



BEST PRACTICES

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Measure for success

We all want to get the best from our teams. Certainly, our employees want to give their best. But how do we inspire great performance and motivate for continued success?

Thomas Edison said genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. In trying to improve performance, there is one tried-and-true path to success: Measure and keep score. People respond when they have measurable goals. It starts early in life when

they get their first report cards. They thrive on positive recognition from their parents and teachers when they do well.

The same is true of employees. If you give them a way to measure their performance, they will work hard to hit their targets. Not all people ultimately meet their goals. But this helps you, as a manager, identify those who need extra training or support, or who may be in the wrong position.

When identifying measurable goals, consider some of the common targets used in the landscape industry to improve profits and drive growth:

➤ **Hours-to-budget:** This can be used to give crew lead-

ers time management objectives, or hours spent on each job. Most companies develop budgeted hours from their estimates of how long the job will take.

One of the best ways to use this measure is to post the hours and efficiency rankings of each crew at a central location where crew leaders regularly meet. Posting can bring out the competitive instinct

of the crew and encourage goal-driven behavior. It motivates the weaker members of the team.

➤ **Ratio of enhancement sales to contract sales:** This ratio is used by many companies to give account managers sales targets for enhancement services. You can look at your historical records to see what that ratio has been. It varies widely in the industry because of variances in what companies classify as “enhancements.” For example, some consider enhancements to be improvements to the landscape while others consider any extra billing, such as mulch, an enhancement.

Because of this inconsistency, some companies sell 25% enhancements as a percent of the contract price, while others might sell as much as 100%. Either way it gives tangible targets to each account manager — and helps improve your enhancement sales. Again, another posting opportunity: Track the ongoing effort, publish the results and unleash the competitive juices.

Enhancement opportunities can vary widely. Some types of clients tend to spend more, so the goals should be developed with your market and your book of business in mind.

➤ **Hours billed as a ratio of hours worked for irrigation technicians:** This has been a good tool to make sure that everything gets billed. Many companies have trouble with small jobs falling through the cracks and not getting billed. Try to measure and score your technicians on this, and billing will most likely go up.

Goals for new contract sales

The most successful salespeople are goal-driven. They are also competitive. Tracking their new business is an obvious first step, but don't stop there. Keep score on the number of proposals generated and dollar volume of each. Track and post. Measure activity: How many sales leads actually make it to the finish line and are closed?

By using multiple measures, you can encourage your salespeople to generate the right amount of activity and hit their goals every step of the way.

SUCCESS HAS ITS REWARDS

Essential to implementing measurable goals is identifying what the rewards are for meeting defined targets. Compensation is always effective, but so, too, are public recognition and the high-five of a job well done.

Keep in mind, though, that a solely reward-driven culture can become counter-productive. If the rewards are too great, it will eventually drive the behavior to become negative. For instance, there have been situations where so much focus is placed on performing the job quickly that quality suffers. Or an account manager tries to sell so many enhancements to meet goals, that customers feel they are being nicked and dimed.

Instead, inspire to perspire. You can never say “thank you” enough. Give lots of recognition and set consistent, measurable goals with realistic rewards, and you'll find a high-performing team willing to give you their best.

