

Commandeer Your Career, Navigate Your Life Using Mind-maps!

Explore the Untold Secrets of Setting Effective Goals!

I don't want to lay it on too thick but without goals, you pretty much can't get anywhere. In a slow drift perhaps, but nothing where you actually take charge. Obvious, I know.

Yet, what do we really know about maximizing the use of goals? How do we move beyond the simple one-shot effort of signposts and task lists to commandeer our futures in the best way possible?

Our answer is to consider goals in their broader context. Goal setting does not stop after you've put pen to paper and sighted the goal, although sure, that means something. It is better to write down a goal than not to write it down at all.

But more than that, it is important to consider that the writing down of something we want is really just a first step toward creating the conditions we'll need for take-off on our own personal and business projects.

Goal-Setting Using Mind-maps: A Great Tool for Helping You Close the Gaps

Once recorded, your goals will inevitably mirror back to you the difference between where you might like to be, having achieved the goal, and where, quite frankly, you may be right now. We're emphasizing a fundamental idea here—learning to first acknowledge a present and future state (where am I and where do I want to be?) and then closing up the gap between those two poles (how will I get there). Both must be identified to get you working those goals.

There are two more options here for helping you be in charge of your career goals.

You can think backwards as if you've already completed the goal, e.g., you'll be thinking of the final accomplishment, then what needs to happen to be on track a few days before, a few weeks before and so forth (some people refer to this as reverse engineering)

Or you can think forwards, from where you are right now, looking ahead to successive gains.

Mind-maps Help You Set Your Goals from the Start!

Mind-maps, those visual diagrams that tell you at a glance the whole of your plans, are incredibly great at expressing goals and your relationship with them.

So, figure, for example, that you're starting out with a few goals and maybe, you'd like to differentiate them. There will be goals you set in order to show immediate successes. And then, goals that are for the longer term.

No doubt, there will also be goals that are focused more on winning over certain individuals. You might decide to differentiate this set by those that are designed for immediate influence, and those that can affect your reputation and that of your project over the long haul. It could be noted that the former set are really a smaller subset of the latter but the important thing is to demonstrate these differentiations visually in your mind-map.

You can do this by manipulating mind-map components: proximity, size, color or placement on the page. Take a look at the example below.

Cool, yes!

Thinking about goals in a larger context or in terms of the relationship of one goal to another underscores the reality that you are the active player. The goals are static, sure, but soon, you will activate them through the actions you decide to take, and the relationships you emphasize between them.

Never forget that YOU are the one to energize your goals.

Mind-maps Help You Set Your Goals Mid-Stream

In the middle of an effort, another interesting, though often hidden truth about achieving our goals, emerges. It's that we have an important opportunity to see our selves a second time in relation to our goals. Using mind-maps, for example, we can paint this second go around picture very clearly.

To be more specific, mind-maps can emphasize any issues we face in an effort to meet our goals and identify the barriers, hurdles, or impasses we meet along the way. We'll get a good idea from reviewing them how certain things are best resolved going forward. Again we are active toward our goals.

Certain problem areas resolved themselves differently than expected? Terrific. Now, we can self-correct, and put that data on the mind-map as well.

Perhaps we do the best summary of all, and put those things we decided were "impossible" or "useless" all on one side of our mind-maps, in the event that situations change to make them "possible and useful" again.

One final tip: read the same mind-maps once a month to note your revisions or expand your view.

Mind-maps Help You Set Your Goals at the Project's End

At the end of an effort to reach our goals, mind-maps also make a key contribution. After a work assignment or a project you have participated in has concluded, have you ever looked back and asked yourself how you felt about what you did?

This evaluation of how successful you've been in meeting your goals creates a lot of momentum the next time around and if you let it, will revitalize your goal setting the very next time you plan.

Your mind-maps could very well tell you what goals you set that were really not so significant that last time around. So, now you'll just have to settle on a new set of goals.

The Advantage You Now Have With Mind-maps

I started out by suggesting there are untold secrets with regard to setting goals for ourselves. And indeed, there are. In all three of the project phases we've mentioned above, none are obvious or consistently practiced by large numbers of the population, so, in effect, they really are like secrets.

To gain the advantage, the secret is to integrate these little gems into a conscious style of working so you can come away knowing how truly strategic goal setting with mind-maps can be.

Best of luck with the improvements. And remember, there's nothing better than feeling that you are the active player in your own life and work!

Some Useful Links

Other useful resources with more information about Mind Mapping are:

[Examples of Mind Maps](#)

This shows a gallery of lots of sample Mind Maps developed to improve productivity and communications

[Business Guide to Mind Mapping book](#)

Everything you need to know to use Mind Mapping in a business context

[Wikipedia information about Mind Maps](#)

Information from Wikipedia about Mind Mapping

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