

# Lesson 2

## Goal Setting



### Key Terms

goals  
priority  
tangible

### What You Will Learn to Do

- Establish performance goals related to the JROTC program

### Linked Core Abilities

- Build your capacity for lifelong learning
- Take responsibility for your actions and choices

### Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way

- Explain the value of goal setting for task achievement
- Discuss how a positive leadership role motivates others
- Discuss how goal setting affects achievements and motivation
- Describe feelings and outcomes of winning and losing
- Define the key words contained in this lesson

## Introduction

Setting goals for yourself is an important step in becoming who you want to be and what you want to accomplish. It has been proven that specific and difficult goals, with feedback, lead to higher performance. So often we are told to “do our best.” That can be in the accomplishment of a cross-country race, a basketball game, an English test or anything we want to accomplish. But what is “your best?” What if the cross-country coach said he wanted you to increase your speed so you could take two minutes off your best time? How about striving for 85 percent or higher on the English test? When someone has been given goals that are specific and challenging and they are given continuous feedback the impact on the accomplishment is impressive.

In this lesson, you will learn the importance of setting reasonable goals that you can achieve and adding more challenges as you go along.

## Understanding the Importance of Goals

**Goals** tell you what needs to be done. Difficult goals are an internal stimulus to push hard to accomplish. And feedback tells you how you are doing. It points out the gap between what you have done and what you want to do. Additionally, self-generated feedback is a stronger motivator than external feedback. That means if you can establish a feedback process for yourself, you will be more motivated than if someone else provides that feedback.

It has also been proven that if the person involved has the opportunity to participate in the goal setting process, they will try harder.

Important to the goal-setting process is that the individual or team is committed to the goal and will not lower or abandon it; they feel capable of attaining the goal; the goal has been made public; and it has been self-set rather than assigned.

## Setting Goals

Setting clear and specific goals offers purpose and direction for both leaders and followers. When you are in a leadership position, you and your followers should ensure that you have a set of clearly written and defined goals and priorities and that, everyone must understand and support them.

There are several key points or guidelines that you should consider when setting goals for your team. These guidelines include the following:

- **Make goals realistic and attainable.**
- **Ensure that goals lead to improved individual and team performance.**
- **Involve team members in the goal setting process.**
- **As a minimum, establish goals for training, maintenance (of appearance and personal property), discipline, morale, cohesion, and development of followers.**
- **Develop a program or set of policies to achieve each goal.**

### Key Note Term

**goals** – objectives; something to be attained; tasks that need to be done

## Developing Plans to Achieve Goals

### Key Note Terms

**priority** – precedence, especially established by order of importance or urgency

**tangible** – possible to understand or realize; the tangible benefits of the plan

After you have analyzed a situation, you can begin setting goals based on what you want the team to accomplish. For each goal you set, you need a well-defined plan that explains how you intend to achieve it. Develop plans by identifying the task or tasks that your team must accomplish, putting them in **priority**, and establishing all the conditions necessary to carry out each task. Remember to consider the capabilities of your team members when assigning tasks.

Write the plan down on paper (see Figure 3.2.1). This helps you to organize the details of how to reach the goal. By having something **tangible**, such as a written version of the plan, you can see exactly what you want to accomplish, when, how, and with what resources. A properly written plan can help you to remain focused on the results.

It is also important to have a method to monitor and evaluate your team's progress (see Figure 3.2.2). This helps you and the other team members stay on schedule and it gives you a basis to make changes to your plan as necessary. Use a checklist or some other document that spells out exactly what the standards are that you must accomplish. Post those standards for everyone to see. Another good method of evaluation is to seek feedback from instructors or others.

Remember, as a leader, you influence your teammates by what you say, write, and most important, do. Every leadership situation is unique; therefore, every goal you set and every plan you develop must be flexible and adapted to each situation. You must be able to look at every situation, analyze it, and then determine exactly what actions you should take to accomplish the mission.



*Figure 3.2.1: Writing down goals can help you organize your plan to achieve them.*

Courtesy of Corbis Images.



*Figure 3.2.2: When goals are achieved, check them off and go on to the next task.*

Courtesy of Paul Edmondson/Corbis Images.

## Conclusion

As you learned in this lesson, goals are critical to motivation. You reviewed the guidelines for goal setting, learned how to set your own performance goals, and established a mechanism for tracking and evaluating progress.

## Lesson Review

1. What is the purpose of goals?
2. Why are evaluation and feedback important to attaining goals?
3. Describe some important attributes of good goals?
4. What is the purpose of plans?