

**SALES SKILLS:**

# Setting goals you *know* you can accomplish

By Tom Wawzenek

Why do some salespeople reach goals easily while others struggle?

Often, the problem is not with the person, but with the goal itself. To be achieved, a goal needs to be set in a clear and easily defined way. If a goal is vague, the results become muddled. If a goal is too ambitious, then one can quickly despair of ever attaining it.

The late Dr. Maxwell Maltz, author of *Psycho-Cybernetics* (Simon and Schuster, New York), believed the mind can be easily programmed to work on achieving a desired goal.

"Your brain and nervous system constitute a goal-striving mechanism which operates automatically to achieve a certain goal," he wrote, "very much as a self-aiming torpedo or missile seeks out its target and steers its way to it."

Maltz claimed that if a missile is programmed in a non-specific way or aimed too far out of range, it can't help but zigzag unpredictably until its system fails and it self-destructs. He believed the same is true for people who don't know how to program goals into their lives.

The good news, he said, is that we all have a built-in guidance system that leads us not only to achieve our goals, but also helps us make corrections if we're straying too far off course toward our target.

How does this apply to sales? Well, think of this built-in guidance system as a good reason for refusing to be despondent over your failures! Your mind, like a missile, depends

upon negative feedback to make corrections in its pursuit of a target. So view each mistake or failure as negative feedback that urges you to make some necessary adjustments.

Denis Waitley, the noted lecturer on personal development, states in his book, *Seeds of Greatness* (Pocket Books, New York): "Set goals that are just out of reach, but not out of sight. It is important to use an incremental approach to success. By setting lower goals — ones that are relatively easy to accomplish — it is easier to make corrections when you get off target. The achievement of step-by-step goals also builds your confidence."

Waitley believes that too many people give up on reaching goals because they set them too high and quickly become frustrated.

He also says: "Specific, written goals are tools which make purpose achievable. Since the mind is a biocomputer, it needs definitive instructions and directions."

How does this apply to sales? Try this idea on for size: If you state that your goal is simply to have a successful career in sales — in itself a commendable goal — you'll probably fall short of it because it lacks clarity. Instead, spell out specific ways that you plan to conduct a successful sales career. What personal attributes do you wish to apply? *Specifically*, how many sales do you want to make within a *specific* time period? *Specifically*, how much do you want to earn?

Also remember that when one goal is achieved, your confidence automatically increases — and it's a bit easier for you to reach the next level. ■

