



## Where Have I Been and Where Am I Going?

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The end of the year is a great time to review our 2009 and to think about what 2010 might bring us.

I find it fascinating that, among the businesses that I work with, some have a preference for the former (reflecting on the year just gone) and some have a preference for the latter (planning the following year). Not only that, the reflection and/or the anticipation seems to conjure up widely-differing emotions among people. Most people accept that a degree of goal-setting and a degree of performance review is healthy - and the end of the year represents an appropriate juncture to do it. If you are experiencing some stress in undertaking these tasks perhaps the following may help....

Let's start with your review of your results for 2009. Imagine a scenario where your business goal for the calendar year was to achieve gross revenue of \$1.0m, compared with actual gross revenue in calendar 2008 of \$0.9m. Imagine that the actual result was \$0.95m. In this situation some of my clients are celebrating an increase in actual revenue of \$50,000, with a consequent sense of satisfaction and achievement. At the same time, and in the same situation, some of my clients are disappointed that they have fallen short of their goal by \$50,000 with a consequent sense of failure. Dan Sullivan refers to this phenomenon as "the gap". If you are struggling to understand why you are feeling disillusioned by your results in 2009 perhaps you are focusing on the shortfall against your stretch goal rather than the actual improvement in your tangible results.

The other tension that can arise in your review of 2009 is the balance between your personal outcomes and your business outcomes. For most small business owners the two are inextricably linked. However, the quality of the outcomes may not be identical. There are some business owners who are celebrating the achievement of their business - satisfied clients; healthy relationships with centres of influence; great staff morale; strong new business; solid profit - but they still feel that something is missing personally. It is important to remember that you and your business are not the same thing. Before setting goals for next year it may be helpful to identify what was "missing" for you personally and to ensure that it forms part of your focus for next year. This may be as simple as recognising that your enjoyment is derived from working directly with clients and vowing to spend more time with them next year - committing, of course, to the change in behaviour that is necessary to deliver a change in outcome. It may be as complex as recognising that there are aspects of your personal life that need more time and attention.

This brings us to the challenge of setting goals for next year and we have already found a clue. In coming up with a set of goals it is important to ensure that there is some balance between your personal goals and your business goals. It is not coincidence that one of the diagnostic tools we use with our clients is called "Why Are You Working So Hard?".



It is important that your goals are quality goals. Here are some questions that may help clarify whether each of your goals is worthy of your commitment:

1. Why do I want that goal?
2. Is it really my goal?
3. Will this goal take me closer to my major objectives in life?
4. Can I emotionally commit to starting this goal?
5. Can I see myself reaching this goal?

The other tension that often becomes evident when we are setting goals is the potentially conflicting concepts of success and happiness. Success is usually seen as a function of drive, with an emphasis on the future, when we will be satisfied if we achieve something. Happiness is usually seen as a function of enjoying being present, satisfied with our current situation and our sense of being. Matt Church has a provocative view on this apparent contrast: “It's not an either/or proposition, it's an and/also one. It's about walking and chewing gum. Set the goals and intent but then let go and enjoy the process you put in place”.

With all of the pressures that you and your business are experiencing in these exciting times it is critical to have a game plan that will deliver success in the future. It is also critical that you have a persona of happiness and satisfaction - that says a lot more to your clients than your website and business card.

These are the best of times to review your performance in 2009 and set quality goals for 2010.