

Disciplined Leadership

You want to manage a disciplined team, focused on achieving results, beating the competition and demonstrating continuous improvement. You want to generate enthusiasm while making measured progress toward common goals. You want the entire team to succeed, to work together and be the best that they can be. You may be wondering how to begin.

It starts with you.

Define the Goals

Define your personal measurable objectives. Your goals must be tangible, measurable and substantive. It is not enough to define a goal as completing a task. You need to define a target date and a method of measuring the completion.

For example, a poor goal would be a personal challenge to lose weight. However, a good goal would be to define the amount of weight to lose and a reasonable target date to achieve the desired weight.

The same concept may apply for personal business goals. You may have financial targets like a budget. You may have a schedule to complete a project, research or analysis. You may need to achieve a specific quota or ranking. Whether your goals relate to your work or your personal life, you need to define them.

Write down your goals and place the list somewhere that you will see it every day.

Develop a Strategy

Your strategy consists of specific steps and milestones. The milestones are periodic measurements to determine that you are on the path to achieve your goal.

For example, if your goal is to achieve a revenue quota, map out specific opportunities that may contribute to the attainment of that goal and then make a plan for each one. If the goal is to complete a project, define the steps necessary to complete the project with associated measurements and milestones.

Check in on your strategy and compare your progress at predefined intervals. Allow some flexibility in between those scheduled intervals, but challenge yourself to remain on schedule as each milestone date arrives.

List the Benefits

Identify the benefits of achieving your goals.

For example, if the personal goal is to lose weight, the benefits may include a new wardrobe, more energy or even better health benefits. If your goal is to achieve a desired budget, identify the residual positive impact.

The benefits of achieving your goal should not be limited to attaining the goal alone. On the contrary, there are typically many benefits realized during the course of completing each step of your strategy. The benefits may include physical, financial, psychological or many other types of motivational rewards.

Organize

Organize your plan, your materials, your thoughts and your environment. This not only applies to the items that contribute to achieving your goals, but it also applies to the numerous items that may distract you from your goals.

For example, clear the clutter from your desk and clear the distractions from your sight. If there are documents that have been sitting for several weeks or months, chances are that the documents are not high enough priority to get done, but not low enough priority that you can stop thinking about them. Create a place to store the low priority items until you are ready to resolve them. In the meantime, remove the low priority distractions so you can focus on the high priority goals.

Exercise Daily Discipline

Challenge yourself to exercise daily discipline. You have purpose. The goals that you have defined are important. The way to achieve your goals is by structured and consistent effort and attention to detail.

Challenge your excuses. You may not feel interested in doing the necessary task or strategic objective that it takes every

single day. When this happens, reflect on your passion for your established goal and do what it takes to keep the momentum.

Focus on Results

Keep your focus on the final goal as you work through your strategy and maintain your daily diligence. As you head toward your goal, it should be like a beacon or lighthouse that leads your effort. Align your activity with the desired ultimate results.

As you attain each milestone in your strategy, focus on the outcome and benefits of your progress. When you have achieved your goal, focus your reflection on the results of your accomplishments.

Reward Yourself

Enjoy some small rewards for accomplishing strategic tasks in accordance with your milestones. If you miss your measurement or milestone, withhold your reward in anticipation of the next milestone or attainment of your goal.

When you do achieve your goal, keep your promise to yourself and savor the reward. Give yourself a small gift of recognition that you can keep as a constant reminder of your accomplishment. Sometimes you will need this as motivation when you define your next personal goals, or as inspiration to maintain daily diligence.

Lead by Example

Practice this discipline in your own activities. As you develop a structure and routine for attaining personal goals with daily diligence, you will be able to share these benefits with your team. You will be able to teach and encourage them to achieve results as you have done. You will be able to help them align personal strategies with focused goals. Eventually you will be able to share the mutual rewards of achieving personal and professional goals.

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