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Setting Goals in Different Roles: Applying Key Results From the Goal-Setting Literature

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Decades of research have demonstrated that managers can effect substantial performance improvements by setting challenging and specific performance goals (Locke & Latham, 2002), providing goal-relevant feedback on a regular basis (Karakowsky & Mann, 2008), and, when appropriate, involving subordinates in goal setting (Stansfield & Longenecker, 2006). This article reviews core findings from the goal setting literature, and presents a collaborative exercise in which teams of students apply these findings to address management problems in five fictitious scenarios. Debriefing tips cite additional research evidence to allow for more nuanced classroom discussion of goal setting. A pretest indicated that prior to completing the goal-setting exercise, only a minority of students had a strong intuitive sense of how to set effective goals; a posttest following its completion demonstrated substantial improvement. Students rated the exercise as both challenging and effective in improving their knowledge of goal setting. *Organization Management Journal*, **12: 14–22, 2015. doi: 10.1080/15416518.2014.969367**

Extensive and systematic research on goal setting has been conducted for more than 50 years, making it one of the most thoroughly researched topics in organizational behavior (OB). In both laboratory and field studies, researchers have examined goal setting's effects on the performance of tasks of varying complexity, including anagram and mathematical problem solving (Locke & Bryan, 1969; Sales, 1970), dieting (Baron & Watters, 1981), bargaining (Hamner & Harnett, 1974), recycling (McCaul & Kopp, 1982), energy conservation (van Houwelingen & van Raaij, 1989), sales work (Barrick, Mount, & Strauss, 1993), exercising (Wilson & Brookfield, 2009), and truck loading (Latham & Baldes, 1975). This research has been conducted with subjects in a wide range of occupations, including logging crews (Latham & Kinne, 1974), scientists and engineers (Latham, Mitchell, & Dossett, 1978), factory workers (Stansfield & Longenecker, 2006), fundraisers (Shantz & Latham, 2011), call-center employees (Webb, Jeffrey, & Schultz, 2010), and clerical workers (Dossett, Latham, & Mitchell, 1979). Although researchers continue to examine moderator variables and to broaden applications of goal setting (e.g., Latham & Locke, 2007; Moussa, 2012; Segal, Borgia, & Schoenfeld, 2005; Zetik & Stuhlmacher, 2002), the strength and consistency of findings noted in both narrative and meta-analytic literature reviews have left little doubt as to the importance of goal setting for individual and group performance (Kleingeld, van Mierlo, & Arends, 2011; Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002; Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981; O'Leary-Kelly, Martocchio, & Frink, 1994; Steers & Porter, 1974; Wofford, Goodwin, & Premack, 1992; Wood, Mento, & Locke, 1987).

This article presents a classroom exercise, Setting Goals in Different Roles, in which teams of students are asked to address hypothetical management problems by applying key research findings from the goal-setting literature. Students should be able to complete the exercise with little advance preparation beyond reading relevant passages in an OB textbook. To identify the findings commonly emphasized by textbook authors, we surveyed the coverage of goal setting in a nonrandom sample of 10 widely adopted OB texts, in their most recent editions: Andre (2008); Colquitt, LePine, and Wesson (2011); George and Jones (2012); Greenberg (2010); Hitt, Miller, and Collela (2011); Ivancevich, Konopaske, and Matteson (2013); Nelson and Quick (2013a, 2013b); Robbins and Judge (2013); and Vandeveer and Menefee (2010). These texts were selected to represent varying levels of comprehensiveness, research emphasis, and appropriateness for graduate or undergraduate students. We note the substantial overlap in the evidence-based principles of goal setting their authors chose to include, and provide an overview of the research supporting these principles.

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We then describe the exercise, presented in full in the appendix, and offer advice for conducting and debriefing the exercise. The debriefing tips include discussion of some more nuanced research findings that instructors can emphasize if they wish to convey an understanding of goal setting beyond what is typically included in textbooks. We conclude with evidence regarding the impact of the exercise in terms of student learning and reactions, and with a cautionary note about the importance of recognizing the potential for misuse of goal setting.

KEY FINDINGS ON GOAL SETTING

The primary topics discussed in textbook passages on goal setting are the effects of goal difficulty, goal specificity, participation in goal setting (and the related topic of goal commitment), and feedback. Of these, goal difficulty and specificity have been found to have the most robust effects on performance, with meta-analyses showing strong effect sizes (Kleingeld et al., 2011; Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002; Wofford et al., 1992; Wood et al., 1987; Zetik & Stuhlmacher, 2002). In general, there is a direct positive relationship between goal difficulty and performance, diminished only when the goal is so difficult that the individual views it as unattainable or is no longer committed to it. Specific goals, particularly when they are also difficult, consistently have yielded better performance than simply entreating individuals to "do your best."

All 10 of the textbooks we surveyed emphasized the importance of setting goals that are specific and difficult. Nine were clear in noting that goals must not be so difficult that they are seen as unattainable, whereas Robbins and Judge (2013) addressed this by noting that goals need to be accepted in order to be motivating.

Participation in goal setting has a much weaker and less consistent relationship to performance than do goal difficulty and specificity (Locke et al., 1981; Mento, Steel, & Karren, 1987; Tubbs, 1986). Research results indicate that goals created through participation can improve performance over assigned goals, especially when participation results in more challenging goals being set, enhances commitment to the goals, or helps give individuals insights into methods for achieving the goals (Karakowsky & Mann, 2008; Latham, Erez, & Locke, 1988; Locke & Latham, 2002). But any relative advantage of participation is diminished if assigned goals are of comparable challenge, if commitment to them is enhanced by offering incentives or stressing the task's importance, or if the leader offers support for goal achievement. Nevertheless, the potential value of participation is underscored in the results of a meta-analysis by Klein, Wesson, Hollebeck, and Alge (1999), who found that participation had a moderately strong effect size in predictions of goal commitment.

Eight of the 10 textbooks we reviewed noted that participation can be useful in increasing goal acceptance and commitment. Four of these (Hitt et al., 2011; Ivancevich et al., 2013; Robbins & Judge, 2013; Vandeveer & Menefee, 2010) specifically discussed the mixed evidence regarding the effects of participation in goal setting, whereas the other four (Colquitt et al., 2011; George & Jones, 2012; Greenberg, 2010; and Nelson & Quick, 2013a) did not. Nelson and Quick (2013b) were more insistent that "managers who use goal setting should ensure employee participation" and that "participation is especially important in the accomplishment of difficult goals" (p. 96). André (2008) omitted discussion of participation or commitment.

Feedback consistently has been found to improve performance beyond goal setting without feedback (Locke et al., 1981; Locke & Latham, 2002) and has been found to be especially useful when goals are more difficult (Tubbs, 1986). All of the textbooks we reviewed stressed the importance of feedback, although they differed in the extent to which they elaborated on characteristics of feedback, such as its frequency and credibility (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), which affect its impact.

The team exercise presented in this article asks students to apply these principles regarding the effects of goal challenge, specificity, participation, and feedback. The exercise describes five hypothetical workplace scenarios and, using a multiple-choice format, asks student teams to make decisions about what goals to set, how to set them, and how to ensure goal achievement. In doing so, the exercise utilizes a collaborative learning approach, an active learning pedagogy consistent with contemporary research on memory and learning (Freeman et al., 2014; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2007; Miller, 2011; Paas & Sweller, 2012; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012).

Collaborative assignments characterized as having high levels of interdependence—that is, with greater demands for sharing information and working together to achieve a group outcome or consensus—have been found to be particularly effective for enhancing learning (Tomcho & Foels, 2012). In the Setting Goals in Different Roles exercise, team members prepare by reading the same background material, but the tendencies to recall, interpret, and apply the information in different ways create interdependencies. As a result, group discussion is typically lively and engaging, as students question each other's assumptions about the principles of goal setting and their application.

"SETTING GOALS IN DIFFERENT ROLES" EXERCISE

Learning Goals

This exercise is designed to improve students' abilities to make effective managerial decisions regarding what goals to set, how to set them, and how to ensure goal achievement. Through thoughtful application of the goal setting principles addressed in most introductory textbooks, students should be able to demonstrate that they recognize:

- The effectiveness of setting goals that are specific and highly challenging (while still being seen as attainable).
- The value that involving employees in goal setting can have, depending on the circumstances, for ensuring goal commitment and developing strategies to achieve goals.
- The value of providing regular feedback to help ensure goal attainment.

An additional goal is for students to demonstrate the ability to make thoughtful decisions about what behaviors to motivate. Most textbooks do not include explicit discussion of the need to choose target behaviors carefully, yet focusing on narrow or otherwise inappropriate goals—for example, emphasizing quantity over quality, sales targets over ethical compliance, or individual over group achievement—can have serious, adverse consequences. The exercise addresses this broad learning goal in just one scenario, but the instructor is encouraged to engage students in more extended discussion about the need to carefully consider what behaviors are desired.

Overview

The exercise in the appendix requires teams of students to select appropriate goals in five different settings based both on what they have read in their textbooks about goal setting, as well as their knowledge of the particular situation. The exercise has been used successfully in both undergraduate and graduate OB courses. Groups typically complete the assignment in about 30–35 minutes, and the debriefing discussion usually takes another 15 minutes (or more, depending on thoroughness). Groups of three to five students work well for the assignment.

Conducting and Debriefing the Exercise

Students should read the textbook material on goal setting prior to class, and bring the book to class for the exercise. Depending on the content in the particular textbook, the instructor may want to supplement the material with a brief lecture on goal setting findings. In class, each student should receive a copy of the assignment provided in the appendix. Teams should be encouraged to provide a thorough defense of their selected goal for each scenario.

Scenario 1 in the appendix, which asks students to choose an appropriate goal to reduce the time taken to conduct a store inventory, requires students to recognize that goals should be challenging but attainable. After discussion, most student groups accurately choose "6 hours" (a 2-hour improvement in the time previously taken to do the inventory work) as a better goal than either 7 or 2 hours. They frequently explain the choice, however, by indicating either that goals should be difficult or that they need to be achievable. Listing this scenario as the first one gives the instructor the opportunity to walk around the room and encourage teams to explain both why they did not

choose 7 hours and why they did not choose 2 hours. We think this helps set the tone that their reasoning should be carefully explained.

In debriefing, the instructor may wish to point out to students that inventory work is a fairly simple task, and that challenging goals tend to have especially strong effects on the performance of individuals when the task is simple (Locke & Latham, 2002; Wood et al., 1987). With more complex tasks, setting challenging goals still helps to motivate higher performance, but the effects are less pronounced, as some actors may have difficulty developing the strategies necessary for improved performance. Goals focused on strategy development rather than on performance outcomes may be more effective in such situations (Latham & Locke, 2007). Alternatively, it may be feasible to set challenging group performance goals if the task is complex. A meta-analysis of group goal setting did not find task complexity to moderate outcomes (Kleingeld et al., 2011); the authors suggested that groups may be better at exploring possible performance strategies than solitary actors.

Scenario 2 asks whether a new and inexperienced leader should assign goals to subordinates in a shipping department or have them participate in goal setting. The question was written with the hope that students would realize that employees may not be committed to goals set by an inexperienced leader and, further, that the employees might be a good source of information for how challenging a goal to set. The majority of student teams opt for employee participation, but the reasons given are generally vague statements about participation in goal setting sometimes being helpful. Students should be encouraged to explain why, in this particular situation, employee participation might be especially useful. Some teams, on the other hand, have made compelling cases for supervisor-set goals, arguing that the employees will be committed to whatever goals the boss sets because the employees have reason to believe that they could be fired if the goals are not met.

In an actual situation, a manager's decision to involve employees in goal setting should depend on a careful assessment of the particular situation. Because some relevant details are omitted in this hypothetical situation (e.g., information about whether the new leader is able to calculate the packing rate needed to get the work done and to get subordinates to work at a faster pace), it is not fully clear that employee participation in goal setting would improve performance. The assumptions and arguments that teams make to decide whether to involve employees in goal setting in this scenario are thus more important than the actual decision itself. As a consequence, the item often generates substantial classroom debate and provides a good opportunity to discuss the evidence that participation, while often improving performance, does have effects that vary.

This second scenario also provides an opportunity for the instructor to mention some of the more nuanced aspects of employee participation in goal setting. For example, Sauer (2011) found that new leaders with low status are perceived

as more effective and have better team performance when they are directive, whereas new leaders with high status are seen as more effective and produce better team performance when they are participative. Therefore, while some individuals may need to exert their formal position power to establish themselves as confident leaders, those with more personal power can demonstrate their self-confidence by ignoring the hierarchical structure and involving others in decisions. Additional considerations that support a decision to involve subordinates in goal setting include a desire to develop and empower employees (Karakowsky & Mann, 2008), high levels of prior subordinate performance (Ilies & Judge, 2005; Webb et al., 2010), and simply having adequate time to involve employees in decisions.

Scenario 3 requires students to recognize that construction workers will reduce waste more if they are given specific waste-reduction goals rather than simply encouraged to do their best. While most groups explain that "reduce waste by at least 20%" is more specific and therefore better than "reduce your waste as much as you possibly can," some (presumably those with less adequate preparation) inevitably choose the latter. (Note that the statement "As you know, we've been measuring waste and we really see a need to reduce it" is important to the scenario; in an earlier version, students argued against choosing the specific goal with the claim that it would not be possible to measure waste.)

In debriefing this scenario, the instructor may wish to note research by Roney and Lehman (2008), which found that framing goals positively ("try to solve at least 12 of the 15 anagrams correctly") results in better performance than framing them negatively ("try not to miss more than 3 of the 15 anagrams"). Students can be asked to think of ways to reframe the "reduce waste by at least 20%" goal in as positive a way as possible.

Scenario 4 requires students to consider what behaviors to motivate by asking them to decide whether to reward individuals or reward groups in a task clearly described as one that requires team members to cooperate rather than compete. As noted previously, few textbooks discuss the importance of choosing target behaviors carefully (some exceptions are discussed in the Conclusion), and students sometimes need to be encouraged to think hard about what behaviors the leader seeks to motivate in the scenario. With a careful reading, most groups are able to reason that individual rewards would be counterproductive to the need to have team members cooperate on this interdependent task.

The research literature provides good evidence to support the choice of a group over an individual reward in this scenario. Guthrie and Hollensbe (2004) found that groups engage in spontaneous goal setting, thereby increasing performance, when group incentives are offered. The meta-analysis by Kleingeld et al. (2011) produced strong evidence that "egocentric" individual goals interfere with group performance and should be used with caution with interdependent groups, whereas "group-centric" goals lead individuals to contribute more to the group's performance. Stanne, Johnson, and Johnson (1999) noted that

individuals will withhold their assistance, or even actively obstruct others, when they compete against one another to attain personal goals. Seijts and Latham (2000) similarly found that people will especially pursue personal goals at the expense of incompatible team goals when money is involved.

Scenario 5, regarding the provision of feedback to ensure speedy checkout scanning, was written to reinforce the importance of frequent feedback. Textbook treatments of goal setting typically note the importance of knowing how well one is performing relative to one's goals, but rarely specify how, or how often, that feedback should be given. Students generally realize that providing cashiers with annual performance feedback (the second option listed) would be of little value in improving scan rates, but they often do not recognize that weekly feedback from the manager (the first option) is less useful than hourly feedback from a computer (the third option). To steer students away from the weekly feedback option, that alternative specifies that the manager would provide the feedback "if the employees want to know how they are doing." Many students, nevertheless, fail to see a problem with the feedback being optional until debriefing, when they are asked to think about whether it is the good or poor performers who are likely to ask their manager for that information.

An argument commonly given in favor of the manager providing the feedback is that the manager is more credible than the computer—an odd claim, given that the manager in the scenario is said to be getting the scan rate data from a computer. Some students argue that having a computer provide constant feedback can be very stressful. The words "to ensure that the goals are met" are boldfaced in the scenario to help students realize that the emphasis here is on what motivates performance, not necessarily what keeps the employees stress-free.

Evidence suggests that being able to monitor one's own performance in a timely way and adjust it accordingly provides better performance outcomes than even daily feedback from one's supervisor (Stansfield & Longenecker, 2006). A more challenging issue to convey to students pertains to the appropriate balance of positive and negative feedback. Negative feedback is helpful and often necessary for correcting problem behavior but, particularly when it is extreme or continues over time, can be demotivating (Ilies & Judge, 2005; Venables & Fairclough, 2009; West, Bagwell, & Dark-Freudeman, 2005). In giving negative feedback, managers should attend to ensuring that recipients see improvement as feasible. For example, forced performance appraisal distributions that require some portion of the workforce to receive highly negative feedback can be highly discouraging to those at the bottom (Ilies & Judge, 2005).

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

To assess the impact of this exercise on student learning, 62 students enrolled in two sections of an OB course answered a three-item multiple-choice pretest designed to assess their

knowledge of basic goal-setting principles. Sixty percent of these respondents were male, and most were white (74%), American-born (94%), and of traditional college age (only 8% were over age 21 years, with the oldest in her late 30s). They were not told which answers on the pretest were correct. The students then answered the same questions in a posttest 2 months later—1 week after completing the goal-setting exercise. Repeated-measures logistic regression analyses were conducted (using the SPSS generalized estimating equations procedure) to determine whether students were more likely to give the optimal answer for each question in the posttest than in the prettest.

The first question asked what goal a high school basketball coach should set for a player who is successful on 50% of his practice foul shots. The options were to tell the player to work on his shot and try to improve his shooting percentage "as much as you possibly can" over the next month, versus to try to improve the percentage to 60%. In the pretest, only 31% correctly chose the specific goal over the "do your best" goal; in the posttest, 84% chose the better answer (Wald chi-squared = 31.34, $df = 1$, $p < .001$).

The second question asked whether a restaurant manager, whose waiters currently sold desserts to about 20% of customers, should set 25%, 33%, 80%, or 100% as the sales target. We considered 33% to be the "optimal" response, in that it was the more challenging of the two goals that had some chance of being attained (25% and 33%). In the pretest, 79% of respondents recommended setting the unattainable goal of selling to 100% of the customers; only 8% of respondents selected the "optimal" sales goal of 33%. In the posttest, the percentage choosing this optimal response rose to 60% of respondents (Wald chi-squared = 31.32, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). (The percentage choosing a sales goal of 25%—which could also be considered an "acceptable" goal to the extent that it is viewed as challenging but attainable—rose just slightly, from 10% in the pretest to 14% in the posttest.)

The third question assessed whether the students recognized the value of giving regular feedback by asking how often insurance claims processors should be given feedback about their speed and accuracy (the scenario described this information as easy to obtain and convey). The five options from which student chose varied the frequency of feedback (daily vs. every week or two), whether feedback should be given only on request (so the manager would know the employee was "open to it"), and whether experienced or inexperienced employees should receive feedback less often than the other group. We considered daily feedback for all employees to be the "optimal" response, in that it would allow the claims processors to know on a regular basis whether they needed to adjust their actions. In the pretest, 24% chose the optimal response of daily feedback, whereas double that number (48%) recommended daily feedback in the posttest (Wald chi-squared = 11.77, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). (One could argue that another option was also "acceptable": giving daily feedback to new employees, but feedback every week or two to experienced employees. The percent choosing this option rose just slightly, from 36% in the pretest to 39% in the posttest.)

Together, the pretest results clearly indicate that the students did not enter the course with an intuitive sense of the basic principles of goal setting. Table 1 shows that half of the respondents failed to select what was considered to be the "optimal" answer (i.e., a 60% foul shot percentage for question 1, a sales target of 33% for question 2, and daily feedback for question 3) on any of the three of the items prior to completing the goal-setting exercise. The table also indicates that when more than one answer was considered "acceptable" (as identified previously), nearly a quarter of the students were unable to choose a single acceptable answer.

Although we did not measure long-term recall, it is encouraging that most students recalled the lessons of the exercise described in this article well enough to apply the principles of goal setting a week later. Table 1 indicates more than two-thirds of respondents to the posttest were able to select what we considered to be the optimal answer on at least two items, and more than a quarter did so on all three. Moreover, 58% of respondents gave "acceptable" answers to all three questions on the posttest.

TABLE 1
Distributions of Optimal and Acceptable Answers on Pretest and Posttest Assessments

Number of "optimal" answers chosen	Percent of respondents		Number of "acceptable" answers chosen	Percent of respondents	
	Pretest	Posttest		Pretest	Posttest
0	50.0%	4.8%	0	24.2%	0%
1	37.1%	27.4%	1	46.8%	12.9%
2	12.9%	38.7%	2	25.8%	29.0%
3	0%	29.0%	3	3.2%	58.1%

Note. $N = 62$.

STUDENT REACTIONS

In a separate survey, 59 students responded to questions regarding their reactions to the exercise. They rated the extent of their agreement with each of five questions on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The mean ratings in Table 2 all exceeded 4.0 on the 5-point scale, indicating that students regarded the exercise as having generated thorough group discussion (question 1), challenged them to think hard about applying knowledge of goal setting (question 2), and improved their understanding of the principles of effective goal setting (question 3). The highest levels of agreement (mean ratings > 4.6) were for two questions regarding the perceived effectiveness of the exercise relative to a lecture or textbook (questions 4 and 5).

An open-ended question asked students to add any additional comments they might have regarding the exercise. One respondent said that the final question (about the frequency of feedback for checkout clerks) was unclear and could have been better worded, and one suggested that students should have been instructed to use the nominal group technique to do the assignment on their own before group collaboration (they had, in fact, been encouraged in class to do just that). Another student, familiar with the popular concept of "SMART goals" (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals) recommended instruction in that topic; unfortunately, this mnemonic emphasizes goal attainability in a way that neglects the principle of goal setting known to have the largest effect sizes on performance: challenge.

TABLE 2
Reactions to Goal-Setting Exercise

Items	Mean	*SD*
1. Our group discussed the questions about goal setting very thoroughly.	4.33	0.79
2. The goal setting exercise really got me thinking about how to apply what I'd read about goal setting.	4.11	0.84
3. I think the group goal setting exercise improved my understanding of the principles of how to set effective goals (beyond what I'd read in the textbook).	4.37	0.72
4. I think this exercise was a more interesting way to learn about goal setting than a lecture would have been.	4.72	0.56
5. I think that having to actively figure out how to apply goal-setting principles is better than just hearing a lecture or reading a book for helping me remember the principles in the long run.	4.61	0.65

Note. N = 59. Responses ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*.

The remaining comments were positive. Several indicated that the exercise was fun, while the rest commented on the challenge and value of applying what they had read:

- "Having to put it into practice helped to understand it more."
- "Directly applying the readings was really fun and effective. It made the information seem practical."
- "I must say that now I do actively examine my work experience and school experience based on what I have learned in class."
- "Good exercise overall! It got my group very involved in figuring out the answers."
- "I like the exercise—better than just hearing a lecture on it. Some of the scenarios really made the group think."

CONCLUSION

Students sometimes complain that the content of management courses is little more than common sense (Nord, 1987; Priem & Rosenstein, 2000; Vecchio, 1987). The inability of students to correctly choose appropriate goals prior to the exercise, the lengthy discussions students had throughout the exercise, and the survey evidence that the exercise was cognitively demanding, all suggest that goal setting is one topic on which instructors should be able to convince students that organizational research has much to offer. We contend that, particularly given the strong effect sizes observed in research on goal setting, having students actively work to apply goal-setting principles in an exercise that is (hopefully!) memorable is a worthwhile use of class time.

Given the strong effect sizes, it is also important to convey to students that care should be taken when deciding what behaviors to motivate. Ordóñez, Schweitzer, Galinsky, and Bazerman (2009) recently warned in their article "Goals Gone Wild" that goals can have very powerful effects on behavior and should be established with careful consideration for their long-term and ethical consequences (see also Barsky, 2008; Schweitzer, Ordóñez, & Douma, 2004). Two of the textbooks we examined (André, 2008; Robbins & Judge, 2013) noted that goal setting has the potential to produce negative outcomes, including accounting fraud, excessively risky investments, a focus on short-term profitability rather than corporate sustainability, and simply lying about goal attainment. We encourage the reader not only to help students see how to use goal setting effectively, but also to consider the ends to which they use this powerful tool.

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APPENDIX A: SETTING GOALS IN DIFFERENT ROLES

For each of the following, choose the **BEST** answer and **give a reason** based on the textbook material on goal setting and on the specific information you have about the situation.

1. You manage a bookstore that specializes in rare books. Taking inventory is one of the most tedious tasks you need to do. Even with the technology the store now uses, it takes three employees working 8 full hours to check the inventory of all of the titles that you have in the store. You're quite aware that the employees could do the work a lot more quickly, but it's such a boring task that they spend a lot of time goofing off. You've decided that the next time you have to take inventory, you'll offer to take them out for pizzas if they can finish the job more quickly.

   Which of the following statements is likely to be best for motivating your employees to work quickly?

   a. "If you finish the job in 7 hours, I'll take all of you out for pizza."
   b. "If you finish the job in 6 hours, I'll take all of you out for pizza."
   c. "If you finish the job in 2 hours, I'll take all of you out for pizza."

   WHY?

2. It's July and, thanks to your success in managing a rare book store, you were hired just last week to supervise the shipping department of a large publishing company. You're kind of nervous; you don't have experience shipping large orders because you just shipped one book at a time to customers at your old job. Your new boss has told you that the place will become very hectic in the next couple of weeks because many textbook orders need to be sent for the start of the school year in August. In fact, she told you that there were a lot of complaints last January from schools that didn't receive their orders on time, and that was one of several reasons the last person who held your position was fired. Gulp! You would like to use a goal-setting approach because you know that it is a useful tool for motivating workers.

   In setting goals for the workers who pack books into boxes, it would be a good idea for you to

   a. decide how many books they should pack each hour (i.e., you set the goal for the workers).
   b. have the workers participate in deciding how many books they should pack each hour (i.e., you and the workers jointly set the goal).

   WHY? (Think hard about this one! Consider what your text says about both goal commitment and participation in goal setting, and think about why participation would or wouldn't be important in this particular situation.)

3. You were such a successful manager at the publishing company that it was easy for you to get a management job at a reputable construction company. Your construction workers produce too much wasted material. Which of the following statements would be better for getting workers to reduce waste?

   a. "As you know, we've been measuring waste and we really see a need to reduce it. I'd like you to reduce waste by at least 20% over the next month."
   b. "As you know, we've been measuring waste and we really see a need to reduce it. I'd like you to be more careful in your use of materials and reduce your waste as much as you possibly can."

   WHY?

4. You've moved on to a new position in which you supervise regional teams of people who repair copy machines. It is important to keep your customers happy by repairing copy machines as quickly as you can. The teams you supervise are organized to cover different counties. Although within each team different people are assigned to cover different customers (e.g., Sam is assigned to fix machines at State University), if one person gets overwhelmed, it is important for them to be able to call someone else in to help them out.

   If you would like to motivate your employees to get the repairs done more quickly, it would be a good idea to

    a. have employees compete against others on their team to see who can repair the most copiers each month. Winners will receive bonuses.

    b. reward <u>teams</u> with bonus money if they can achieve goals for quickly repairing the copiers in their region.

    WHY?

5. You've gone on to become a district manager for a grocery store chain. You have set performance goals so that your grocery store checkout clerks will scan items at a faster rate. **To ensure that the goals are met**, you should

    a. program the computer so that store managers get a weekly printout showing each employee's average "scan rate" (number of items scanned per hour). They can then share this information with employees if the employees want to know how they are doing.

    b. program the computer to determine each employee's average scan rate over the course of a year and have managers share this information with the employee at their annual performance appraisal.

    c. program the computer so that each cashier's register screen displays their current hourly scan rate.

    WHY? (Again, think hard!)

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