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6 Steps To Insanely Successful Business Goals For 2013

It's time to determine your company's goals for the New Year. Don't wait any longer. Smart business builders are working on this task *now*. From my point of view, it is imperative to establish reachable and measurable goals in advance.

Those who don't are destined for the **Cemetery of Failed Businesses**. Why? Consider the profound advice of **Hall of Fame** catcher **Yogi Berra**: "If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."

Where do you want your company to be one year from now? What do you want to achieve?



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If you start your planning today instead of waiting until the new year is upon us, you'll have much more time to consider, ponder, decide, prepare, organize, and communicate the most important results that your company must achieve to be insanely successful during 2013.

With that in mind, please consider the following suggestions:

1. **Talk to Customers:** Successful organizations start planning for the New Year by talking to customers. Listen carefully to what they have to say and respond appropriately. Each year, through my decades as an entrepreneur, I have diligently contacted my clients to ask what they want from us over the coming year. In some cases, we also use the visit as a chance to discuss new innovations they haven't yet considered. They are almost always willing to help. Their answers about the purchase of current and future products, pricing, delivery, warranties and their feedback about buying experiences are highly valuable as we set our company goals. Combining this information with other company data helps to determine revenue forecasts for the following year, as well solidifying plans for the products and services to make and deliver and the expenses involved.
2. **Establish Very Specific Goals:** Earlier this month, fellow **Forbes.com** contributor [Sebastian Bailey discussed](#) the results of a "meta-analysis" that shows that the establishment of "specific goals" result in significantly higher performance than general goals. Likewise I've also found that specific goals lead to better outcomes. For example, a few years ago, my **MarketStar** team decided

that our specific goal for the coming year, based on client wishes, was to expand our operations internationally. After considerable study, we recognized that **Europe** would be our best choice, followed by **Latin America** and **Asia**. In addition, the countries of **Great Britain**, **Germany** and **France** emerged as key targets, and **London**, **Berlin** and **Paris** as our cities of focus. With this larger picture in mind, we sent a senior executive to live in England to analyze the economic environment of each area and create a plan to move our business forward. At each step of the way, we were very specific about what we wanted to learn, to measure and to accomplish. Afterwards, MarketStar established business relationships in our target countries and began to offer services to US technology clients with an interest in this region of the world. Our specific goal led to a massive increase in opportunities and revenue, for that year and beyond. Keep in mind that you will have both strategic goals (markets, customers, competitors, products, channels, people, other resources and processes) and financial goals (revenues, margins, expenses, profits, and various industry financial ratios). All should be highly defined and very specific.

3. **Be Inclusive:** Involve employees in the development and establishment of your company goals. All workers need to be heard, understood and respected, especially if you want them to fully commit. I view this process as a negotiation between parties. In short, goals need to be mutually acceptable to all to be attainable. With this in mind, the next step is to clearly communicate to employees exactly what needs to happen at each layer of the organization. Everyone should know their assignments, their level of authority, their resources (people and budgets) and when and how to report on progress. They should also know how their duties fit within the full enterprise picture.
4. **Set Long-Term and Short-Term Goals:** Create long-term goals (such as 'double revenue by the end of the second year of business') to provide mileposts to help you visualize progress for the years to come. Then develop short-term, monthly and quarterly objectives to lead your organization step-by-step toward the accomplishment of the longer-term goals.
5. **Have a "Plan B":** Even with your best efforts, you won't reach every goal. Knowing this, allow for some variation in your plans. There should always be an alternative that addresses unexpected challenges or opportunities beyond your control
6. **Measure, Evaluate, and Respond:** Once goals are approved, meet with your employees on a regular basis – weekly, monthly or quarterly – to assess the progress of each critical task. The status of goals reviewed at each meeting will vary based on employee levels. With evaluations in hand, you can determine what needs to happen between each meeting to align current results with expected outcomes.

In sum, to succeed in establishing and reaching your goals, you should focus well in advance on what needs to happen and spend all time necessary in advance to ensure their success. While some goals may be harder to achieve than others, each experience will refine your focus and improve the time and energy you spend on reaching the key objectives that bring the bigger goal within reach.

Get started now, and you'll be much more likely to succeed when January arrives.

With that said, what are your goals for next year? I look forward to hearing your responses. You can reach me here, at @AskAlanEHall, or at www.AlanEHall.com.

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