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4 Steps to a Plan for 2010

By Jenni Murphy-Scanlon

I've always loved setting goals each year, but struggle with the detail of SMART objectives - you know, the specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely formula. I can cope with 'relevant and specific' at a high level, find 'attainable' a bit restrictive and generally fail on the measurable bit, especially at a weekly level. Nevertheless I have a process that has always worked well for me without getting too low level. I even successfully planned for babies and starting my business using this method, even though at the time there was no indication these things were likely to happen. Whether you are planning for your career, life or business here are four steps that will help you do so successfully:

1. Decide what success means for you

What does success mean to you for 2010? Make a list of all the elements that add up to success. Be specific but honest - don't worry about how realistic it seems right now. A year is a long time. Test your list with a trusted friend or family member who knows your values. This list forms your 'vision'.

2. Choose how to reach each element of success

For each element on your list, think broadly about how you could achieve that. Don't get into too many details. For instance, if an element is to have a close relationship with a family member, you might choose to listen attentively when they talk with you and be encouraging. Or if it is to secure a higher income, you might choose to increase your client numbers or obtain a higher paid role. These are your strategies.

3. Identify barriers and accelerators

Beside each strategy note the key factors likely to help you achieve that currently, and in future. Often these will be your strengths. Note also any key factors likely to hinder your achievement. These might be lack of confidence in your ability, for example, or lack of knowledge about something.



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4. Read your document daily

Every day read through your vision, your strategies and the barriers and accelerators. Monitor the barriers and try to work around them or develop new skills if relevant. Use the accelerators to help you achieve success. Add or remove accelerators and barriers as needed through the year.

Following these four steps keeps you focussed on your vision and strategies. The power of focus is quite remarkable and you are likely to be pleasantly surprised at how you become aware of opportunities that fit your strategies and lead you toward attaining your vision.



Jenni is the Principal Advisor at Strategies Direct Ltd. She helps professionals, managers and business owners to think strategically and maximise career and business opportunities.

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