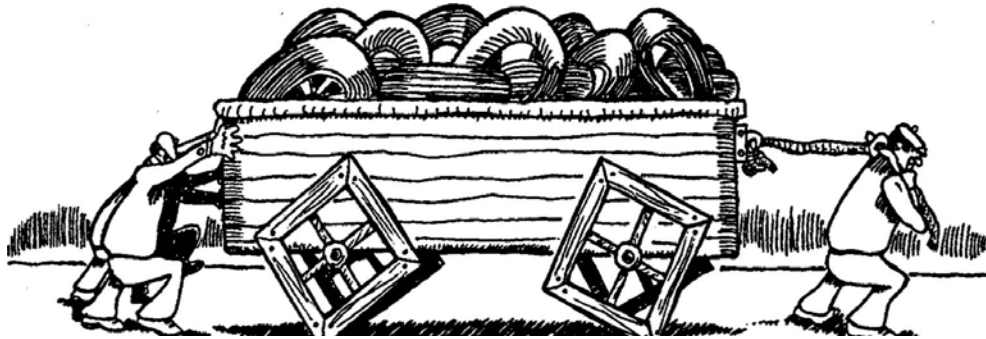
The first step toward bold goal achievement is to develop a statement of what it will be like when the goal has been achieved, stated in first person present tense, as though it has already been accomplished. We need to be able to visualize what it will be like and hold that thought. This statement or affirmation should be read and visualized daily, or multiple times daily, until it has been imprinted into our subconscious as a true belief of what is. All sane human beings act on the truth as we perceive it to be. Our subconscious has been programmed with those perceived truths, which may or may not actually be true. The process of affirming and visualizing the end goal as we know it will be is the act of reprogramming perceived subconscious truths. When this occurs, the discrepancy between current reality and the new perceived truth of the way things will be creates the energy and desire to discover the “how to’s.” Many individuals begin focusing on the “how to’s” before they are solidly locked onto the goal. Then the issues that arise become barriers, and before long inwardly they convince themselves that it is not possible to achieve the goal. In other words, they find a way out because their subconscious truth all along was that it wouldn’t be possible to achieve such a “bold goal.”

Most very successful corporate executives are end result thinkers and have confidence in their ability to make things happen, and most got to their level in their respective company because they did make things happen. However, one of the weaknesses that some executives have is that they think everyone sees things the same way they do. This is called a scotoma, a blind spot. They are so focused on the truth as they perceive it to be that they can’t see the truth as others see it. Maybe a better way of saying it is; they are so locked onto their truth that they can’t see other possibilities.

Workers, and low to mid level managers within most companies, have been trained to focus on the process and continuously make improvements. To do this they are always looking for process variability or problems. They are so wrapped up in the daily issues or problems that they begin to believe that the goal is to fix problems. Their SMART goals begin to read like a project plan or a list of activities that they plan to complete, with no measurable results tied to stated goals of the company. Because the truth as they perceive it to be is that completing activities is the real goal, the assumption is that the company will benefit somehow when they have resolved these issues. However, the issues may be something of no value, “hobby horses.” So it is no wonder that they don’t get emotionally excited about “bold goals” that are parachuted down from

the top. Their perceived truth is that it is another program of the year and that their real job is to stay focused on the issues and not be concerned with management's long-term vision. At a conscious level they give it lip service, but inwardly they know that it will blow over when the next program comes along. In other words, they know there will be a way out, and that management's focus will change; because it always has!

When searching for a way to illustrate this point I found the following that to me creates a picture of the blind spots that exist. ¹I believe that most people work like the team shown below.



Here they are working hard and thumping along on Square Wheels. Note that the round wheels already exist in the wagon. They plod along like they have always done because these wheels do work. And after all, how would we know that we were making any progress if things didn't go Thump, Thump?

The Square Wheels can represent many things, including traditions and habits. Organizationally, they may represent processes and practices that do not work well or inter-departmental conflicts. They are the shared experiences of any organization that does not move smoothly forward. They increase costs of doing things and are inefficient and ineffective.

The person in the front pulls forward but also gets isolated from the wagon itself and may not feel the thumps and bumps nor hear the talk at the back. Communication is hard. The view from the back is not very motivating and the pushers are somewhat blind to the future. The wagon can do the job, but it's difficult to turn; changing direction is always hard.

Individually, these Square Wheels might represent the things we are so used to doing. They could just be our preferences in how we approach job, or home activities. What we have been doing works, but there might be more effective ways of doing things. But it is sometimes hard to see this. After all, we are making progress!

And there is another paradox: We set our goals based on Square Wheels. And we can meet our goals if they are set this way! Lastly, over time, it becomes increasingly hard to stop and step back to look for new possibilities for doing things because we are working so hard to meet these goals!"

When an organization is striving to achieve bold goals, what are the signs that the managers are beginning to lose their focus or looking for ways out? Through their communications they begin to talk about the problems they are encountering or the issues that they are dealing with, instead of communicating their confidence in the ability of

¹ Scott J. Simmerman, Ph.D, Performance Management Company, 1998 – 2000.

their team to meet or exceed the goal. ²“We move toward and become like that which we think about, and our present thoughts, more than anything else, determine our future.” They may consciously be concerned about the issues, however their communication needs to affirm their confidence in achieving the bold goal. Those using management skills tend to focus on issues, resolving one at a time, while those using leadership skills focus on end results and communicate their positive expectation, which creates energy and confidence within the team, allowing them to clear issues at a rapid pace. In other words, managers tend to achieve incremental improvement; leaders create energy within a team allowing the team to clear hurdles achieving bold goals. The really successful leaders communicate such a positive message to their organization that at the conscious level the entire organization begins to believe in their ability to achieve the goal and overcome anything that gets in their way. As they begin to build on and celebrate their successes, they begin to imprint into the subconscious level the true belief that they will achieve the desired goal, and guess what, they do.

Unfortunately many in leadership roles don't have that god-given ability to communicate a strong enough message that the entire team can believe and visualize having achieved the desired goal. However, this skill can be developed within all of us through a process of inner reflection, goal setting, and affirming that which we desire to be. More about this later!

Many of us within organizations lose sight of, or just don't understand the value of our communications, or the damage that we can do. The following illustrates this point.

³**A Man Lived By the Side of the Road and Sold Hot Dogs**

- He was hard of hearing, so he had no radio.
- He had trouble with his eyes, so he had no newspaper.
- But he sold hot dogs.
- He put up a sign on the highway, advertising how good they were.
- He stood by the side of the road and cried, “Buy a hot dog mister!”
- And people bought.
- He increased his meat and bun orders, and he bought a bigger stove to take care of his trade.
- He got his son home from college to help him. But then something happened.
- His son said, “Father, haven't you heard on the radio? There's a big depression on. The international situation is terrible, and the domestic situation is even worse.”
- Whereupon the father thought “Well my son has gone to college. He listens to the radio and reads the newspapers, so he ought to know.”
- So the father cut down on the bun order, took down his advertising signs, and no longer bothered to stand on the highway to sell hot dogs.
- His hot dog sales fell almost overnight.
- “You were right son,” the father said to the boy.
“We are certainly in the middle of a great depression.”

² Lou Tice, The Winner's Circle, November 18, 2000

³ The Pacific Institute, 1999

Everyone looks up to someone, and within large organizations they look for the signals being given by the leadership team. Those signals come in the form of body language and the words we use. Words like; we plan to, aim to, hope to, if everything goes right, we are trying, etc. subconsciously communicate that the leader doesn't fully expect to deliver. He or she is giving the organization a way out.

Communications can only be effective when the receiver perceives the same message as the sender intended. Why then do so many communications leave so much room for failure? Is it fear? Is it lack of commitment, or simply a reflection of the core expectations that the leader has about the organization and the people's capabilities within it?

It has been said that people rise to a level that matches their expectations. I believe that organizations perform at a level that matches the expectation of the managers. If as a manager I lack confidence in our ability to achieve a bold goal, my actions and words will signal the organization. Like the man selling hot dogs along the road, they will give up and begin to only expect to be able to achieve incremental improvement as in the past. The round wheels will be in the wagon, but they won't be seen or even considered as a possible solution.

Leadership is ⁴"the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose and the character which inspires confidence." What does it take to be a leader and how do we improve individual leadership skills so that we become better able to "rally men and women to a common purpose," and develop the "character which inspires confidence.?"

First, and the most essential quality, is to have a vision that drives you forward and the passion to never give up. Every person on the management team within any company is there to be a "change agent." Why then is it so hard to create change? We have too many of our "change agents" managing "what is" and protecting the status quo. It is human nature to settle into a comfort zone, if you aren't being driven by "your" vision, goals, and purpose. So how can you lead without a vision or a sense of direction for where you are going? Without a vision "anyplace you end up, is okay." So without a vision, no one can lead!

Character is a foundation for leadership. You can't be an effective leader without knowing who you are and what you stand for. Without solid character you will lean with every wind and no one will know who you are or where you're heading. So why or how could anyone follow?

Another quality is having the courage to step out and take a chance. It takes courage to try new things and to speak up for those things that you want to change. We should be very careful not to fall in the trap of complaining about things that are wrong. That doesn't take courage and it sucks the energy out of the environment. Providing suggestions and solutions requires courage and creates energy within the environment. ⁵"Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities...because it is the quality which guarantees all others."

⁴ Bernard Montgomery, British Field Marshall

⁵ Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister

Without initiative you will never get started. ⁶“Even the right decision is the wrong decision if it is made too late.” A leader takes action, assumes risks and makes mistakes, but learns from each mistake and tries again.

Focus separates the good from the great. When you have focus there is always an effort to solve problems and find better ways, which creates high levels of energy that allows the leader to keep going when others have given up. I read once that to be average, work eight hours per day, to be good work ten hours per day, but to be great focus all of the time.

⁷“Change at the Heart of Life – We really mean that change is at the very heart of life. Think about it for a moment, independent of business as such, and look at the role of change in general. You could say that life is change. From conception to death we are changing physically every microsecond, and certainly from the first moment of independent existence we are changing mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

We are all the time taking into our minds new impressions through the senses. We see things, we hear things, we smell things, we touch things, we taste things and beyond that we have feelings about the messages our five senses bring to us. They make us sad, happy, impatient, excited, worried, angry, determined, uncertain, jealous, envious; they make us love, hate, sympathize, empathize, cooperate, oppose, fight; and these emotions, being stirred, provide us with energy and impel us to action.

These perceptions of what it is to be human can help us to take a positive approach to change and make it work to our advantage. You are only really alive when you are changing. It is the essence of personal growth, it is the basis of relationships with other people, and without it there is no learning and no progress.

Yet even when we acknowledge all this, we are prone to resist change. We fear it, we avoid it, and we long for the status quo.

So the real question we are addressing here is; how do we overcome all of the obstacles and barriers that stand in our way of achieving the stated bold goals? To summarize, these obstacles and barriers are.

- Not believing that it is actually possible
- Looking for a way out
- Negative self-talk
- Blocking out other possibilities
- Lack of constant focus on the bold goal
- Inter-departmental conflicts
- Working so hard to achieve the goals, that we don't see solutions
- Ineffective communications
- Negative expectations
- Lack of personal vision
- Lack of passion
- Protecting the status quo
- Lack of courage to step out and take a chance
- Not knowing who you are and what you stand for
- Being prone to resist change

⁶ Lee Iacocca, former Chrysler Chairman

⁷ Edgar Wille and Philip Hodgson, Making Change Work, Copyright 1991 Mercury Books

- Settled into comfort zones

All of these obstacles and barriers are addressed, and are at the heart of the *Imagine 21* workshop that has been developed by Lou Tice and The Pacific Institute. You see, this isn't an engineering solution to change and bold goal achievement. It is a solution that focuses on what is real, the human aspect of the business. You can't see it or touch it, but you can feel it and know how much better it can be.

Because you can't see it or touch it, makes it a very cost-effective solution for bold goal achievement. When you can see and touch something it becomes a tangible asset, which depreciates over time and eventually will be replaced. But the *Imagine 21* concepts are tools for life that continually help every person develop new truths, improve and take on challenges they previously never thought possible. The concepts will continually develop within each person and the organization, never needing to be replaced. This truly is an investment that will give an organization the common focus, passion, personal character, excitement for change, and recognition that other possibilities do exist, ensuring that the company becomes that which is possible.