
Managing with Goals

Becoming a more effective manager through better goal-setting practices



The Difference Between Good and Great Managers

Regardless of industry or function, managers are key influencers of employee productivity and engagement. Studies have shown that manager effectiveness accounts for more than 70% of variance in employee engagement scores across business units.¹ So what qualities and talents make up a top-notch manager?

Truly great managers are rare, but their main value centers around understanding company vision and goals, and then translating that to their team. According to Gallup², great managers will:

- **Make data-driven decisions** that drive results
- **Motivate** employees by connecting short-term team goals to big picture company objectives
- **Foster transparency** around goals and metrics to drive accountability and open dialogue
- **Build relationships** and create a culture of trust

The best managers help their people accomplish key team and company goals — and by enabling them to do good work, they set them up to achieve their personal and professional goals as well.



“If we win the hearts and minds of employees, we’re going to have better business success.”

Mary Barra, CEO, GMC

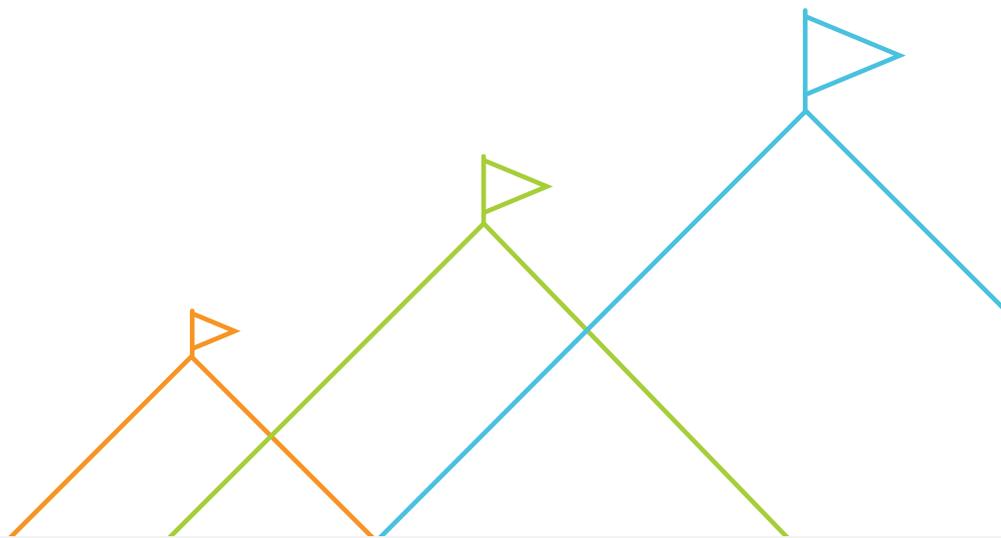
¹ Gallup Business Journal. “Managers Account for 70% of Variance in Employee Engagement,” April 21, 2015.

² Gallup Business Journal. “Why Great Managers are So Rare,” March 25, 2014.

Why Goals Matter

Great managers identify a clear set of goals, then ensure their team is focused on the right activities to accomplish those goals. Goals provide direction — but it doesn't stop there.

Setting effective goals is an important first step, but measuring, monitoring and managing those goals are equally as important. Managers should take an always-on approach to monitoring employees' progress against goals, so that they can proactively offer coaching and course-correct when necessary, ideally before an employee has moved too far off the mark.



“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.”

Jack Welch, former GE chairman and CEO

Goal Strategies of Great Managers

Great managers coach and engage their employees in goal-setting best practices. The chart below shows how the best managers use goals to build top-performing teams.

Approach to...	Good Managers	Great Managers
GOAL DEVELOPMENT	Ask employees to set S.M.A.R.T. goals	Ask employees to set 4–6 aspirational goals based on Goal Science™ thinking and the S.M.A.R.T. goal framework
CADENCE	Annually	Quarterly
VISIBILITY	Share goals with the immediate team by capturing them in spreadsheets or presentations	Share goals with everyone in the company in an open, easy-to-use system
COLLABORATION & ALIGNMENT	Hope goals are aligned with other teams and that employees know to collaborate	Ensure around 50% cross-functional alignment of shared goals
FEEDBACK	Review goals annually	Check in weekly to review goal progress
COACHING	Reactively provide input, typically privately	Proactively provide public encouragement on progress; privately discuss obstacles and sensitive issues
REPORTING	Annually to senior leadership	In real time as needed; weekly to team; monthly and quarterly to senior leadership
ASSESSMENT/ SCORING & RETROSPECTING	Annually and in conjunction with compensation discussion	Quarterly, during planning and not in conjunction with any compensation or professional development discussion

GOAL DEVELOPMENT

Understanding the S.M.A.R.T. approach to goal setting is a great place to start — good managers help employees set goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused and time-bound.

Great managers rely on Goal Science™ principles to help employees achieve goals by improving the way they set and pursue them. Goal Science enhances S.M.A.R.T. with the following five key pillars:



Connected

Vertical/horizontal alignment and clarity



Supported

Working transparently with praise and recognition



Progress-Based

Frequent, measurable feedback and frequent wins



Adaptable

Flexibility to respond to changing goals and business needs



Aspirational

Greater achievement and encourage excellence

Because goals focus work, great managers also ask employees to consider and pursue only the 4–6 most important goals during any given quarter.

The most critical part of goal development is requiring employees to clearly state their goals and the specific actions they plan to take to achieve them. Encouraging your employees to publish goals in a centralized, open forum like BetterWorks can prevent goals from being forgotten on the shelf.

Research has shown that when people are required to write down goals and share weekly updates on their progress, they're more than twice as likely to complete those goals.³ This effect multiplied throughout an organization can have huge implications on goal achievement and productivity.

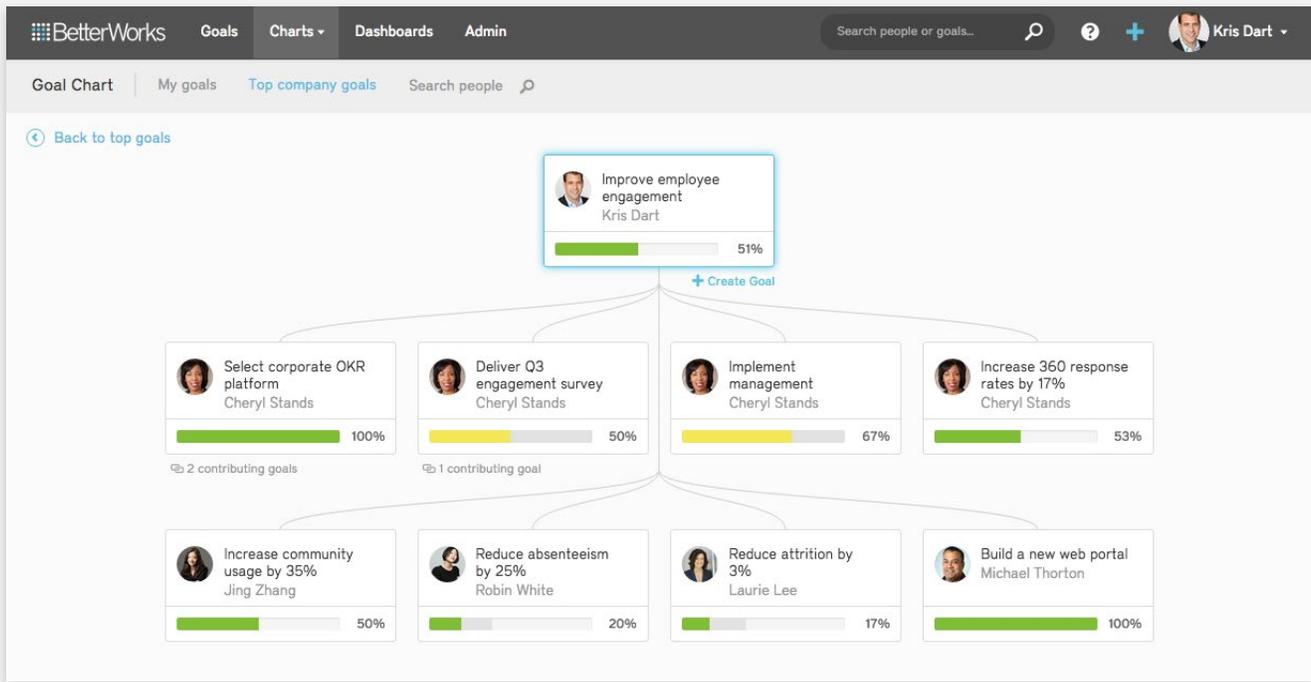
³ Dominican University of California, Goals Research, Dr. Gail Matthews, 2007.

GOAL SETTING CADENCE

The days of “setting and forgetting” goals every 6-12 months are over. Studies have shown that organizations with employees that engage with goals on at least a quarterly basis are 3.5 times more likely to be top performers.⁴ Senior leaders may alter company goals as often as managers change their team’s goals, so your organization can get ahead by creating a culture of openness around goals and properly communicating changing priorities.

GOAL VISIBILITY

Good managers will update their team on progress against goals on a weekly or monthly basis; however, great managers will make sure those goals are the basis for everything their team does by making progress clear at all times. When everyone’s goals are visible across an organization, you’re much more likely to avoid the pitfalls of siloing and duplicated efforts. In order to do this effectively, cross-functional teams should all be capturing progress in the same place. Spreadsheets can get messy fast, while a goal setting and management software like BetterWorks makes goals clear and keeps them organized.



⁴ Bersin by Deloitte. “The Gift of Clarity,” December 18, 2014.

Great managers also know that when goals are published for all to see, people are much more likely to hold themselves accountable. Employees are also better able to support team members and cross-functional partners when they know what they're working on. Whether it's collaborating more closely or simply recognizing a colleague's achievements, people will find the goals process much more engaging when it's open and transparent.

COLLABORATION & ALIGNMENT

Many managers struggle with cross-functional misalignment and a lack of insight into what other teams are working on. Instead of relying on dotted line connections across teams, managers should ensure partners are aligned and roles are clear. Because this has implications for other teams, there should be a centralized view for both teams. A best practice for goal alignment is about 50% — half of a team's goals should be directly aligned to other teams' goals to ensure maximum collaboration.

The screenshot displays the BetterWorks interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'Goals', 'Charts', and 'Dashboards', along with a search bar and user profile for 'Gina Rogers'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column, titled 'People in filter' and 'Sorted by Progress', lists several goals for Gina Rogers with progress bars: 'campaign creative' (100%), 'Support CS and other teams on design projects' (100%), 'Do more exploration on the concept and possible metaphors' (100%), 'Work through my backlog' (92%), and 'Plan and execute monthly refreshes for current paid ad campaigns' (86%). The right column provides a detailed view of the selected goal: 'Plan and execute monthly refreshes for current paid ad campaigns'. It shows the goal owner 'Gina Rogers' with an 86% progress bar, last updated 21 days ago, and a due date of 9/30/2015. Below the goal description, there is a 'Milestones' section listing three contributing tasks: 'Have 6 new display ads per size for AdRoll' (93% progress, 14/15 display ads), 'Add 2 new or reworded tweets to paid campaigns per week (50 ads total)' (80% progress, 40/50 Twitter ads), and 'Test 4 PPC ads in Adwords per month' (83% progress, 10/12 PPC ads). A '+ Add a contributing milestone' button is located at the bottom of the milestones list.

FEEDBACK & COACHING

A great manager doesn't wait until an annual performance review or quarterly meeting to provide feedback to employees. Employees crave ongoing conversations about how they're performing, and it's up to the manager to provide feedback around their work while it's still fresh. At the very least, managers and employees should be having conversations on a weekly basis about how they're executing against goals.

That's where monitoring goal progress comes in. With the right data managers can understand how their employees are spending their time, and pinpoint which activities lead to the biggest impact. Goal management software is instrumental in connecting your systems of record to create a holistic picture of how employees are working. With that information, managers can coach employees to maximize their time and deliver the most value for their business.

BetterWorks Goals Charts Dashboards Admin Search people or goals... Kris Dart

Reduce attrition by 3%

Laurie Lee

50%

Current Value: 1.5% Target Value: 3% Due Date: 12/31/2015

Last checked in 5 days ago
Kris Dart

Milestones

Reduce attrition by 3% Laurie Lee 50% 1.5 / 3%

+ Add a contributing milestone

Timeline

Post a comment or @mention a colleague...

Comment

Stats

19 3 1

Alignment

View in Charts

- Improve employee engagement Kris Dart 62%
- Reduce attrition by 3% Laurie Lee 50%

REPORTING

If you're a senior leader, you're likely familiar with the process of hunting down information from your reports. This is a time consuming process for you and your reports, who have to compile the right information from their team and various data sources.

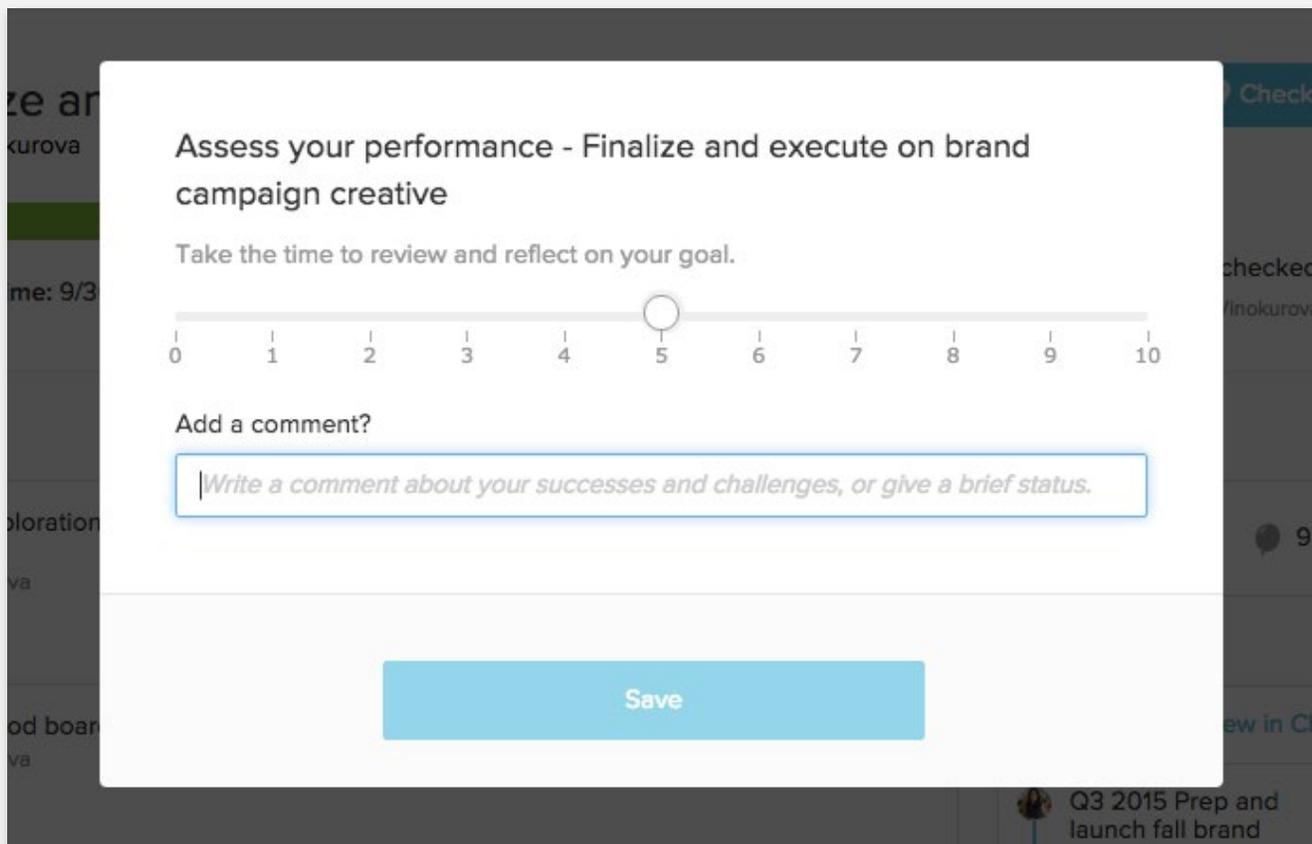
When managers hold people accountable at all times for updating progress on goals, that information is already readily available. BetterWorks keeps key information visible at all times so you can avoid tracking down your employees for updates.



ASSESSMENT & SCORING

Traditionally, goals have been evaluated and scored as part of a performance review process, usually once or twice a year. Great managers understand that reflecting on goals on a more frequent cadence — quarterly or monthly — helps employees understand how their contributions are moving the needle. This also provides an opportunity to evaluate what goals worked well and what priorities have changed, so that employees can continue to align themselves with larger organizational goals even as they're adjusted.

It can be helpful for employees to take time to reflect and give their goal achievement a simple score, but managers should avoid creating a heavy, complicated scoring process.



The screenshot shows a performance assessment modal window. The title is "Assess your performance - Finalize and execute on brand campaign creative". Below the title is the instruction "Take the time to review and reflect on your goal." A horizontal progress bar with a scale from 0 to 10 is shown, with a white circle marker positioned at the number 5. Below the progress bar is the prompt "Add a comment?" followed by a text input field containing the placeholder text "Write a comment about your successes and challenges, or give a brief status." At the bottom of the modal is a blue "Save" button. The background of the application is dimmed, showing a sidebar with navigation items and a main content area with a header "Q3 2015 Prep and launch fall brand".

Begin Your Journey to Become a Great Manager

Great managers do more than educate their direct reports about why they should develop goals; they train them to create effective goals, adapt them based on changing resources and market conditions, and accurately assess their progress at least quarterly. Great managers ensure every employee's goals are open and visible to their peers. Most important, they encourage alignment and collaboration between teams and provide the necessary feedback to overcome obstacles to achievement.

The right enterprise goal setting and management software can help you transition from a good manager to a great one. Learn how at www.BetterWorks.com.

About BetterWorks

BetterWorks enterprise software provides the easiest way to set and manage goals. Rooted in Objectives and Key Results (OKRs), it uses Goal Science™ insights to help high-performing companies get aligned, stay focused on the work that matters and ultimately become more successful. The experienced team comes from innovative companies like Apple, Box, Cisco, Palantir, Salesforce and Yammer. Headquartered in Palo Alto with an office in New York City, BetterWorks is backed by Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers and Formation 8. Board members and advisors include thought leaders John Doerr, Laszlo Bock, Jason Lemkin, Aaron Levie and Bing Gordon.

For more information visit www.BetterWorks.com

