

# 80% of small business owners do not track their business goals.

Source: 4th Annual Staples National Small Business Survey, 2010

Last month, you tackled your budget; this month, it's time to devise goals for your business. For many, creating goals can be a daunting experience. However, clear targets are necessary for success in business and in life. *What is your vision for your business?* Turn your dreams into reality by setting measurable, attainable goals. During the process, remember to:

- **Clarify** what you want to accomplish and set a deadline.
- **Commit** to your goals and make achieving them a priority.
- **Assess** your progress. Once you reach a goal, set the bar higher. If you are having difficulty reaching it, then break it into smaller goals.

## Conduct an end-of-the-year review

The end of the year is often the best time to evaluate the state of your business and begin to think about what you would like to improve in the coming year. To succeed in 2012, start planning now.

- **Assess your finances** to help you create tangible goals for your business. You should know:
  - ✓ The number of transactions you closed in 2011
  - ✓ The number of referrals you generated
  - ✓ Your total revenue and expenditures
- **Review your database.** Take the time to evaluate and re-categorize your new and existing "A," "B" and "C" clients. Who are your biggest advocates? This exercise will help to focus your referral and lead generation efforts in the coming year.
- **Set realistic goals for your business.** If your goal is to increase your revenue by a certain percentage, you will need to increase the number of sales you close. *How many referrals do you need to generate in the new year to achieve your goals?* Remember to be realistic and base what you want to achieve on your past accomplishments.

# Goals



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## GOAL SETTING

- S** SPECIFIC & WRITTEN
- M** MEASURABLE IN PROGRESS & COMPLETION
- A** ACHIEVABLE OUTCOME
- R** REALISTIC IN TIME & SKILL
- T** TIME-BASED ACHIEVEMENT

Tracking your progress will keep you motivated and committed to achieving your goal.



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# Setting Goals is as Easy as 1, 2, 3

There's no time like the present to set goals for the future. What do you want to accomplish in the next 10 days, 10 weeks and 10 months in your business and your personal life? A goal without a deadline is similar to a New Year's resolution—both are forgotten within a few weeks. Setting a deadline will increase your motivation and hold you accountable to your aspirations.

## 1 Visualize

Imagining the life you want to lead is a starting point to developing your goals. The visualizing process will provide focus for your aspirations. Remember to ask yourself: What do you aspire to be or have and why? How will you achieve it? What is your time frame for success?

## 2 Turn your vision into tangible goals

To improve your chances of achieving a larger goal, break it into smaller, manageable pieces. Setting short- and mid-term goals that are related to a long-term goal can help you to measure your progress and may boost your motivation.

## 3 Write them down

Once you've translated your vision into goals, it's time to put pen to paper. Write down what you want to accomplish in the next 10 days. On a separate sheet of paper, write down what you want to achieve over the next 10 weeks. Finally, on a third sheet of paper, write down what you hope to achieve over the next 10 months. Post your goals where you can see them on a daily basis.

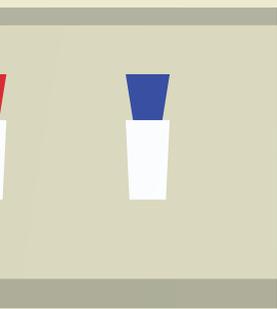
### How to Create Vibrant Goals

Visualization is the first step in setting vibrant goals. Once you have envisioned what your life will look like upon achieving your goal, consider:

- **The Positive Power of Why:** Why do you want to fulfill your goals?
- **The Price of Completion:** What do you need to do to make these goals a reality?
- **The Cost of Non-completion:** What are the consequences of not achieving your goals?



Fewer than **20%** of people put their goals in writing. Of these people, only **20%** review these goals on a regular basis.



### Take 10

Be sure to set aside 10 minutes every two weeks to write new 10-day goals and assess your progress on your 10-week and 10-month goals.