

Annual Goals-It's Time for a Visit!

It's hard to believe that the first quarter of the year is over already! Didn't we just ring in the New Year, make (and probably break) our new year's resolutions, and set our annual goals? Although it may seem like we just finished setting goals, now is the time to revisit them for a few reasons.

First, even though it may not seem like much has changed since January; it's likely that there has been some shift in business need or priority that would impact the specifics around a particular goal. Take a look at your own goals and evaluate where your time is being spent. Is the majority of your time spent in activities in support of your highest priorities goals? If the answer is no, then it's time to do some reevaluating of either your daily priorities or your goals. Perhaps resources have changed or budget dollars have been reallocated which may hinder the achievement of the goal. Or, maybe you are not spending your time as wisely you should on a given day, or you lack the skills you need to accomplish the goal as effectively as possible. Or maybe businesses priorities have shifted due to Q1 results. The important step here is to identify where your time is spent in relation to your goals and why your time is spent that way. If there is disconnect, an adjustment needs to be made either to the goals or to the way you are working. Your goals should be agile enough to be flexible to changing demands, but you also need to be very honest about how you are spending your time. You can't expect to change a goal every time you are missing the mark, so you need to be able to fairly and objectively analyze your progress toward your goals.

To truly assess your goal progress, you need to have a conversation with your manager to align your view-points on what's working and what's not. You may think you are doing a bang up job, but your manager may think otherwise or vice versa. Now is the time to "calibrate" your perception of the situation with your

direct supervisor, not at the end of the year during your formal performance review.

If your manager has not scheduled a formal “check-in” with you, take the initiative to request time to review your goals and discuss progress. Even the busiest of managers is going to appreciate that you want to have this conversation and should welcome the opportunity to reinforce what you are doing well or provide you with some feedback to help you course-correct if need be. Come prepared to the conversation with milestones that you have achieved so far as well as any obstacles or barriers that are getting in the way. Make sure that you have some proposed solutions for obstacles, but also use it as an opportunity to ask for ideas and/or resources if you need them.

Finally, be sure to capture notes from the goal check in conversation. Whether you are a people-manager or an individual contributor, making notes about the conversation or sending a simple summary email can ensure that you are on the same page with plans, progress and performance measurements and can save you a tremendous amount of time when it is time to write self-reviews or employee performance reviews.