

Setting your New Year Workplace Goals

The New Year is officially here, and as everyone slowly filters back into the workplace after the summer holidays, it's natural to start rethinking about your professional goals as reality starts to kick in.

While we all love the allure of a fresh start, we also know that good intentions can get lost in the shuffle of our busy everyday lives. Achieving goals and New Year's resolutions in the workplace can be especially difficult without forming a plan and strategy to tackle them. So, here are five tips to make this the year you achieve some of your workplace goals!

1) Take some time to reflect

Before you make any goals, take a step back and review what you actually want to achieve in the short and long-term. Are these the same as last year? If not, why do you think that's the case? Articulate your aspirations — whatever they may be! The key reason why it's important to do this is because it's hard to stick to resolution if your heart's not in it.

When you commit to making a change, you need to make sure that your actions align with your core values. One exercise that can help you decipher what you want your future to look like is asking:

- What am I doing?
- Who am I working for?
- How do I feel?

Be honest in your assessment. If you're not, it will be harder to inspire yourself to make the necessary changes that are in line with your goals.

2) Focus on smaller goals

At the start of a New Year, it's so easy to get caught up in the euphoria of a new start. As a result, it's common to make sweeping generalised goals without knowing how to achieve them. While it's okay to set big, long-term, targets, your next step should be breaking it up into small, realistic objectives. If your goal is to achieve a promotion, for example, you could set smaller goals like talking to your manager or relevant professional about it, taking the time to produce more accurate work, or researching how others have been successful in your organisation or industry.

It can be helpful to map out a timeline of when and how you want to make strides toward your career aim. Prioritising one or two action items to work on every quarter can also help you meet your ultimate goal. Don't be afraid to ask for honest feedback. Many people wait until an end-of-year evaluation to seek out feedback, but it can be more productive to ask regularly throughout the year.

3) Increase your knowledge

No one knows everything, but there are always ways to improve yourself, and this is especially true in your professional career. Identify one or two actions you can take, like an industry meeting you can attend, or regularly reading publications that will offer insight about the future. You could also take a course to learn or improve a skill that's useful in your current position, or that will help you get the next one.

4) Nurture your workplace relationships

If you enjoy your working environment, you're more likely to be more effective and productive in your job. In fact, regardless of industry, positive workplace relationships is one of the most important factors in your career success. Make a habit of learning the preferences of others and you will have better

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relationships at work. Improving your workplace relationships might mean taking the time to understand your boss' personality and communication style to better interact with them professionally. Master the art of managing up, down and across in all your workplace relationships.

5) Stay on track and keep at it!

So, you've set yourself up for success. How do you make sure you actually get there? There are a few easy ways to help you stay motivated along the process. The first is to develop a habit. If your goal is to improve your communication, perhaps implementing a time every week where you get together with your team or manager to discuss what you've done or what you have in the pipeline can help make this action more natural to you.

It can also be beneficial to share your professional goal(s) with a trusted friend or co-worker and aim to reach them together. You can create a shared Google Doc with your chosen person where you write down your goals, deadlines, plans and other thoughts or schedule a monthly check-in to update each other on your progress.

Another tactic is using rewards. If you reach one of your goals, or micro-goals, treat yourself to something you really enjoy, whether that's a meal out with your partner, a special bottle of wine or champagne, or expensive chocolates, the reward will help your desire to reach your next goal.

One of the most important things to keep in mind about professional resolutions is that they don't have to be intimidating. Your goal is often not some far off or unobtainable. You're simply resolving to change something, right now. Don't worry too much about the future. Just focus on the progress you can make right now.

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