

Set achievable goals and stay on track

7-min read



At SBR, we don't believe in just setting goals at the start of a New Year. After all, many of us might choose to set business goals at the start of the financial year or personal goals around a birthday.

However, whenever you set yourself new targets, you're probably painfully aware of the fact that 80% of us fail to meet the objectives we set for ourselves.

What if you're one of the magical 20%? Chances are it's because you've managed to focus on the track itself just as much as on the finishing line. Therein lies the secret to effective goal setting.

In this blog post, we'll discuss how to set different types of goals – outcome goals, performance goals and process goals – to ensure success and maintain motivation over time.

Why set goals in the first place?

Studies have shown that setting goals can improve performance and productivity by up to 25%. It supports motivation, increases resilience and helps us to develop new skills and strategies.

Setting goals allows us to examine our current situation, visualise a way forward, and set new challenges for ourselves.

So, if you haven't already, grab a pen and paper, and get ready to smash some goals!

Outcome goals

Your outcome goal is the end result you're striving for. It's your North Star.

This must be as specific as possible. For example, you may want to "get fitter" but that, alone, won't give you the direction and urgency you'll need to make a change. Now, if you've signed up to cycle from London to Brighton in a couple months' time, and you haven't been on a bike since your tender years, you know you'd better get training.

Another important factor to consider when setting your goal is how much it will stretch you to achieve it. As motivating as we may find personal and professional development, we also tend to panic and give up if we feel overstretched.

Make sure you set your goals within an achievable range. Better still, **set yourself 3 goals**. We at SBR call this [triple set goal setting](#):

- **Your pride goal** – The minimum you need to achieve to feel a sense of satisfaction. So, in the case of that cycle race, it might be to finish in 9 hours. It's only 6mph, but you're starting from your sofa so this will be a win!
- **Your medium goal** – This will be higher and more of a stretch. Let's say you'll do it in under 7 hours. You'll need to average about 8mph and you know that climbing up Ditchling Beacon is likely to slow you down, so you'll have to push harder on the country lanes before that.
- **Your high goal** – Why not finish with the best of them and do it in under 6 hours? And that climb? You'll do it without putting a foot down.

The great thing about triple-set goals is that you still get a sense of achievement even if you don't reach your high goal. And if your pride goal becomes too easy, you can keep pushing for your medium and high goals.

So, outcome goals will give you a sense of direction. But it's just as important, if not more so, to focus on the process. Especially as a number of external factors may derail your progress. The key is to concentrate on what you can control.

Performance goals

Coming first in a race depends on your opponents' performance just as much as it does on yours. So, while there's nothing you can do about their time (unless you're prepared to slash tyres, which we do not condone), you should set your own standards for improvement.

Your performance goals are the milestones you can set along the way and build upon to reach your outcome goal. So, before you can ride the 55 miles between London and Brighton in under 7 hours, you're going to have to build your endurance and speed on the bike.

You'll need to, for example:

- Do 20 miles in 3 hours
- Then do 20 miles in 2.5 hours
- Then do 30 miles, including a climb, in 4 hours
- ...

The aim here is to consistently improve on your last performance so that your outcome goal becomes just another milestone, albeit the final one, on your journey. And you get to celebrate all your wins along the way, all your new personal bests. This means that if you don't end up taking part in the race for reasons beyond your control, you'll nevertheless have achieved goals in the preparation.

Now, it's for you to determine which milestones to set and to understand the skills, knowledge and training you'll need to achieve them. You might need to talk to people who have done the race before. You may want to listen to podcasts, read other cyclists' blogs, or hire a personal trainer.

Anything you'll need to do to improve your performance should become part of your process.

Process goals

“Goals are good for setting a direction, but systems are best for making progress.”

James Clear, *Atomic Habits*

This is what your process goals are about. They are your systems – the small habits you need to build in order to improve your performance over time and reach your outcome goals.

To set these goals, you’ll need to reverse engineer your process from your outcome and performance goals. You’ll also need to take into consideration the real obstacles you may encounter, as well as the “rational lies” you’ll tell yourself, like the fact that you haven’t got time when you spend hours binge-watching series on Netflix.

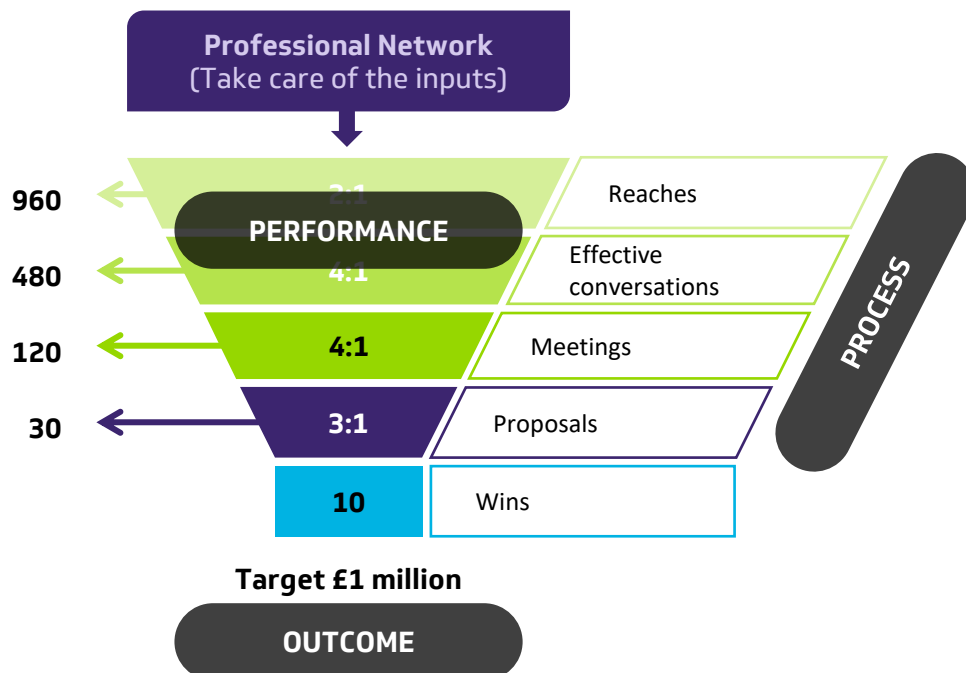
So, if you’re starting from your sofa and you want to cycle 55 miles in the best possible time, what are the daily and weekly habits you’ll need to put in place?

What does all this mean in the context of sales?

Let’s leave the bike for now and look at these different types of goals in the context of sales. Say, you want to make £1 million in sales by the end of the year (outcome goal).

You know your typical contract prices – you’ll need 10 big wins to achieve that goal. From there, you’ll have to work backwards to figure out that, if you can win 1 out of 3 proposals (performance goal), you’ll need to make 30 proposals (process goal).

And if 1 meeting out of 4 leads to a proposal (performance goal), you’ll need to schedule 120 meetings (process goal). You’ll need to keep on breaking your process down until you know how many phone calls to make, and how many you’ll make every day.



In summary

Setting outcome goals is great for direction and purpose. But, in order to stay on course and reach these goals, it's the process you need to focus on. You need to figure out the milestones to reach along the way and the habits that will get you there.

All the little wins should keep you motivated and success will become a by-product of your new habits.

To discover more about the psychology of setting goals, including our 10-step guide to effective goal setting, [let's talk growth](#).