
A black and white photograph of a soccer ball hitting a goal net. The ball is in the lower right quadrant, partially obscured by the net's ropes. The net's ropes form a grid pattern across the frame.

Foolproof Goal Achievement

**7 steps to
achieving your
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Foolproof Goal Achievement

7 Steps to Achieving Your Goals Every Time!

by Ken Runkle – America’s Profitability Expert™

Is there a foolproof way to achieve your big goals?

For more than two decades I have personally watched practices set big goals and work toward achieving those goals. Some meet and even exceed their goals while others fall short. In closely monitoring and evaluating the reasons practices succeed, seven essential steps to achieving big goals have emerged.

1. Set a BHAG

Every successful dental practice possesses a Big Hairy Audacious Goal, or BHAG. We highly encourage every practice we work with to set a yearly BHAG. It has to be Big because small goals lead only to small results. It has to be Hairy and Audacious – meaning it must stretch your team enough to motivate, challenge and excite them. In addition to setting the goal, achieving practices make setting the goal itself a special staff occasion established during an annual gathering or short retreat.

Action Question

Is your goal big enough to motivate, challenge and excite your team?

2. Clearly Articulate Expectations

The number one failure of practices that do not meet their BHAG is expectations surrounding the goal have not been clearly articulated by the practice leader. When expectations are not clearly communicated, frustration and anger among all parties involved is the inevitable result.

Beyond sharing expectations verbally, the doctor must *show* staff how to meet those expectations by walking them step-by-step, detail-by-detail through every element connected to the goal. If you want a five-star experience for your patients, your staff must be fully acquainted with what that looks like, feels like, and how to achieve it in your practice.

In setting and achieving a BHAG, realize that higher goals require higher expectations.

Action Question

Does your staff know exactly what you expect in every area connected to meeting the goal?

3. Visualize

Visualizing the outcome of a BHAG provides motivation to stay focused and tenacious during the journey. A shared reward, like a vacation trip, for achieving your practice BHAG provides a great visualization opportunity for your entire team.

To visualize the reward, we encourage practices to place fun reminders throughout the office, keeping the goal and the reward continually in front of the staff. For example, if you are planning a reward trip to Hawaii, you may have Hawaiian leis, beach pictures, bathing suits, helpful snacks for developing a beach body, and other fun connections to Hawaii.

In the end, beyond the shared adventure of the vacation, the significant long-term benefit to the practice is that the team learns how to set and achieve a goal. They grow to expect success, causing them to look forward with confidence to next year's bigger and better BHAG.

Action Question

Have you and your team visualized the outcome?

4. Change Your Words to Reflect Your BHAG

Tony Dungy, the former Super Bowl winning coach, would begin every year by telling his team that he expects to win the Super Bowl during the coming season. He would then use the goal as a standard by which every practice and game would be measured. If it did not rise to the level of Super Bowl Champions, changes would be made.

If your BHAG is to grow to a \$1 million, \$2 million or \$10 million practice, you must begin to use words that reflect that reality. Would a \$2 million practice say that? How would a \$3 million practice talk about hygiene, power blocks, or patients?

I recall serving a rural practice that began referring to itself as a provider of “World Class Dentistry.” Within five years, people began flying in from all around the country to receive “World Class” treatment. Your practice will reflect the words you use to describe it.

Start talking now as if your BHAG has been achieved. One of two things will happen as you change your words to reflect your BHAG. You will either change your behavior to align with your new words or you will stop saying it and give up on your BHAG.

Action Question

What words or phrases do you or your team members use that do not point to the achievement of your BHAG?

5. Take Appropriate Action in Line with Your BHAG

If your goal is \$2 million and your reward is a trip to Hawaii, your actions should reflect your belief that you will achieve that goal. Have you cleared the week for the trip of hygiene and other appointments? Have your staff members acquired passports and made family preparations? Have you published an itinerary for the trip?

With a BHAG you are either fully-in or not in at all. If your BHAG is big enough, anything less than one-hundred percent will never bring achievement. You cannot say you will make preparations if you get closer to the goal. You must align your actions now and let those actions fuel your drive to the goal.

If you are serious about losing weight and getting fit, try burning your old clothes every time you move down a size. That is an action aligning with a goal.

Action Question

What current actions align with achieving your BHAG?

6. Change Your Habits to Support Your BHAG

You must change your habits to support, not sabotage your goal. Habits become auto-conscious and routine in such a way that we do not have to think about them. Like driving a car, we no longer think about all the details involved in driving, we simply drive. Habits are like a computer operating system; they free us to think and do while our habits run in the background to manage our lives.

Evaluate whether or not your current habits support your new BHAG. Chances are good that you may have to change some personal and practice habits to achieve your BHAG. Although your habits were originally put in place to serve you well, some may currently control you and your practice in unhelpful ways.

How do you change a habit? Here are four steps:

1. Pick only one or two habits to focus on at a time.
2. Choose a supportive habit to replace your existing habit. Habits are not broken, they are replaced with habits of equal or greater strength.
3. Find a reinforcement mechanism. Sometimes the best mechanism is a person rather than a thing. Chances are that your mom taught you habits and became your reinforcement mechanism to establish those habits.
4. Commit to implement your habit 100% of the time every day for ninety days. It takes ninety days to fully own a habit to the point it becomes auto-conscious and routine.

Action Question

What habits do you have that do not support your BHAG? When and how will you change them?

7. Monitor Your BHAG

You will never achieve your BHAG unless it is consistently measured, monitored and analyzed. In the same way that an airline pilot guides a plane, regular measurements and monitoring along the path serve to keep you on course while helping you make necessary adjustments. Course corrections will be needed along the way and you may not know it unless you stay in touch with your progress.

Go Big or Go Home

Just as world-class athletes and professional teams set challenging goals, we encourage our clients to shoot for the moon. If you haven't established a BHAG for this year, now is the time. If it is too small, make a huge adjustment. Do not settle for small goals and small results.

Go for it!

– **Ken Runkle, America's Profitability Expert™**, is the founder and president of Paragon Management, Inc. and has been helping dental practices reach peak profitability for twenty-four years.
