

Managing Green City Development

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Targeting Green Urban Development:

7 Simple Keys to Set Goals Efficiently, Boost Team Engagement and Virtually Banish Employee Turnover

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Have you ever had a project, or maybe a city planner, or an employee take a turn that made your jaw drop?

Made you doubt every decision that led up to that point?

You may have thought, “How could this happen?” “What are they thinking?” “Why don’t they GET it?”

The path to a certificate of completion, occupancy, or even a long-thriving successful built project can be a winding and murky one, with many pitfalls along the way.

The constantly evolving market, property values, lease terms, budgets, costs, weather, scientific knowledge and political will are just the overarching beginning to a description of the issues we deal with.

They can catch the best and most experienced of us off guard, and **those who survive the longest are the ones who never stop adapting their goals to address these shifting needs.**

While these issues can pop up at any time, and in any project, they can be *even more critical or damaging* in a **green land development project** or one where we’ve already had to do some work to gain investment in green

amenities that, while sustainable and enduring, *do require* some higher up front costs.

But in a world whirling with such change, one cannot be blamed for clinging to certain things that work, or at least worked in the past.

The insistence on repeating a particularly successful graphic style, for example, an efficient drafting method, or thoroughly researched set of facts that carried you through a challenging time - **these things should be protected from change.**

So how exactly do we cull those items with enough value to deserve preservation, encapsulate them, and convey them to those who matter?

And how do we take a hard look at the areas that we can and should adapt to keep up with the times and situation?

The answer is to ***collaboratively set goals.***

Here are **7 keys to setting goals efficiently** that I have used *successfully over and over again* in managing green development:

1. **Decide Which Things You Need Accomplished No Matter What.**

I'm putting this first key first not because it should come first in the process of goal-setting, but rather **because it is likely to be your first concern**, and I want to address it now so that you can be at ease right away.

You may be overwhelmed and desperately need to delegate, yet there may be some things you are loathe to let go of and would rather trust only yourself with these projects.

I encourage you to **expand the list of things you need to assign to other members of your team as much as possible.**

Then look at those things still left on your plate. Can some of the tasks that will lead to the culmination of your own goals be given to others?

What support can they give you with just a little extra training perhaps? *Could additional staff be brought on either permanently or temporarily to assist?*

2. Assess Your Team Members' Strengths And Sense Of Purpose.

This one is usually best to be done first. We need to find out *exactly* what each member of our team can do and wants to do.

This is where true **motivation** and **engagement** begins.

Whether you decide to use the DiSC method to reveal general styles, or StrengthsFinder from Gallup to do a more in depth look into the areas where our employees shine, this step doesn't have to take much time, but should be referred back to throughout all goal-making processes.

3. Collaborate In Putting Down Goals.

Allow each team member to make suggestions for goals they feel they can accomplish. Take a look at these and then adjust as you feel absolutely necessary, adding in those things from key #1 that you feel they can best accomplish.

Goals are best as a two-way street where you clearly communicate those things that are important to you, while also listening to those things that our employees are most motivated to achieve.

You may also want to show your list of all the things you need to accomplish to the whole team, either individually or together, and ask which items they feel best suited to contribute to.

Don't be afraid to consider letting members work together, or divide up projects themselves into chunks that can then be combined into a complete result.

You'll be amazed at how productive your team can be when lead properly and allowed even a limited amount of autonomy, and the ability to participate in the bigger organizational goals.

4. Apply Goal Setting to Situations Other Than Individual Team Members.

Nothing gets everyone on the same page better than setting out goals at the beginning of any project or program.

This is where many managers fear getting bogged down in infinite rounds of input if they allow the goals to be collaborative. However, I highly recommend the K-J Method for streamlining this process.

I won't go into the K-J method in detail here as I have before, but the idea is that by having members offer their input on post-its (then organizing common ideas together **before even beginning any discussion**) you can target the most critical items.

This simple check-in on the general consensus avoids wasting time on outlier issues that more vocal members might otherwise succeed in making the focus.

5. Document Key Procedures And System Processes.

We all get caught up in our particular projects and can relegate these seemingly mundane procedures and systems to either "*things everyone should already know*" or "*things that admins or HR should take care of*".

Certainly admins and HR can play a part, but if you want predictable results, you need to outline these things and distribute them to everyone.

Training employees in these *simple ways* throughout a year or so will **alleviate the feeling of having to guess**, *increase personal investment*

in your vision, and give them the tools they need to **contribute to the organization long term.**

Examples of these items include: common file locations, file naming conventions, project file documentation procedures, project close out procedures, work flow tracking, document templates, graphic style samples.

6. The Right Type Of Meetings

The goal making process can require some **meetings**, and all meetings should have goals or an agenda laid out. But let's face it, meetings can be a huge drain on everyone's time.

One of the best ways to shorten meetings is contained within the first sentence of this paragraph: **make sure you lay out the goals for the meeting.**

This should also tell you who really needs to be there. If someone may be optional, invite them and let them know the agenda - then they can decide whether to attend.

Consider holding certain meetings where everyone stands - this alone can shorten decision making time by $\frac{1}{3}$. And try not to assume that anything will always require a weekly 1+ hour meeting. Think about how all critical issues can be handled in less time with fewer meetings.

7. Communicate Using Methods Other Than Meetings.

Once you've landed on appropriate goals for everyone, every project and every program, write them down or post them.

Then make sure everyone gets some quality, uninterrupted time to accomplish them.

Allow employees some time each week or maybe every day when they *don't have to immediately respond to inquiries or pick up phone calls.* This gives them quality time to help you get those goals accomplished.

Email and instant messaging, while also potential interruptions, can be used in a way where each person can *choose* when to respond, and therefore can be great communication methods in this stage.

I have often implemented each and every one of these goal-setting methods in less than a week's time.

But the amount of time ***saved*** by their implementation is IMMEASURABLE.

And the **quality** of work when everyone adheres to these methods **skyrockets.**

Providing each employee the space and structure to foster autonomy and mastery **engages them in ways no other methods can - these employees are highly invested in the success of the whole.**

Statistically, teams with this high-level of engagement create:

- **22% Higher Profitability**
- **21% Higher Productivity**
- **10% Higher Customer Engagement**
- **37% Lower Absenteeism**
- **65% Lower Employee Turnover**

So now you can see why it's so important to your business.

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