

Your Guide to 2021 Goal Setting



2021 goal setting presents a unique set of challenges. If 2020 taught us nothing else, it's that you can't predict the future - not even remotely - no pun intended. When you sat down to write your goals in 2019 for the new year, you couldn't have imagined we'd be hit with a global pandemic, forced to wear masks, and for many, work, learn, play and eat from home.

Yet, here we are, and the goals you set for 2020 might have come true, or maybe they didn't. Either way, you can and should learn from 2020 and consider those lessons as you set goals for the new year.

Before you get started

It's crucial to note that just because 2020 was a doozy, it doesn't mean we should throw goal setting out of the window. Setting goals is still a vital method to stay focused during the year and reach new heights within your organization.

One of the most significant takeaways from 2020 is that you want your goals to be flexible because anything can happen in life that makes it difficult or impossible to achieve what you initially planned.

And that's okay.

There's no need to beat yourself up about it, but you do want to be ready to pivot when obstacles present themselves. Keep reading and learn goal setting strategies for 2021 that take into account what we learned in 2020.

Guidelines for setting goals in 2021

Set SMART goals

The benefit of setting SMART goals hasn't changed over the years. It is still a tried and true goal setting strategy for a reason. Here's a brief refresher on how to set SMART goals.

SMART stands for.

Specific - Your goal should be well defined. Goals that are too vague or open-ended can be more challenging to achieve.

Measurable - You should be able to easily measure whether your goal has been achieved. This requires specificity.

Attainable - You should only set goals that can actually be achieved. Setting goals that you know you won't be able to reach won't be beneficial for you.

Realistic/Relevant - Similar to being attainable, your goal should be realistic for you to attain. Otherwise, you're setting yourself up for failure, which can discourage you from setting goals in the future. Also, it should be relevant to your organization. If not, it's not serving you appropriately.

Timely - You want to set a time frame for achieving your goal, so you can measure your progress and determine whether it is still realistically attainable as you get closer to the predetermined deadline.

Additional Resource: Read more on [setting SMART goals](#).



Have a backup plan

There's always a possibility that things won't go as planned. Instead of being surprised when it happens, prepare for the possibility by having a backup plan. What might happen that makes it more challenging for you to achieve your 2021 goals? Brainstorm these possibilities and have a plan in place for what you can do to combat it if it does happen.

You've made it through 2020 with all of its twists and turns. You can now be prepared for what the new year might have to offer by thinking about it in advance.

Keep your employees' happiness top of mind

2020 was a tough year for just about everybody, and if your employees are still showing up every day and doing their job, give them credit for that. Show your appreciation. Give them some slack. Remember that we are all human beings getting through this crazy thing called life together.

Consider how you can set goals that allow you to prioritize the people you work with, not just their duties and how they impact the company's bottom line.

At this point, self-care and employee satisfaction should be a priority, not a privilege.

Improve diversity efforts

Along with COVID-19, there has been a resurgence like never before in the importance of diversity, inclusion, and equity in our country. This means no longer sticking to the Diversity traditional monolithic society that's been deemed acceptable by the majority.

Our country has diversity in sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic background, race, religion, and culture. Your company should work to ensure you reflect the diversity of America on all levels - including upper management. Be sure to consider how you're representing diversity, inclusion, and equity in your company.

Use technology

Technology has been around for years and growing in importance over time, but the pandemic has shown us that sometimes technology becomes a requirement instead of a perk. Even if you choose not to use certain technology daily, have a plan in place if you need to go from paper-pencil or in-person to online. You might even

find that it's more convenient, cost-effective, or easier to utilize technology to get the job done, like signing contracts and agreements.

Consider crisis management

During a crisis, your employees should be able to trust the company leaders to guide the way. If current leadership is not equipped to manage difficult situations properly, consider offering training on operating as a leader during a crisis. While you often can't predict a crisis, preparing for managing a company during difficult times can be beneficial.

Set goals for a greater 2021

A new year means another opportunity to achieve new goals and improve upon current conditions in your company. Use the lessons learned in 2020 to set goals for a better new year.