



Career Management Column L&MB - [Rita Balian Allen](#)

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“Set Goals and Position Yourself for Success ”

Can you answer the following questions:

- ❖ What does success look like for you?
- ❖ Can you think of specific examples of that success?
- ❖ How often do you experience this level of success?
- ❖ Why or why not?

When you look back over the last few years, were there missed opportunities as a result of not having set goals for yourself? Did you hold back your career by not identifying specific goals that you wrote down and reviewed monthly for progress? An important ingredient to managing a successful career is creating our vision and determining our direction followed by establishing goals that will allow us to achieve that vision. Accountability is critical as well - writing down our goals will keep us focused and more likely to accomplish our goals. Set goals on a regular basis and revisit, review and adjust as needed. Oh, and remember - always keep an open mind for the unexpected paths that may open up along the way!

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.”

~~ Pablo Picasso...Painter, Sculptor and Poet

Many years ago, I made a commitment to block out 3 hours the first Friday of every December dedicated to setting my goals for the following year in addition to reflecting on the previous year – reviewing, reevaluating and adjusting as necessary – and this allows me to start each year with incredible focus and determination. We all need to have a mission for our career and specific goals we want to accomplish – both personally and professionally. Without a plan, we may stumble along aimlessly without direction or criteria for accountability; *we just simply exist*. Our success lies in our ability to identify this vision putting ourselves in the driver's seat rather than sitting in the back going along for the ride.

Let me offer the following **5 step process** to help you stay on target and achieve the kind of success you envision for yourself. It will enable you to drive your career in the direction you aspire to as well as to be open to unexpected opportunities exploring new paths and directions.

Step 1 - Identify your Vision, Mission and Values

- Vision - what do you envision for yourself now and in the future
- Mission - what is the purpose of your career for you, currently and ideally
- Core Values - what matters most to you, identify your top 5 values

Step 2 - Create "SMART" Goals

- Specific - precise, focused and well-defined, not vague
- Measurable - appropriate metrics to qualify and quantify success
- Attainable - reachable, appropriate and achievable
- Realistic/Relevant - results-oriented and rewarding
- Time Bound - specific target dates for completion

Step 3 - Develop Goal Setting Process

- Short term goals - 1 to 3 years
- Long term goals - 3 to 5 years
- Realistic obstacles and challenges you may encounter
- Execution strategy - what, how and when
- Follow up plan to review and evaluate regularly

Step 4 - Determine Commitment

- Write them down, both personal and professional - put them on paper
- Reach out to others for help and support
- Earn trust and gain cooperation from others involved
- Commit to staying focused and true to yourself, live more intentional life

Step 5 - Maintain Accountability

- Revisit, reassess and reevaluate goals regularly - at least monthly
- Make adjustments as appropriate and necessary, keep an open mind

- Continue to formulate your process of setting your personal and professional goals

When we are focused and clear on our goals, we are energized and motivated to achieve them. This empowers us to not only drive our career but it also enables us to uncover any gaps in our skills, abilities or competencies to be developed in order for us to be positioned and able to progress into the roles we aspire to fill. It prepares us in creating our roadmap with focus, purpose and determination!

Ask Rita: Do you have a career question and/or a career story to share? Email your questions or stories to rita@ritaballenassociates.com

Rita B. Allen is the Author of [Personal Branding and Marketing Yourself](#)

Rita Balian Allen is the president of Rita B. Allen Associates, a career management firm specializing in executive coaching, leadership development, management training and career development. She is a lecturer at Boston-area universities, a sought-after speaker and presenter, the author of numerous articles, blogs and the newly released book, "Personal Branding and Marketing Yourself: The Three P's Marketing Technique as a Guide to Career Empowerment". Rita was voted one of the top ten executive coaches by the Boston Women's Business Journal .