



Measures of Success

By: Chanon Collins

Part 2 of series of 6 article discussing change.

Edmond Burke spoke directly to business owners when he identified the path to success as “a journey, not a destination.” Businesses with a shared vision can see their destination, but they need to develop methods to set them on their way. They need specific goals and performance benchmarks to measure the success of their journey.

Goals and performance benchmarks are essential to the success of any business undergoing change. The goals established by the business must be translated into performance objectives that can be measured and managed. These objectives must be strategic ones, not something crafted to impress the board of directors, but something tangible that can be used to measure the progress of the business’s journey. Objectives are tools used for the implementation of change, not the rationalization of a vision. The time for talking has passed – actions are required for success.

Business objectives allow the team members the ability to create a day-by-day blueprint of their activities. Objectives establish priorities for the daily routine. Teachers use objectives to measure the success of their students just as coaches use objectives to measure the success of their teams. Rick Pitino, coach of the Boston Celtics and author of *Success is a Choice*, sees goals as “the individual steps [taken] to ultimately deserve the prize.” Success is not possible without goals, and goals are not achieved without executing strategic objectives.

The process of meeting objectives is not enough to ensure success. The measurement of objectives is the key to a successful change. People need to see that their hard work has not been in vain – short-term wins are essential in sustaining motivation and drive. It is for this reason that objectives must be measurable and demanding. If simple goals are established and easily met, then the motivation to excel diminishes.

Performance benchmarks need to stem from the company’s vision, but these benchmarks must also be attainable through team effort. It serves no purpose to set lofty goals that will be impossible to reach, just as it defeats the purpose of objectives to set simple ones which require little effort to surpass.

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Strategic objectives and performance benchmarks yield great power and it must be harnessed in a positive way. Teams must manipulate their objectives to work for them; they should not be overwhelmed by deadlines and status reports. This is not to say that objectives and benchmarks should not act as measurements, but that they should be used as tools for success. Paul Dunn, founder of Results Accountants Systems, believes that “business owners can only manage what they can measure.” In other words, use benchmarks and objects to implement change, not impede it.

Objectives and benchmarks are only useful if they are used. They are meant to be tools for change. Michael Gerber, author of *The E-Myth Revisited*, sees objectives as “templates for [change] in a business.” These tools for progress have no power if they remain idle. Albert Camus, a French author, recognizes the power of progress – “You cannot acquire experience by making experiments. You cannot create experience. You must undergo it.” Business owners are the craftsmen of change and their objectives and benchmarks are their instruments for experience.

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