

## **AN EIGHT-STEP PROCESS FOR ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS**

Using a proper methodology for setting your goals is very important because the result must be specific, realistic, and most importantly, achievable. Additionally, you must baseline your performance and establish specific activity benchmarks that must be met on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis in order to achieve your goals.

Observations from my consulting work with hundreds of search and staffing firms indicate that goal setting is generally a challenge for both management and staff. However, as turnover rates and year-end results clearly demonstrate, the bigger challenge is achieving the goals once they are established.

With most staffing/recruiting firms, the goals of the organization reflect the collective goals of the producers. If all the producers reach or surpass their goals, the organization will reach or surpass its goals. Consequently, for the purposes of this article, we will present eight key steps to follow for the achievement of individual goals.

As stated in the above referenced article, annual goals should be broken down into quarterly, monthly, weekly, and even daily goals. Once this is in place, each producer in the organization should monitor their activity and results in relationship to these goals.

### **Remember**

**The responsibility for performance always belongs to the performer.**

For those of you who are performers (producers), here are eight steps you can implement immediately to help ensure you do not fall behind the pace necessary to achieve your annual goals.

### **Step One: Have a full week of marketing and recruiting calls planned before arriving at the office each Monday.**

You determine the number of calls to plan by reviewing your performance ratios, particularly the job order/search to placement ratio, the marketing calls to job order/search ratio, the individuals called to individuals recruited ratio, the candidates presented to clients versus the candidates interviewed ratio, and the candidates interviewed by your clients to candidates hired ratio. You will also need to factor in the number of calls attempted to the number of calls (connects) completed ratio. This is essential if you are to have the proper number of preplanned calls in place each Monday morning.

Some will balk at the idea of preplanning an entire week's worth of calls. Since ours is a dynamic business with circumstances and opportunities changing on a daily basis, they argue that flexibility is the key and therefore, planning an entire week's worth of calls is a waste of time. Conceptually they may have a point but in reality the fact remains that the average producer wastes over 50% of their time every day. Remember:

### **Parkinson's Law**

**“Work expands to fill the time allotted for its completion.”**

They operate in a reactive mode rather than proactively pursuing the accomplishment of their goals. This is generally reflected in their lack of planning for a full day of productive activity. Consequently, beginning the day with little or no planning in place to keep them focused on productive activity, they exemplify “*Parkinson’s Law*” as the day slips away in a wash of avoidance behavior and reactive impulse. They do not control their time and therefore do not control their day. The first step to overcoming this problem is to plan enough marketing and recruiting calls (both targeted and continuous cycle) to fill an entire week.

### **Step Two: Make certain you always have enough calls planned to cover at least two full days of work.**

This is a refinement of “Step One” and tightens the focus to help ensure your plan doesn’t run out before your week does. To illustrate the importance of this step you need only look at the results from a typical “intensive care session”.

An “intensive care session” is designed for the producer who is not meeting their goals because they are not putting in enough sustained, focused effort on a daily basis. It’s generally conducted by the manager who greets the producer as they enter the office. The manager explains that the producer will be working in the manager’s office that morning (or, the manager will sit with the producer at their desk). During their time together, the manager will not interfere with or distract the producer. The manager will only serve as an observer. The producer will not be taking any incoming calls (other than the ones agreed upon because of their critical nature), nor will they have access to email until 11:30 AM. The producer’s sole purpose is to execute their plan for the day without any interruptions.

On average, the typical producer who undergoes an “intensive care session” runs out of things (calls) to do within an hour from the start of the session. This is the result of poor or non-existent planning. Conversely, someone who has a minimum of two full days planned in advance will have no difficulty in filling the entire morning with productive activity.

### **Step Three: Start executing your plan as soon as you arrive at the office each morning.**

Begin with your on-going activity (balls in the air) and then complete the part of your plan that you dread the most. It may be a specific call or perhaps a group of calls e.g. candidate marketing. Get those calls completed and behind you for the day. They will never be as difficult as you thought they would be and you will have gained a sense of accomplishment for completing them. This will help provide positive momentum for the remainder of your day.

### **Step Four: Keep your plan at the center of your desk at all times so that when you are distracted or interrupted, its visible presence will remind you to get back on task.**

Don’t cover it up with paper work or shove it off to the side because if you lose sight of your plan you may also lose control of your day. Do not fall prey to the “out of sight, out of mind” phenomenon, which can cost you valuable time. Instead keep your daily plan the central focus of your desk.

### **Step Five: Give yourself a midday review.**

Ask how you are doing in relationship to how you should be doing based on your plan for the day. This midday review is critically important, particularly if you have fallen behind in executing your plan. If you do find yourself behind, the good news is that you have the rest of the day to catch up and complete your planned activities. The downside of not doing a midday review is that you may not realize you are behind plan until the end of the day at which point it is too late to catch up. Not accomplishing your planned objectives for a single day is not catastrophic. However, not accomplishing your plan several days in a row can lead to a less than productive week. These types of weeks can lead to a nonproductive month and a couple of nonproductive months can lead to discouragement and frustration as you begin to realize that the likelihood of achieving your annual goals is remote at best.

### **Step Six: Give yourself another review at 4:00 PM each afternoon.**

If you haven't had a good day or if you have fallen hopelessly behind on accomplishing your plan, use the rest of the work day to accomplish something positive, e.g. complete five more recruiting or marketing calls, arrange a sendout, complete a couple of reference checks on two of your best candidates. The objective is to create something positive so that when you leave the office for the day you have a sense of accomplishment and positive momentum to carry you over to the next day.

### **Step Seven: Always think a week at a time.**

You may miss your plan on one day but with an entire week's plan in place, you can maintain your focus. Keep your eye on the "end game" – completely executing the entire week's plan.

### **Step Eight: Hold yourself accountable.**

Remember, responsibility for performance always belongs to the performer — and you are that performer.

#### **Terry's Law**

**We all succeed in inverse proportion to the number of socially acceptable excuses we use to justify our own behavior.**

Achievement-oriented people in all walks of life take responsibility for their actions and outcomes. They know the difference between reasons and excuses. If they have a set back one day, they make up for it on another day. When they establish realistic goals, they commit to achieving them regardless of the obstacles or difficulties.

One top producer explained it in this manner:

*"Once goals are set there are only two acceptable reasons why they are not accomplished, death or total disability. Anything else is just an excuse."*

He makes his point in rather dramatic fashion. Do not take goal setting lightly. It's not just an annual exercise in crunching numbers. If the goals you (the operative word being "you") set are specific, realistic, and achievable, then give your full commitment to accomplishing them. This is done one day at a time. The steps outlined above, if followed, will help ensure you do not fall behind your timeline for goal achievement.

As always, if you have questions or comments about this article or wish to receive my input on any other topic related to this business, just let me know. Your calls and emails are most welcome.



*Terry Petra is available for one-on-one coaching, consulting and group training through "**Petra On Call**", a cost effective approach to receiving the full benefit of his expertise. For details on Terry's products and services, including "**Business Appraisals**", visit his web site at: [www.tpetra.com](http://www.tpetra.com). As always, if you have questions or comments about this article or wish to receive Terry's input on any other topic related to this business, your calls and e-mails are most welcome. Terry can be reached at (651) 738-8561 or e-mail him at [Terry@tpetra.com](mailto:Terry@tpetra.com).*