

The data shows that we love goals but struggle to achieve them.

Are goals the one thing we love to fail at? Is this true for you? Do you set goals year after year only to be stressed and struggling to complete them?

According to Gallup, 7 of 10 Americans will likely set goals in 2023. Most of us have been schooled in the SMART methodology for designing goal statements. And 48% of us will actually write them down. While it is important to create powerful goals statements, many of us struggle to achieve our goals while continuing to do the day-to-day tasks and activities that are part of our on-going job requirements.



To actually reach our goals, we need to add in planning, accountability and continuous refinement to the process. Below is a five-step process, SPAR-C, that will help you and/or your team members achieve more.

1. SENSIBILITY

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, most workers only have between 20% to 40% of their working day to actually devote to doing “productive” work (meaning something new/important vs. day-to-day activities). Given these demands on our time, it is imperative that we are realistic about what we can accomplish.

- Goals need to be attainable (Can we complete within our 20% to 40% discretionary time)
- Goals need to stretch not break us (Does it create a challenge vs. stress)
- Goals need to be limited (Capped no more than 3 at a time to ensure progress & completion can occur)

2. PLANNING & SYSTEMS

It is not enough to write our goals down. According to BetterUp, a whopping 92% of us fail to achieve our goals. By creating an action plan, you are making a roadmap for achieving your goal. Action plans include:

- Results you want
- Steps required
- Deadlines for completing

A system is a repeatable process that helps you create a habit, which moves you toward a desired outcome. For achieving your goals, a system needs three steps:

- Clarity on what you want to achieve
- Identifying the habit(s) that will nudge you toward your desired outcome
- Commitment to revise your system on a regular basis

For example, if your goal was to write a book, your system could be to hit a daily or weekly quota for words written.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY

We all need accountability if we are to move from our present self to our future self. How we create accountability will depend on our personality. According to Gretchen Rubin, author of *The Four Tendencies*, there are four personality tendencies; Upholder, Questioner, Obliger and Rebel. As an example, if you are an Obliger, you focus on meeting outer expectations but resist inner expectations. So It is important for Obligers to create accountability through commitments to others. To take the Four Tendencies quiz and find out what that means for your behavior and life go to: <https://gretchenrubin.com>.

Other ways you can create accountability:

- Commit to a schedule
- Create micro-goals
- Have an accountability partner
- Know your why

4. THREE R'S - REVIEW, RESET & REENGAGE

We have all had the experience of setting a goal on January 1st only to have our world change soon after. To be successful at achieving our goals, we need to continually reevaluate them to ensure they are still the most critical given changing demands. A quarterly review can be very helpful to ensure we are working on the right things. The second step is to reset or revise, if the environment or the focus has changed. Achieving your goals is about action; so it is important to reengage and recommit to the actions that will create success.

5. CELEBRATE

Achieving a step or completing a goal needs to have positive energy associated with it. Be sure to take a pause so you can acknowledge the work you did to achieve the goal. Many of us tend to be stuck in the need for continuous action or looking ahead to the next goal that needs to be completed. We need to take the time to celebrate both the small successes (completing a step) and the big ones (completing/ achieving the goal) because it helps to build momentum and stay focused. Each win helps to build our confidence in creating a “can do” mindset. Make sure you have options for celebrate in a way that is meaningful and motivating to you.

Five Important Questions to Continually Ask Yourself or Your Team Members:

1. Are the goals achievable given other demands and priorities?
2. Is there a plan in place to achieve the goal(s)?
3. Is there accountability?
4. Is there a cadence of regular reviews to re-align the goals to the current priorities?
5. Is there planned celebrations for both small and big wins?

