



# PeopleFocus



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## Editor's Message

*It is a Brand New Year! So what goals have you set? What plans have you made?*

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Yes, 2005 is upon us! 2004 seemed to have simply whizzed us by. What have you achieved last year? Did you get that promotion? Found your dream job? Started a business? Learned something new? Increased your network of friends and associates? Helped the needy? Got to know your spouse better? Or simply, yet equally important, had more fun with your children?

Indeed, a new year is here. What would you like to achieve this year? Give some time to yourself to reflect on your aspirations for the year, set some goals and act on them!

In this issue of the **PeopleFocus** newsletter, we take a look at how we should set well-defined goals for the year ahead, and I propose that we could all do with more collaboration and more control in our personal lives, careers and businesses.

The **PeopleFocus** newsletter aims to provide informative articles and resources to organisations to help improve workplace performance and to individuals to develop their personal effectiveness in their career and life goals.

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## Inside This Issue

- 1 Editor's Message
- 1 Don't Make Resolutions, Set Goals and Take Action!
- 3 Seek Collaborations and Partnerships
- 4 Taking Control: That's Your Responsibility!



## Don't Make Resolutions, Set Goals and Take Action!

*Did you make a resolution for 2005 but have forgotten all about it already? Well, don't just make resolutions, set well-defined goals!*

Are you looking for an exciting fresh start in the New Year? Made a resolution? For many of my friends, colleagues or relatives, I have seen that the resolutions they made were rarely achieved. Many of them set their resolutions on 31 Dec and by Jan 15, most of them have forgotten about them.

Rather than moving forward purposefully, we live reacting to whatever happens to us and in the process, our aspirations get short-circuited, or even forgotten. There are 5 reasons why this happen:

1. We are not sure of what we want.
2. We don't set well-defined goals.
3. We are trying to avoid something, rather than achieve something.
4. We bite off more than we can chew.
5. We don't put enough support around our goals.

A truly effective goal-setting and goal-achieving process must begin by acknowledging that only we are responsible for ourselves, that we want to change for the better and that we are in charge of our own lives.

### Inventorise Yourself

This is to determine where you are now so that you can decide where you want to go and what you have to do – a sort of self-evaluation. Your goal is your destination. In order to plan your journey, you must first know where you are. Knowing where you are is a very important step that is often missed by many people looking to achieve their goals.

continued on Page 2

continued from Page 1

You can probably think of instances in your life when you've spent too much time in one area, only to have another area suffer. You must find balance in your life and determine where you are and what you need. Viewing all the components that make up your life will help determine your priorities, identify where you need to start, and decide how you will proceed.

### Choose value-driven goals

Using value-driven goal-setting will help you choose the goals that you want, goals that will motivate you towards achievement. We constantly have a want or desire of some sort. However, most of the time, we set goals unconsciously or barely consciously and we almost never examine our choice of goals critically.

Whether it's losing weight, quit smoking, eating healthily, read more and better books, give more time with the family and so on, your brain sees the logic and we make behavioural adjustments. But sooner or later, if your values and goals are not aligned, your brains would be over-whelmed and over-ruled, and inevitably your goals are not met. The truth is that PERMANENT change happens only when our values and goals are aligned.

### Employ goal achieving strategy and action plan

The next step in the process to growth, achievement and joy in 2005 is to employ a goal achieving strategy:

- Set **SMART** goals
- Develop an action plan

Now that you've chosen the area you'd most like to work on, you need to get **SMART** about what exactly you want to accomplish. If you aren't **SMART**, it's not likely you will ever reach your goal. Your goals must be **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-Bound**.

Don't simply say, "I would like to have more income." Be **SMART** like, "I would like to increase my income by at least \$24,000 by Dec 2005." Being **SMART** helps you visualize the outcome and motivate you to get moving towards that goal. The more specific the goal, the higher the probability you'll have of success.

When it's measurable, you have a yardstick to determine your success and you can develop an action plan. Your goal has to be attainable because it has to be aligned with your values. The goal must be big enough

to challenge you, yet realistic enough to be within your reach. And of course, you must set a deadline to achieve your goal.

After setting your goal, you will develop a **plan of action**. Your goal should have a start and end date. You then devise your plan of action. To earn that \$24,000, you can work overtime, learn new selling skills, make more calls per day, or take on a second job, make some investments, or even start a home-based business. With each option, there are steps to be taken, and each step or task may have its own timetable.

Each task achieved is a milestone, a small step in a journey towards your goal. When your goals are measurable and you achieve the desired results, you'll be motivated to move to the next step. Check off each step and task as you accomplish them, and be good to yourself and celebrate that you have completed that particular milestone.

You also need to determine your resources. In some cases, to achieve your goals you may have to muster some resources or materials to complete each step towards your goal. For example, if the step is to start a home-based business, resources may include the equipment for a home office, obtaining a licensing agreement with a vendor, read business books, attend seminars or seek a mentor.

Talk to people who have set the same or similar goals. Ask them what you could expect - what some of the pitfalls might be and how to manage them. Be open to input and search for viable alternatives to alter or change your plan where necessary.

### Take action

Developing your plan of action is crucial to achieving your goals. But it is only a plan, a tool. Only half the work is done. Your goals are nothing more than dreams if you don't take positive actions. How many of you dream of striking it big in Toto or 4-D? What do you think of your chances? Relatively small, right? But if you don't take action to buy, your chances are a guaranteed zero – it is just a dream.

The same applies to your goals. If you don't take positive action, your goals are just dreams. Taking the first step is the pivotal point of your goal-achieving process. The transition from goal setting is taking action. This is where you are most likely to stumble. If you are tempted to stop, DON'T! The power lies in taking action. ■

## Seek Collaborations and Partnerships

*Successful collaborations and partnerships prove the adage that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.*

The beauty of good collaborations and partnerships is that they expand resources, influence, potential and results. Simply put, good partnerships produce good results, whether they are forged between solo entrepreneurs, between departments within a company or between any imaginable configuration of individuals, programmes, organisations or initiatives.

But such collaborations don't just happen. Often, people can find themselves thrown together to get a particular job done or partnering with another out of convenience. Such partnerships, however, can produce as many problems as there are solutions. To succeed, we must all build bridges.

For partnerships to be productive, the partners must be compatible in vision, approach and work processes. They must know how to communicate with each other, when to stand firm on an issue, and when to compromise. The participants must share risks and responsibilities, and treat each other fairly. This kind of relationship fosters trust, which in turn, is the foundation of a successful endeavour.

Productive partnerships take many forms, from informal collaborations and alliances to formal partner agreements. Internet technologies also facilitate easy-to-track affiliate relationships and offer potential for building effective partnerships anywhere in the world. In any case, the objective is mutual benefit.

### Beginning the Process

Before partnering with another individual, business or department, it is crucial to be clear on your ideas and visions. What do you want to achieve, and are you certain you cannot (or do not want to) provide that yourself with current resources and know-how?

Depending on your need, you may wish to start your search for the right partner locally, with such organisations as the Chambers of Commerce, networking groups, professional associations, social clubs and university alumnus.

### The Makings of a Strong Partnership

The Drucker Foundation Partnership Summit identified the principles of good partnership as:

- Partners must understand not only the values, goals, and constraints of the partnership itself but also the values, goals, and constraints of the other partners.
- Partnerships must translate broad goals into measurable, interim targets and time frames.
- Partnerships rely not just on the clarity of mission but also on a mutual understanding of partners' roles.

### Other Factors Influencing Partnership Success

Even the best laid plans must be adapted to shifting conditions, altered needs and preferences, experience of what isn't working, emerging opportunities and fresh thinking to improve outcomes. Partnerships are no different and clearly evolve in response to successes and partner's needs. Productive partnerships also include:

- Mutual respect, understanding and trust
- Ability to compromise
- Can-do attitude
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Open and frequent communication
- Review of both disappointments and achievements
- Partners share a stake in both process and outcome
- Encouragement to explore boundaries and to grow partnership

To see your business grow, your career soar or your relationships deepen, consider building productive partnerships in 2005. ■

## Taking Control: That's Your Responsibility!

*You often hear your friends or colleagues say that they have no control over something. The truth is: we have more control than we think we do.*

It's true. It's not possible to control a system, another person's behaviour or other peoples' impressions. But that doesn't mean that you have no control over your situation. What you can control ultimately has more power to affect a situation than any control we might try to exert over others.

Consider the power available to us when we pay attention to these areas - things you can actually do something about:

**Our Words.** Spoken or written, the words we choose impact our lives and the lives of others. For example, you could learn ways to give feedback to your colleague that stand a better chance of being accepted.

**Our Beliefs.** You can always change your beliefs. For example, you might want to examine your belief that you can't risk your financial security despite hating your job. Or your belief that doing something else that is fulfilling and stimulating won't provide well enough for you.

**Our Actions.** You alone are responsible for what you do. For example, you can find out exactly what leadership and/or managerial qualities your superiors

think you may lack that's hampering your promotion. You can take courses to learn skills, work with a coach to bring out leadership qualities or to look at other work possibilities.

**Our Values.** What's important to you is your call. No one else can tell you what to value. Where you truly tap into power is when you align our values with your actions.

**Our Work.** Although many of you may complain of being stuck in a job or profession, you do actually get to choose what your work in the world is.

**Our Friends.** Those you associate with say a lot about what you think about yourselves. You can either choose to have friends who support you and who mirror your best qualities or those who bring you down.

**Our Time.** Though it sometimes feels like you have no choice, you do choose every day how you will use the 24 hours a day gives you.

**Our Basic Health.** While you cannot control your genetic make-up, you can choose to exercise, sleep enough, eat healthy food, get routine check-ups, etc. ■



## About Us



**Lionel L Lim** is the founder of Aurora Executive Solutions (AES), a Human Talent Management and Development Solutions firm. He is a US-certified EQ trainer, a career and life coach, a People's Association approved trainer, and a licensed facilitator of the Profiles occupational assessments. Lionel is also an experienced facilitator of the EQ Map, the Emotional Intelligence Style Inventory, MBTI tools and the INSIGHT Inventory.

Lionel is a graduate of the University of South Australia with a BA in Communication and Media Management. He also holds a Diploma in Training and a Certificate in Counselling Skills. Lionel has a varied experience in executive search, communication, leadership, training, coaching and mentoring, as well as the effective management of teams in both local and overseas assignments.

Lionel is a professional member of the Asian Association of Career Management Professionals, the Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Network, the Career Planning and Adult Development Network, the National Resume Writers' Association and the International Association of Coaches.

## Our Programmes

- **Hiring, Executive Selection & 360 Feedback Tools**
- **Leadership Development**
- **Team Effectiveness**
- **Communication Skills**
- **Workplace Effectiveness Skills**
- **Emotional Intelligence Development**
- **Career Coaching**
- **Life Coaching**

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