



CAPRICORN

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Other resources in step 9a:

- Goal setting template

If you fail to plan, you can plan to fail

Writing books and delivering lectures about setting goals – for life, for business, for love, for anything – has become a growth industry in itself. Self help books litter the shelves at airports particularly.

Many of these self help books only make money for their authors and are written by people whose worlds are far removed from the reality of a busy automotive workshop.

Does setting goals really help? Looking for our own inspiration we found this appropriate comment from the guy who wrote the best selling book *The Greatest Salesman in the World*, Og Mandino: The victory of success is half won when one gains the habit of setting goals and achieving them. Even the most tedious chore will become endurable as you parade through each day convinced that every task, no matter how menial or boring, brings you closer to fulfilling your dreams.

This philosophy certainly worked for Mr Mandino. He sold 50 million of his books in more than 25 languages.

But back to reality. The spare time of most automotive workshop owners and managers who we know, use it relaxing with the family. Business can wait until tomorrow when they open the doors once again.

Our experience in automotive workshop management has convinced us that goal setting does work. In fact, it can be critically important to the success of your business.

It is an undisputed fact that business owners who set goals achieve success. Just walking into a workshop, in most cases, can tell you whether the business owner has achievable goals or whether they are just going through the motions.

Goal setting made simple

Think of goal setting as simply putting your dreams and thoughts down on paper.

Everyone has dreams and thoughts, so it follows that everyone has goals. Far too many workshop owners continue to just dream their way through their business life, but if you really want to change your business and your life for the better, it's a relatively simple process to plan your goals – all it takes is a little willpower.

The process can begin like this:

1. **What** you want to achieve (goals)
2. **How** you are going to get there (strategies)

Ensure your goals are SMART:

Specific – be specific with what you want to achieve.

Measurable – the more measurable, the better. Where possible the goal should include a number, a dollar value, a percentage or some form of measure.

Attainable – the goal must be attainable. It's great to stretch yourself but if it's not really attainable then you set yourself up to fail.

Realistic – be realistic about your goals.

Time-based – set yourself a deadline. A specific date works best – rather than a month or a year.

Building your action plan

Once you have decided on your goals, it's time to document how you will achieve them in your action plan. This is where you describe the strategies you will use to achieve your goals.

The word *strategy* can be broken down into **tasks** or **activities** that need to be completed. These must be documented because these are the actual things you will be doing and there are many different ways to do this. TaT Biz has provided an example action plan complete with a strategy and its implementation tasks.

TaT Biz recommends that you plan three months in advance.

There are too many variables in small business to try to plan 12 months in advance.

At the end of each quarter you can reassess where you're at and then plan out your next quarter.

Be realistic with what you can achieve in three months. As a starting point try to set between six and ten strategies every quarter. This may vary depending on the complexity of the strategies and your role within your business.

Finding the time to see your plan through

The hardest part about achieving goals is finding the time to get the work done. Don't think you're alone or any different to any other workshop owner. Everyone is time poor. However, where there is a will there is a way. If you want success bad enough there is always time available.

From our experience you need to find a couple of hours every week to work **on** your business and not **in** your business. This needs to be uninterrupted time, so for some of us that may have to be after hours or at home. Assign the time in your diary and keep it consistent to help make it routine. Don't imagine you will find time somehow during the day because something will always pop up that is more urgent. Watch three hours less TV every week and you've found the time.

If you can't find the time, or make the time to work on your business, the reality is that your business will never change or improve and you will wake up in five years time in exactly the same position. There is no other choice – find the time now or you will forever be time poor.

Start planning today for a better 2012

There is an old saying "If you fail to prepare you are preparing to fail".

Don't let this statement ring true for you in 2012. Start planning today to ensure that 2012 is your most successful year to date.

So here's the challenge. In the next four weeks, give yourself a target to set your goals for 2012 and build your action plan for the first quarter of the year.

The place to start is www.tatbiz.net.au/capricorn

Just go for it!