

'A goal is a **dream** with a date'

By dental practice manager and coach **Felicity Cleaver***

Having a vision

You don't need a new year to make changes, all you need is a Monday and vision! Allowing yourself some thinking time is a great way to look at what is working well, what you enjoy doing and where you would like to take your career. These are important questions as the average person spends 97,464 hours working from the age of 18-65, eight hours a day, five days a week.

So where do you start to ensure that you enjoy your job, stay on track and reach your goals? There are a number of ways that you can do this. In this article I would like to share a few ideas with you.

Visualising

The first is visualising where you want to be; one way to do this is to create a vision board. Use magazine cuttings, lots of coloured pens or paint and put down what you want in your future. It doesn't have to be a masterpiece as you are the only one who needs to see it! Unless of course you want others' input, ultimately it is your vision, so be creative. If you prefer technology Pinterest is a fabulous app that you can use on the go adding photos and quotes. You can also create a number of different vision boards at any time.

Carrying out this activity allows you some great thinking time and some fun. Once you start to visualise your ambitions you can start to think about how you are going to realise your dreams and turn them into reality. It will

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give you clarity about what is important to you, what you enjoy and where you want to go.

Now you have created your vision board display it, add to it and alter it. Life changes as does our taste so use your board as a working document. This is also a great way of involving all of your team at work; sometimes pictures speak far louder than words and using a vision board is a great way of having some fun while really nailing down where the business is going.

Achieving your goals

The next stage is pulling information from your vision board; focus on what you want first, then second, third etc, and write this down as a statement or goal. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What one thing could you do differently tomorrow that would put you on the first step to achieving your goal?
2. What would you do tomorrow if you knew you could not fail?
3. What is really important to you?

Top tips to staying on track are putting your statement in a prominent position so you see it at least once a day. This could be in your diary, Outlook, mobile phone or on your bathroom mirror!

Some people also assign an object to help them remember their goal, such as a necklace or stone in their pocket. Every time they touch the object it reminds them what they are striving towards.

Use your statement as a mantra and say it to yourself every morning a number of times. Evidence has shown that it takes 21 connections until you change a habit or the way you think.

A word of caution

So you now have a vision board; you have set some goals and a way to stay on track. So what could go wrong? A word of caution is to not concentrate on too many goals at any one time otherwise you will find yourself not making the progress you would like to or giving up completely.

Remember that others around you will have an opinion and may not want you to make changes. This is your vision and your goal so, as hard as it can be sometimes, stick to it!

Coaching

All of the above are just a small number of techniques that are used during coaching sessions. Coaching can help you to realise your dreams and ambitions in a safe and non-judgemental environment.

So what is coaching and how could it help you? The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) lists some characteristics of coaching in organisations that are generally agreed on by most coaching professionals:

- It consists of one-to-one developmental discussions
- It provides people with feedback on both their strengths and weaknesses
- It is aimed at specific issues/areas
- It is essentially a non-directive form of development
- It focuses on improving performance and developing/enhancing individuals skills
- It is used to address a wide range of issues
- Coaching activities have both organisational and individual goals
- It is time-bound
- It is a skilled activity.

Coaching can not only help you, but the organisation you work for. It does this by working through your reality, setting goals, talking through any concerns or limitations, setting a way forward and focusing on techniques to help you stay on track.

Remember a goal is a dream with a date; when are you going to realise yours?

**Felicity started her career as a trainee dental nurse ten years ago and then worked her way into practice management. She now works as a group practice manager in London overseeing two private dental clinics. Her passion lies in team development, which in May 2012 led her to embark on a Diploma in Personal Performance AND a Diploma in Corporate & Executive Coaching.*

Felicity has had the pleasure of working with dental nurses through the Dental Nurse Network to offer them Career Coaching Workshops.

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