

Managing in the current climate - Goals and Strategies

I'm sure many of us would say we have them for our businesses but to what extent do they affect our decision-making and just how much attention do we give to them in reality?

In the current economic climate there is a tendency to be swayed by influences around us such as the media into negative thinking about our business situation. This can lead to evasive action and short –term thinking at the very time we should perhaps be maintaining a focus on our longer –term plans and goals; as it is likely that these were what motivated us into setting a business up in the first place.

Being cautious in the current climate is sound advice but equally we should not be swayed by what we read, hear or see in the media. It is fact that bad news sells. More value (and sleep) can be gained instead focusing on the facts and reality of what our own business situation is. That way we are more likely to make more sound longer-term business decisions rather than knee-jerk reactions.

One way of maintaining a positive focus in these turbulent times is to ensure that we have absolute clarity about not only the long-term goals and strategies for our business but also our personal goals.

In the 1960's there was a study carried out at a leading US Business School where graduating students were asked about whether they had goals. Unsurprisingly a large proportion of them did. However when asked how many had actually spent time being clear about these goals and committing them to paper only 2% did. This study was followed up 30 years later to see what had happened to all of these individuals. The results were significant as the 2% were all financially independent and worth more than the other 98% combined.

I'm not advocating that if you all do the same you will be millionaires but if your goals stay in your head then you run the risk of them being overtaken by other things.

The psychology behind this is that once you are clear about what your goal is you will start to find yourself unconsciously keeping away from people and circumstances which may undermine you achieving it. You will also unconsciously start to meet people who will support you and help you recognise opportunities to help you achieve your goal. Its common sense that if you know where you are going then it is easier to get there.

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Whether you believe this or not the fact remains that if you are clear about what your goals are and write them down this will give you an advantage over the other 98% of the population including your competitors!

Also if you are able to clearly articulate your business goals they will also give others in your Organisation: -

1. Greater clarity over what you are trying to achieve for the business.
2. Clearer direction on where to focus their efforts
3. Greater confidence about you as a leader taking the business in the right direction

Recent research by Business psychologists on the subject of motivation highlights that generally people respond well to the use of targets and goals. Such knowledge can be used to good effect in the current climate where staff can be more insecure and it is easy for them to lose focus for fear of what might happen. Therefore it is important that your goals are reflected in goals you set for your staff so they understand how they are contributing to the success of the Business. I'm sure you've heard of the saying "what gets measured gets done". Well it's true but it does come with a word of caution. Once you have set goals then in order to maintain motivation you need to ensure efforts are rewarded when these are achieved. The good news is this does not have to be monetary. In a recent UK survey conducted with employees about what they want most and what motivates them, appreciation in the workplace came out as no 1. Good wages only just made the top 5!

Having clear goals and strategies and sticking to them is not just about planning they can help you and your staff stay positive and maintain focus when others including our competitors might be losing theirs.

If you want further advice or guidance on developing goals or strategies and staying positive

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