

Goal-Setting Theory

In 1990, Locke and Latham published their seminal work, "A Theory of Goal Setting & Task Performance." In this book, they repeated the need to set specific and difficult goals, while outlining five other characteristics for successful goal setting.

Lock and Latham's Five Principles:

1. CLARITY

- ~Setting clear goals
- ~When your goals are clear, you know what you're trying to achieve. You can also measure results accurately, and you know which behavior to adapt
- ~SMART can help (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound)
- ~What metrics will you use?

2. CHALLENGING

- ~Difficult goals lead to higher effort and performance
- ~Challenging goals energize you!

3. COMMITMENT

- ~Make sure you and your team will commit to the goal (believed it is achievable, consistent with your values and ambitions, and credible)
- ~Use visualization to imagine how life will look once you have achieved your goals
- ~Make a public commitment!

4. COMPLEXITY

- ~Consider the complexity and how it is related to your context
- ~Do you need to set a more appropriate deadline to prevent becoming overwhelmed?
- ~Break large, complex goals down into smaller sub-goals.
- ~Set learning goals for very complex goals

5. FEEDBACK

- ~Important to gauge your progress
- ~Gives you the opportunity to clarify expectations and adjust the difficulty of goals
- ~Schedule feedback intermittently

Locke's Goal-Setting Theory - Goal Setting Training from mindtools.com

Building a Practically Useful Theory of Goal Setting and Task Motivation, Locke, E. Latham, G. American Psychologist, September 2002, Vol. 57, No. 9, 705-717