



# Winning Ways

A publication of

## Winning Ways

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### Winning Ways NewsBits

Winning at Sales class begins September 14th. Seats are filling up fast so don't miss out! Call Joan now to reserve your seat: 703-273-9299

Joan Fletcher will be speaking for the Greater Washington Board of Trade, Leadership Speaker Series on Thursday September 20th at 8:30am. Register online at:

<http://www.bot.org/news/events/>

New home salespeople and realtors! Decide today to increase your home sales! Join Betsy in her next "Winning at Home Sales" course. New class begins on September 10, 2007.

Parents: Help your youth prepare for a more successful life by developing goal setting, communication, time management and self-leadership skills today! Youth Leadership Program with Betsy Hudson begins on September 10, 2007.

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## Prioritizing Goals

See if this story sounds familiar: you're trying to come up with ways to help your business progress, and you find a great book. It's inspiring, and you can easily see how its ideas—say, a new approach to sales—can be implemented to help you. For the next couple of weeks, you make it your number one goal to improve sales, using the techniques in this book, and you're feeling pretty good about it. Then a friend recommends to you another book—perhaps a book on office management. Immediately on reading it, you realize that you have some serious weaknesses in the way your office runs, and that by correcting and restructuring these, many aspects of your business will be improved. You decide that this, too, is important enough to be your number one goal.

After another couple of weeks, you're already feeling a little strain between focusing on these two different goals, when you attend a seminar on customer relations. The speaker really strikes a chord with you, and you're reminded that excellent customer relations are a key part of your vision for your business. You go home buzzing with new ideas for improving in this area; this is too important to wait.

All these new ideas are exciting, and they all have great potential to develop your business and help you achieve your vision. The problem is, now you have three number one goals. As time goes on, you find that you're constantly berating yourself because you have let one of your goals slip, in order to achieve the other ones. Your employees are confused and frustrated, feeling like you're sending them mixed messages about your focus. Where the first idea helped give you clarity of purpose and energy of direction, each new one only seems to muddle your thinking and planning. And yet each one is important.

Prioritizing goals can be difficult. With all the information and ideas available, it's easy to get overwhelmed and pulled too many different ways, until you start to feel like a juggler who's dropping balls left and right. The worst part of it is that, even though you may be making headway in a few of these areas, you're likely to feel like you're not accomplishing anything, because of all the other, unfulfilled goals you have on your mind.

The simple fact is, you and your business have a limited supply of resources. You need to be able to prioritize, and to identify which goals are truly essential right now, which can wait, and which can be dropped entirely. The best way to do this is to take it back to your vision and mission statement. What things *need* to happen for your mission to be fulfilled? And what is the minimal number of things that will *ensure* that your mission is fulfilled?

You should be able to identify a few broad categories—no more than seven, and ideally around four—where you need to grow in order to reach your mission. These will yield vague, general goals, such as “increase customer satisfaction,” “improve sales,” “be well known in our area,” “reach a new market.” Each of these goals need to pass the test of necessity: can I achieve my mission without this? If the answer is yes, then it's not a critical goal, no matter how nice it sounds. Then, the handful of goals you've come up with need to pass the test of sufficiency: will meeting all of these ensure that my mission is accomplished? If the answer is no, then you need to look back at your mission statement and see what you've missed.

Once you have this handful of necessary and sufficient goal categories, they must be transferred into specific and concrete goals. The SMART acronym is useful for making sure your concrete goals are well-designed: they must be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistically high, and Time bound. With goals that meet the SMART criteria, you will be able to plan your activities, assess how you're progressing, and keep your eyes on how much you've achieved!

### Cleaning out the library: a story about prioritizing in all areas of life

A man I know was trying to organize his home office, which had gotten out of control. His biggest problem was getting rid of excess books: he had far more than he had room for, but hated to give any of them up. The solution he came up with was based on the goal categories he had identified for his life. He hung up a sign in his office, saying,

Will this help me:

-become a better husband and father?

-become a better writer?

-study economics?

-advance at my job?

Any books that didn't meet one of these criteria were given away or put into storage. He found that keeping this sign in his office was a great way to keep him focused on what he really wanted to accomplish, and guard against distractions that would take time away from the things he valued most.

This is a simple and effective method for keeping your eyes fixed on what's most important to you.