Do Your Employees Want to Commit to Your 2021 Goals?

The success or failure of your goals often hinges on employee commitment or employee buy-in. If your workforce does not believe in your goals, it's likely you need to go back to the drawing board to re-evaluate how you created and developed those objectives.

Why Do Goals Fail?

[Studies into workplace dynamics](#) suggest that some goals fail due to deficiencies existing in the goal itself. The same research says that employees who feel genuine commitment toward their organizations' goals are much more likely to be successful in achieving them. If your employees don't care, then your goals are likely to fail. The bad news is you can't just tell your employees to believe in your goals and expect them to commit to them without any other effort. What makes employees resist committing to your goals?

Fair Play

Workers, and humans in general, like having certainty. When an employee receives an ambiguous directive, they could feel as if they've been placed into an unfair situation. Without a manager defining a clear path forward, you're not setting your employees up for success, and they often see it coming. On another branch of the same tree, goals that conflict with each other will also be confusing for employees.

The goal you set also has to be realistic for the workforce to achieve. If you shoot too high, then you run the risk of demotivating your team. A person's typical thought pattern will reject an unrealistic goal rather than risk certain failure.

All of this means when you're building your goals, they need to be realistically achievable, and you need to define the terms of success clearly for everyone. To check your goals against these factors, ask yourself the following questions:
- If I were this employee, would I find these goals to be clear and concise?
- Does this objective line up with our established personal and professional values?
- Am I setting quantifiable targets in line with established industry standards, current business conditions, and relevant documented performance outputs?
- Will employees find these goals challenging yet practical for them to achieve?

Transparency

When the system that we work within feels fair and balanced, we are more motivated to work within it. We perceive rewards as being within our reach, and we understand and trust the system that created these goals for us. Understanding breeds confidence and confidence fuels other aspects of our work, such as motivation and commitment. You want your system of goal setting to be seen as fair and transparent to your workforce.

Employees will put in the extra effort and commitment when they understand where a goal came from, how it was set, and if it seems achievable within your established expectations. It is akin to showing your work when you solve a math problem. You can't just give them a number and expect everyone to buy-in fully; you need to show your work. To assess the procedural transparency of your goals, take these actions:

- Work with other departments or a consultant to examine your goal setting process and get an outside perspective on your path.
- Ask for and accept lower-level employee feedback on your goals. You can easily do this through surveys, which will help you find new points of view.

Setting New Goals in 2021

2020 was not an easy year for anyone, and that should be taken into account when setting new goals for 2021. Now is the perfect time to reassess where your values lie and how your annual goals are established. Taking another look at this process will help you find new paths to goals that are practical yet ambitious and are viewed as within reach by your employees.