

Create Plans

Now, the next thing that I want to talk about is creating plans. Goals that we just talked about - goals are dreams with deadlines. Plans, on the other hand, define what needs to be accomplished to turn those dreams into reality. So what are the three keys to plans?

Plans must be documented. They must be broken down into smaller, actionable steps. And plans must be measurable. Must be documented, broken down to smaller actual steps, and measurable. "Documented" simply means writing them down. "Broken down to smaller actionable steps" - what this means is that you need to think about all the smaller steps that need to be accomplished in order to reach that goal. So let's say your goal is to take that new product to market. You need to break that down to into steps. So possible steps would be designing the new product. Creating a prototype. Beta testing the product. Improving the product based on customer beta testing feedback. Finding distributors for this product. Creating marketing materials for the product, etc. So you need to breakdown your bigger goals into smaller actionable steps. And thirdly, I talked about "measurable." You must be able to measure your progress towards achieving your goals.

So, if in the next 12 months you want to take a new product to market, you create your actionable steps. You say, in month one we're going to design a product. In month two and three, we're going to create a prototype, and in month four, we're going to beta test, and in month five, we're going to improve the product, etc. You break it down to smaller tasks and then you are able to measure your progress. So in month three, where are you? Are you where you expected to be in month three? Are you before that? After

that? What have you accomplished? It needs to be measurable.

I have two tips that I want to share with you on this point here. Tip number one is that old plans would be converted into smaller tasks. I will discuss this in the next section. You want to start by breaking the first part of that plan into much smaller tasks.

For example, the plan to write a book starts with writing the first chapter, page, or paragraph. And too many plans go awry right away - using the book example - when somebody says, "Okay. I want to write a 12-chapter book in the next year," which is good thinking, and then they start with "Okay, I'm going to write chapter one this month," and they never get to it because they didn't break it down into an even smaller part. So rather than saying, "I will write the first chapter," you really want to break it down to "I want to write the first page," or even "just the first paragraph" to get it started. You need to break down these plans into very small tasks.

Tip number two - which relates to the example that I just gave you - is because taking that first step toward achieving a plan is the hardest, make it easy. So many people are trying to quit smoking, lose weight, launch a new product, and it's very, very hard to achieve a new plan. The biggest tip that I can give is to make the first step really, really easy. Once again, with the book example. The first step should not be writing the first chapter. That is very hard; it takes a long time and you might start to get discouraged.

Rather, make the first step - coming up with a temporary title. Not even the final title - just a temporary working title. Maybe the next step is writing the first paragraph. Maybe the next step is writing the first page, and then your plans would get harder and harder as you build momentum. The hardest thing is always to take the first step and get yourself in the habit of investing

time each and every day to achieve a goal. So you need to start small.

Break everything out. Do some of the easiest things first to get the momentum going, and then you'll start achieving your goals.