



The PARAGON Perspective

PARAGON DEVELOPMENT

Features

Conferences

Technology Transfer/Capabilities

Quotes of the Month

Interesting Words

“Three Popular Goal-Setting Techniques Managers Should Avoid”

From the President

For those of you not familiar with us and may have received this as a ‘forward’ from the original recipient, The PARAGON Perspective is sponsored by PARAGON Development.

First and foremost, we wish you a prosperous and joyful coming year! Hard to believe that this is our 17th year. We thank all of you for making the time a wonderful experience that has just flown by.

Besides our wishes for success, we want to use this newsletter to do the following:

- Share information we have learned that we consider important concerning best practices, trends, successes and failures, conferences, and other elements that will enable all of you to grow your organizations with maximum top and bottom line results.
- Share information about select client initiatives that may be of interest based on technologies, markets, or business needs that you believe could fit within the scope of those client's interests.
- Share personal observations and even humorous items given to us by others.

All issues of *The Paragon Perspective* are archived on our website, so you may easily pass along past issues to colleagues.

This month's editorial is a contribution from a reader. We thank Bill who sent us this short article written by Dick Grote. We appreciate both the author and Bill for sharing **“Three Types of Goal Setting to Avoid.”**

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Paragon Update

Our projects are for a 2017 that will be vibrant and busy. Our clients are almost all projecting increases over the past year and clients from previous years have once again budgeted for new growth and have requested our assistance. We are encouraged that the economy is finally on the verge of a large recovery. But, a few January project-starts have been delayed for a month or two as our clients look at how new policies will affect their potential in the US.

We tested a new process last year that has proven to be very successful and valuable. We have been involved in technology and new product startups beyond our traditional client base bringing individual experience in addition to our access to many outside experts. We are ready to offer an initial discussion to anyone interested and we appreciate the referrals.

[Return to #Top](#)

Conferences

Pan Pacific Micro Electronics Symposium
February 6-9, 2017
Kauai, HI.



This is an annual conference and has always been the 'go-to' event for business, market, and technology managers with a business or interest in Micro-Electronics. More information can be found at <https://WWW.SMTA.Org/PanPac>

Technology Transfer/Capabilities

This section is open for clients, friends, and other newsletter recipients to spotlight technologies they have available for licensing, acquisition, development, or could be available to use. Please send a description of your technology to be posted in this section for future newsletters. Inquiries can either be sent directly to those who have posted information, or, we could forward any/all inquiries to you. This section highlights non-client project technologies.

This newsletter has a distribution of over six thousand individuals who are in executive positions who either oversee or practice new business development, so the audience has the potential to generate legitimate interest. We do reserve the right to withhold posting any technology closely related to ones in which we have a client conflict.

No new items were presented in the past month.

[Return to #Top](#)

Quotes of the Month

"There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it." *Edith Wharton*

"Problems worthy of attack prove their worth by fighting back." *Piet Hein*

"The fear of making mistakes is a great barrier to creativity. But, if you're ready to learn from them, mistakes can be your friend. If you don't make mistakes, you're not working on hard enough problems. And that's a big mistake." Several attributions

"The problem is not that there are problems. The problem is expecting otherwise and thinking that having problems is a problem." *Theodore Rubin*

"Every revolutionary idea seems to evoke three stages of reaction. They may be summed up by the three phrases: (1) It's completely impossible. (2) It's possible, but it's not worth doing. (3) I said it was a good idea all along." *Arthur C. Clark*

"To be successful, you have to have your heart in your business and your business in your heart." *Thomas Watson Sr.*

"The ideal scientist thinks like a poet and only later works like a bookkeeper." *E. O. Wilson*

[Return to #Top](#)

Interesting Words

Bathos: (BAY-thos) Noun

An abrupt descent from lofty or sublime to the commonplace. Anticlimax.

Bespoke: (bi-SPOHK) Adjective

1. Custom made.
2. Relating to custom made products.

Fardel: (FAHR-dl) Noun

1. A bundle.
2. A burden.

Quotidian: (kwo-TID-ee-uhn) Adjective

1. Commonplace; ordinary.
2. Occurring every day.

[Return to #Top](#)

"Three Popular Goal-Setting Techniques Managers Should Avoid"

By Dick Grote, January 2, 2017, Harvard Review



In 2002, professors Edwin A. Locke and Gary P. Latham, two of the best known academic researchers on goal-setting, wrote an article in *American Psychologist* summarizing their 35 years of research. Among their findings:

- Setting specific, difficult goals consistently leads to higher performance than just urging people to do their best.
- High goals generate greater effort than low goals, and the highest or most difficult goals produce the greatest levels of effort and performance.
- Tight deadlines lead to a more rapid work pace than loose deadlines.
- Making a public commitment to a goal enhances personal commitment.
- Whether the goal is set by mutual-agreement or by the boss alone doesn't make a big difference in goal achievement.

So, the argument for strategic goal setting seemed settled. Set specific, difficult goals with tight deadlines. Don't be too concerned about whether the goal is jointly set by the individual and manager together, or whether the boss just hands the subordinate the list of goals he expects the subordinate to achieve together with a tough due-date. Let everybody know what your goals are. The predictable result: Increased effort, greater persistence, and better performance.

But many organizations don't follow Locke and Latham's advice. In fact, there are three techniques that are common in today's organizations that go directly against their findings: SMART goals, cascading goals, and using percentage weights to indicate relative goal importance.

SMART Goals

By now, everyone who works for an organization must be familiar with the banal SMART acronym for setting goals. Goals must be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound. Many wording variations exist, but the essence is always the same.

You and Your Team Series

Goal Setting

The stale SMART acronym can be a major obstacle to goal-setting success, and too often, it's the only support that's offered to those charged with setting goals. While the SMART test may be a useful minor mechanism for making sure that a goal statement has been phrased properly (in the same way that a spell-checker is a useful mechanism for flagging any misspelled words in a document), it provides no help in determining whether the goal itself is a good idea. In other words, a goal can easily be SMART without being wise.

Worse, the SMART technique encourages people to set low goals. No one is going to set goals that don't seem attainable or realistic, but a manager's weakest subordinates may glom on to the A and the R in the acronym as their justification for setting goals at the shooting-fish-in-a-barrel level of challenge. It's the setting of high goals—tough, demanding, stretching—that generates the greatest levels of effort and performance.

Tip: Rather than using the acronym as a way to determine which goals are wise or worth pursuing, use it only as test to check whether goals are well stated.

Cascading Goals

Goal-setters are frequently advised that goals should cascade down from the top of the organization. The president starts by setting her goals. The vice presidents then set their goals to support the achievement of the president's objectives. Then the directors determine their goals based on the ones the VPs have set, followed in turn by the managers, then by the supervisors, and finally by those at the bottom of the organizational food chain.

Certainly no one should set goals that thwart those set by people higher in the organization. But if the concept of cascading goals is applied too rigidly throughout an organization, the practical outcome is that nobody can begin the goal-setting process until that person's boss has finished his goals. The process drags on interminably; everybody blames the guy one step above for slowing the process.

A further risk is that important goals that are specific to an individual's unique job may be omitted if there isn't an obvious link to a superior's goal.

Tip: Free the goal-setting process from any rigid requirement that individual goals must be tightly linked to the supervisor's goals and must be limited only to the areas in which the supervisor or the executive team has set their goals. The goals set by

one's immediate supervisor represent an important data-source about where a person might logically set her own goals for her own job. However, they should never limit an individual's goal-setting.

Using Percentage Weights

Certainly some goals are more important than others, but assigning percentage weights to goals to indicate their relative importance is counterproductive.

Here's why. It's impossible to accurately identify the relative importance of goals at, for example, a 5% level of granularity. Should one particular goal be assessed as reflecting 20% of the total weight for all goals, or should it be 25%? And from which other goal should the additional 5% be taken? This argument isn't productive.

Using percentages to indicate goal importance creates an even bigger problem at appraisal time. If each goal is assigned a percentage weight, then appraisers are likely to conduct performance appraisals as though they are solving an arithmetic problem. With a percentage weight for each goal, and a 5-level rating scale, appraisers are tempted (or even instructed) to multiply the percentage weight of the goal times the numerical score they've assigned to that goal and thus determine the assessment rating. Do this for all the goals, compute a mean score, and the final performance appraisal rating—out to one or two decimal points—is determined. This approach may be mathematically precise, but it's nonsense. Performance appraisal isn't a matter of mathematical computation. It's a matter of good managerial judgment.

Tip: Don't assign percentage weights to goals. Instead, indicate High, Medium, and Low or list goals in the approximate order of their importance to indicate the relative degree of significance of each goal compared with the others.

It's easy to think that there's a technique that's going to make goal setting easy or straightforward, but there isn't. However, as Latham and Locke's research has shown, the payoffs of investing time and thought into goal setting are substantial. Just avoid being blindly constrained by the SMART test, be cautious about cascading goals, and avoid percentage weights. You'll set better goals.

PS:

We want to remind our readers that this section of the newsletter is open to anyone with a development topic or an approach they would like to share or even just comments or criticisms of a past topic. We had primarily written editorials on topics based on our experience and perspective but we are grateful for the increase in items that have been sent to us over the past couple of months---Keep them coming!

Also, many of you - consultants, company managers, and academics - have very solid and profound contributions that could be presented in future newsletters as a guest contributor. We ask that your submission be from 300 to 800 words. Let us know and we will gladly distribute your topic to the thousands of people on our distribution list. We agree that the copyright and ownership be kept by the contributor and that our only right is to reproduce it in conjunction with this newsletter.

[Return to #Top](#)

We hope you learned something from this and/or stimulated an action that leads to new opportunities for you and your organizations and that you will let others who might find this newsletter useful know about our publication. Previous issues of our newsletters can be found at <http://www.paragondevelopment.com/perspective.html>. If you would rather not receive the newsletter please respond to this email and include the word REMOVE in the subject line or in the message. To subscribe to our newsletter, please send an email to contact@paragondevelopment.com and include the word SUBSCRIBE in the subject line or message. We will never sell your email address to others.

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[Return to #Top](#)

