**Goals are Worthless …**

By Brian Jud

Goals are the foundation of a solid marketing plan. They provide a target at which to aim, the standard against which you can gauge your company’s progress. They divide your vision statement into manageable steps and provide a path to its realization. And written goals provide a means for looking back to see how far you have come.

If all these benefits of setting goals are true, how can goals be of no value? Goal-setting is a tool, and like any other tool it is useless if used incorrectly. Goals are worthless…

**…if they are not clear, specific, measurable, time-sensitive and written**. This admonition is almost a cliché, but it bears repeating. Objectives must be clear so there is no misinterpreting their intent; specific so there is no doubt about whether you reached them or not; measurable in their objectivity, eliminating indeterminate goals such as "be the best in the business;" attainable in a limited period (which could be a month, a year, five years or more); written to make them indelible and not subject to later (mis)interpretation.

**... if they are not realistic**. Set goals within the realm of what is possible for you to accomplish. This does not mean you shouldn’t stretch to meet a worthy objective, but only that your optimism should not exceed your ability to fulfill.

… **if they are not arranged hierarchically**. Arrange your goals from the most to the least important, from broad to specific targets so you do the most important tasks first.

**… if they are not part of a plan**. Planning is a verb, a series of sequential actions represented by the acronym PIE -- *Planning, Implementation* and *Evaluation*. Preparing objectives is the beginning of the planning process, the foundation upon which your implementation and evaluation occur.

**… if you don’t follow up and make them work**. Once your plan is complete, move to the second part of the PIE acronym and *implement* your plan, taking action to reach your objectives. As the saying goes, plan your work and work your plan.

**… if you don’t evaluate your relative progress and make necessary corrections**. Are your actions taking you closer to, or further from your goals? How do you know? The *evaluation* portion of the PIE acronym tests your relative progress to make sure it is forward and goal directed. If it is not, make the corrections necessary to get you back on course.

**… if they are focused on the problem and not the solution**. Murphy’s Law is alive and well in most parts of the publishing process. But if you dwell on the things that go wrong, that is where your attention will be focused. Don’t fight problems, *right* problems. Set goals to reach profitability, not to avoid a loss.

**... if they are set when you are in a negative frame of mind**. Negativity can overpower your thoughts when revenue and profits are down. That is not the time to be setting goals. Wait until you have regained control of your attitude.

**… if they are not derived from a sense of purpose**. Purpose breeds passion, the unfailing belief in yourself and your ability to make your goals become reality. Your targets will rarely motivate you to sustained action if they are not set from an unfailing sense of destiny.

Use goal-setting as the tool it was meant to be, part of the process that transforms your vision statement into reality. Do this and your march to success will be as simple as PIE.

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Brian Jud is a book-marketing consultant and the Executive Director of the Association of Publishers for Special Sales (APSS – www.bookapss.org– formerly SPAN). Contact Brian at brianjud@bookmarketing.com or www.premiumbookcompany.com