

Tiny Goals for Maximum Results Presentation Slide Notes

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Slide 1	Tiny Goals for Maximum Results	<p>This presentation summarizes some of the articles on the CxO-Atlas.com website. A list of those articles is included at the end of the presentation. The subtitle of this presentation may seem to be an overstatement or even an oxymoron. However, if you follow the simple five-step plan outlined in this presentation, I believe you can indeed change the future of your company and perhaps your life!</p> <p>The plan is simple; it only requires you to take action on things that you already know consciously.</p> <p>The other subtitle, “Negative Thinking to Avoid Negative Results, is a challenge to the typical optimistic outlook of entrepreneurs. It is built on the 5-step plan.</p>
Slide 2	Some Numbers...	<p>At one time, I was a very heavy smoker – three packs a day. I enjoyed every one. One Saturday morning, while smoking and reading the newspaper, my five-year-old son, who was watching a Fat Albert cartoon show, came up to me and asked when I was going to quit smoking. His question troubled me; I responded, “Soon.” He walked away, but then came back a few moments later and tore the newspaper out of my hand and said, “That’s not a good answer.” I swore at him and told him to leave me alone! Not a great parenting moment for me!</p> <p>The following Thursday, while driving, I thought of what he said, and quit smoking. I knew that I couldn’t do it for a day, week, month, year, or the rest of my life, but I knew I could do it for five minutes. I set the stopwatch on my wristwatch—the urgency passed for a while. For the next several days, every time I got the urge, I set my stopwatch. The victories kept piling up.</p> <p>To this day, I sometimes get the urge to smoke. I quickly think back to my son’s comment and my perfect track record. I now realize that I quit forever – cigarettes, cigars, a pipe, and whatever else!</p>
Slide 3	My Observations	<p>In 1990, I left Motorola to become a founder of a Motorola-IBM joint venture, leaving the corporate world behind. I quickly noticed the differences between my new environment and my “mahogany row” past life. I started writing down the differences. Some were relatively trivial while others were, I believe, profound. Over the years, that list grew to be 982 items!</p> <p>As an example, People in big companies focus on not losing, while those in startups focus on winning.”</p> <p>In 2004, I started writing a book to capture my observations. I wrote four chapters that totaled 94 pages. While proofreading them, I got bored and quickly realized that no one was going to read 20-plus-page chapters. I stopped writing.</p> <p>In 2015, after writing 62 short, two-minute video scripts for a company I was working with, I decided to take the same approach with my giant list of observations. So, I decided to write short, standalone articles that cover only a single narrow subject. Further, the articles were written so that they could be read in any order – no need to start at the beginning of a Volume, Chapter, or Section.</p>

		Over the years, I have spend well over 6,000 hours creating the articles, tools, and presentations.
Slide 4	Mini Goal Metrics	This chart maps my mini goals and the definitional characteristics previously listed. Note that an “outsider” could easily understand the factors, the criteria, and the results. Note that I had long-term goals but focused only on the short-term, immediate goals. The victories piled up!
Slide 5	Why does it work?	<p>There is an underlying theory of why short-term goals work. It was developed by Clark Hull many years ago. We see the results all the time: The infamous two-minute drill in football, the last 100-yard sprint of a marathon runner, or the all-night push to finish a task are a few examples. We all like to reward ourselves – the more rewards, the better, and the size does not matter!</p> <p>Incidentally, this same observation works with any activity; do not focus on how much time or money was spent in the past. What is gone is gone. Focus on how much effort will be required to finish the activity and objectively ask yourself if the goal is still worth pursuing. If not, forget about the past investment and move on. Be sure to understand why you didn’t meet the goal. We will talk about that subject later.</p>
Slide 6	Tiny Goals for Maximum Results	<p>Several years ago, the newly appointed Program Manager of the Motorola-sponsored Iridium low Earth orbit space communications system commented that “yearly slips happen one day at a time.” By embracing the suggested five-step process, yearly goals can be met one day at a time.</p> <p>I previously mentioned that there is only one sign on my desk: “If time is not working for you, it is working against you.” If I were to add another sign, it would be: “There is never a good time to do anything, so you might as well do it now.”</p> <p>You can change tomorrow’s outcomes today.</p>
Slide 7	What does this have to do with you?	<p>It is hard to develop a sense of urgency when goals are a long way away. “There is always tomorrow” seems to sneak into our thought process. Many of us plan to lose weight and even make New Year’s Resolutions to do it – promising ourselves that we will start after the holidays, but what happens?</p> <p>We often work incredibly hard on tactical items and then, much to our dismay, find that we have missed our important long-term goals. Remember Henry Kaiser’s quotes. We often go home without accomplishing many of the daily goals that we planned to – we’ll do them tomorrow!</p>
Slide 8	“Wildly Important Goal”	<p>From the list of potential goals, identify one and only one top priority goal. This will be very difficult, but it is critical to your success. It may be very different than your previous goal. This concept has become widely popular through the business process known as “The 4 Disciplines of Execution.”</p> <p>The 4 Disciplines are 1) Create One Goal, 2) Develop and Act of Identified Metrics, 3) Share the Metrics and Results, and 4) Regularly Review Performance.</p> <p>Studies have shown that if an organization has multiple goals, the chances of reaching those goals drop dramatically with the number of goals. Even three goals are two too many!</p>

		My approach takes the 4 Disciplines approach a bit further by sharpening the focus on what might get in the way of meeting the small, incremental goals that could impact the WIG.
Slide 9	Goal Examples	Each company could have multiple goals. It is, however, difficult to pick only one. Covey, through research in developing the 4 Disciplines approach, found that multiple goals quickly lead to missing all of them.
Slide 10	Increased Revenue Goal Example	<p>Clearly, revenue is a wonder drug – it fixes almost everything. Companies cannot save their way to long-term profitability. Revenue is key. For companies that are past the development stage, it is probably the most common goal. However, stating a numerical revenue goal is not enough. It is equally important to specify the type of revenue desired. It is tricky to select multiple revenue types. Invariably, compromises will be required.</p> <p>Further complicating the situation is the fact that different elements within the company will have different views on the importance of each.</p>
Slide 11	Goal Example	<p>It sounds basic, but gaining agreement on the definition of a sale is essential, There are specific GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) that vary based on the market and type of revenue. Each company needs to define the term “sale” to meet its business objectives. As an example, a cash-strapped startup may focus on cash collections as the primary sales “driver.”</p> <p>Equally important, the type of sale must be clearly understood. I use the term “Sales Event” to help avoid confusion. I define it as “Receiving a Shippable Order from a customer.” “Shippable can apply to a product or the delivery of a service.</p>
Slide 12	Event Variances	<p>This chart is an example of how different sales events can have on the company. The sales funnel flow-through rate can vary significantly. The types of sales events will also vary considerably based on the company’s offering history, installed base, market size, and many other factors.</p> <p>It should be obvious that simply picking a gross revenue number without careful consideration of the types of sales events required most often leads to disappointment.</p>
Slide 13	Marketing & Sales Timing Implications	The implications of different types of sales events impact virtually all other elements within the company. The most obvious and the most important is the impact on operating cash. Securing a large number of new trial accounts may seem very satisfying to the sales organization, but if the company runs out of money before customers begin to pay, everyone loses!
Slide 14	Who Can Help?	Most companies hold the sales organization accountable for their revenue goal. However, virtually every element within the company plays a vital role. Missing product features, poor quality, manufacturing delays, poor customer service, to name a few, can have immediate revenue impacts far beyond the control of the sales organization.
Slide 15	Mini Goals	The key to success is defining mini goals that share a common set of characteristics that can be universally applied. With this approach, variances or deviations will quickly become apparent, allowing corrective action before THE goal is placed in jeopardy.

Slide 16	Create Short-Term Goals	The concept of “SMART” goals is well-documented and widely used by many companies. However, without Personal Public Accountability, goals are seldom met. Aside from each sales rep's quota performance and the CEO’s responsibility for the company’s overall performance, most companies do not hold individuals responsible for meeting mini goals or the company’s overall success.
Slide 17	Set Definitive Goals	<p>A Five-Step method helps create accountability that can be shared throughout any organization.</p> <p>This is the First Step in the process. Most of us develop a clear mental picture of our long-term goals. Some of us even write them down and share them with others! But how often do we review them —often when it is too late to make meaningful adjustments?</p> <p>There is a simple exercise that can take our well-meaning, perhaps general or abstract, goals and bring a sense of “do-able reality” to them. All that has to be done is to answer the simple question listed. A different time frame can be used if desired.</p>
Slide 18	Capture Definitive Goals	<p>The process is simple. The only tricky part is keeping it simple! There is an almost overwhelming desire to discuss and debate each other’s statements and jump to solution discussions. Everyone needs to help enforce the discipline of capturing items as they are stated, ideally in a few words.</p> <p>It is interesting to note the different perspectives that individuals offer as goals. Most reflect their work assignments, departments, or their silos.</p>
Slide 19	Why <u>doesn’t</u> it work?	It is simple. Bad things happen. What better example is the COVID-19 pandemic? Clearly, unforeseen events can occur. The concept of the Black Swan is the classic example. A more graphic and gruesome example is a landmine. Although one could argue that landmines do not have to be unforeseen. It could have been detected beforehand. In fact, most business bumps in the road are predictable. Someone always knows. We often see the opposite of this fact which surfaces with the “I told you so” comment around the water cooler or in a bar after work.
Slide 20	React or Anticipate	<p>The difference is simple and always obvious in hindsight. Measuring results after the fact requires us to react. Anticipating results allows us to change the future! Think of driving and what happens when you don’t anticipate. You have to slam on the brakes or swerve. If you anticipate, you can gradually slow down or take an alternate path.</p> <p>The 4Ds model suggests that you measure and then take action. There is a better way.</p>
Slide 21	Play “What IF...”	This notion is where I differ from the 4 Disciplines of Execution. Instead of focusing on the progress toward goals, I suggest that the organization focus on what could go wrong and take action before it occurs. In all probability, you or someone else knows. Your job is to ask them -- now!
Slide 22	Step Two	This step is the key to the process's effectiveness and is very hard! This is especially true for entrepreneurs and small startups. Everyone is focused on the vision and the bright and rosy future. Expressing negative views is frowned upon.

		Anyone who does so is viewed as “not being a team player.” If participants feel intimidated, this part of the process quickly becomes ineffective.
Slide 23	Some Impediment Examples...	Of course, this list just scratches the surface of the impediments that could occur. The unknown impediment is a Black Swan event. By definition, they cannot be predicted. Think about the impact of 9/11 on us. For example, I worked with a young startup in Fort Lee, New Jersey. Their office was almost in the shadow of the World Trade Center across the river. They planned to announce their first product on 9/11! COVID-19 is today’s example.
Slide 24	Step Three	<p>Identifying problem indicators is critical. Everyone must consider the “thunder in the distance” signs or trends that could lead to the identified impediment — clearly, the earlier the warning, the better. Think of the difference that thunder in the distance means to a boater on the lake or a person sitting comfortably at home.</p> <p>Be careful, as some participants may accuse well-meaning individuals who raise potential issues of unnecessarily crying wolf. Common examples are the pushback that a development manager or a sales manager gives to individuals who point out potential missed commitments. The line managers are likely to respond that they can make up for the deficiencies “shortly.” Do not argue; instead, establish milestones and trigger points.</p>
Slide 25	Step Four	<p>In most cases, remedial actions can be transformed into preventive measures taken before the issue arises. We have all experienced the efforts that become possible after an occurrence that were deemed impossible before the failure.</p> <p>Eliyahu Goldratt, in his definitive works “Theory of Constraints” and “The Critical Chain,” put forth the notion of focusing on a single limiting factor, even at the expense of sub-optimizing other activities. This approach often meets resistance because others want to optimize their individual silo activities, even if it is not the best overall approach for the organization. His graphic example is a chain. It doesn’t matter how strong all of the other links are, the only thing that matters is the weakest link. Fix that weakest link and the rest will benefit in accomplishing the fundamental objective. After the first weakest link is addressed, move on to the next weakest link, and repeat the process. Make this activity a normal part of running the business.</p>
Slide 26	Step Five	<p>The first four steps involve a group. However, each impediment should have a specific owner. That person does not necessarily have to be the “do-er.” They need only to be the “watcher” and the “alarmer” of the likelihood of an impediment’s occurrence.</p> <p>It should be made clear to everyone that one person is accountable for tracking the impediment or its indicators. Let them determine what they will do and how they will do it. Give them the authority along with the responsibility.</p>
Slide 27	What makes this process NOT work?	The five-step process is remarkably easy to implement but can quickly be derailed by conscious or unconscious actions of almost anyone involved. The most critical element is the CEO's involvement and total support. They must set the standard for everyone else to follow.

Slide 28	Number One Reason	One reason for the failure of the 5-step process stands out from all the rest. It is based on misguided best intentions.
Slide 29	Silo Goals	<p>Typically, after THE goal is set, the natural next step is for everyone within their workgroups to determine what they need to do to support THE goal. All intentions are good. Individual workgroups cannot help but morph into silos that focus on their responsibilities and metrics. The “Silo Mentality” is not restricted to large organizations. A silo can consist of one person. It could be the person responsible for marketing, sales, customer service, accounting, or any other business function.</p> <p>The more definitive each person’s metrics are regarding their functional responsibility, the thicker the walls of their silos become. “Big hat thinking” gives way into wearing protective helmets.</p>
Slide 30	“Critical Chain [★] ”	As previously mentioned, think of all elements within the company as forming a chain. The strength of each “link” is the natural primary goal of each link’s membership.
Slide 31	Company-Wide Focus	<p>However, the strength of the chain is defined by its weakest link. The superior strength of all the other links does not matter! The company as a whole must focus on the weakest link, even if it means weakening the others! Silo goals and, most importantly, the accountability for meeting them must be adjusted to accommodate the change in focus.</p> <p>Individuals may agree to the concept until they are asked to “do their part to help out!” “Cost Accountant Thinking” in which every subsystem is optimized, must be set aside. How cares if a company has a world-class development or marketing organization if the company goes out of business?</p> <p>To implement this approach, the CEO must show their unwavering commitment.</p>
Slide 32	An Example	<p>This is an example from earlier in my career. When my SQA team told me about the 8-week schedule, I knew I had to take action. Our prospects, partners, and investors were well aware of our commitment to the product release. Eight weeks was unacceptable.</p> <p>So, working only with the SQA team, we identified resources across the company who could help. I then brought the managers of each department together, and TOLD them what we were going to do. After the shock wore off, they all got behind the plan (probably out of fear of retribution). We informed the entire company. It worked!</p>
Slide 33	Small Companies/Single Entrepreneurs	<p>To this point, the process seems to apply to larger companies or startups with full teams. The same process can also apply to single entrepreneurs or small startups with a few modifications. For these companies, organizational structures and their silos have not appeared. Independent of structure, the need to establish mini-goals and consider impediments remains important.</p> <p>An all-too-common problem is the founder being totally focused on finishing the development of their near-perfect product or service offering. Their heads-down view neglects all other aspects of the business. The common rationalization is that “I will get to the other stuff” later. Unfortunately, that “other stuff” can be even more time-consuming than developing the product itself. Further,</p>

		<p>implementing many of those tasks may require fundamental changes to the product, negating some of the original development work.</p> <p>To address this issue, a series of mini-goals, all aimed at finding prospects, closing sales, delivering the solution, and supporting the customer, should be created. Some of these goals will depend on others, while some may be able to be addressed in parallel.</p>
Slide 34	Process Summary	<p>Here are the five steps in one easy-to-understand chart. When viewed together, it becomes clear that the process is obvious! However, in the day-to-day tactical juggling of tasks, it is easy to lose sight of the longer-term goals and their potential impediments.</p> <p>Involving as many people as possible is critical. Mentors, consultants, and Board Members can offer insight based on their experience. Include them if possible. This common approach and continual communications can make this process become part of the organization's culture. It will result in planned responses instead of unplanned knee-jerk reactions.</p> <p>The process acknowledges the notion that there are very few surprises; someone knew. All we have to do is provide a forum in which others can share their knowledge, insights, and feelings.</p>
Slide 35	Assessing Risk	<p>The entire notion of considering potential impediments is based on a risk assessment. The process is remarkably simple: Just ask three questions sequentially. Reserve all comments and judgment. Take the inputs as well-meaning concerns that may or may not be valid. When framed as suggested, the tendency to frown upon "negative thinkers" will diminish, and those individuals are likely to step forward with comments that can help the company address potential stumbling points.</p> <p>Every day you apply this process without thinking when you are driving a car. By watching the car ahead of your's brake lights, you start the process. In high-speed or congested traffic, it is better to look ahead at multiple cars to anticipate what could happen, its impacts, and what you can do now to prepare for an issue if it occurs.</p>
Slide 36	Observations on Risk	<p>For the entrepreneur, it is usually uncomfortable to think about what could go wrong and to focus only on how things will surely go right. Thinking about risk in the terms shown can help to put it into proper perspective.</p>
Slide 37	Repeat the Process	<p>Although I will describe a tool to use to document this process, it can be done with almost anything, from sticky notes and easel sheets to someone acting as a scribe or software tools.</p>
Slide 38	Step Six	<p>It is all about assessing the likelihood of an event happening and its impact on the business if it occurs. It is as simple as that. I use a basic 5-point weighting system to add a level of objectivity to the process and to allow comparison of very different factors.</p> <p>This process involves examining the previously developed list of potential impediments and assigning two numerical values to each. Using a whole-number grading system, as shown, provides a method for prioritizing the impediments. Whole number granularity is all that is required. When establishing the various</p>

		<p>grades, expect differences of opinion. In the scheme of things, do not argue over a one-point difference. However, if there is a significant difference, say a 1 and a 4, probe to understand why both grades are being proposed. It could be that some individuals have better insight than others or some have historical biases. In any case, avoid compromise grades; obtain agreement.</p> <p>Multiplying the Likelihood and Impact grades together will provide a rank order of impediments. The accountability person assigned to each impediment should be responsible for their item in this exercise. Their goal should be, by working with others, to drive both factors to the lowest possible grades.</p>
Slide 39	Investigation Rank Order	<p>The result is a listing that can be sorted by highest total to the lowest total. Every organization has limited resources. It is highly unlikely that any company could address every possible risk. Instead, focusing on the potentially fatal issues with the highest likelihood makes sense.</p> <p>Prioritizing the Unknown Likelihoods and Impacts is also important to avoid potentially nasty surprises. In these cases, replacing the “unknowns” with factual data is critical and then reprioritizing the list accordingly.</p> <p>The list cannot be used solely as the factor in determining the application of resources. The time at which an impediment can occur and the time required to address it should also be considered.</p>
Slide 40	More Considerations	<p>It can be useful to include other factors for each identified risk. This list was created for a company that I was running. Other items or other considerations may be important to other organizations.</p>
Slide 41	A Tool Example	<p>This chart shows a snapshot of a tool that is available on the CxO-Atlas website. It is a simple Excel™ workbook. Registered site users can download it, along with the associated user guide.</p> <p>Several years ago, I became involved in a startup that three highly respected venture capital firms had recently funded. I knew the space fairly well and once involved after the investment was made, conducted a risk analysis. I identified 17 issues that could negatively impact the company. Within a few months, 13 negative impacts occurred; 2 turned out to be non-issues, and the remaining 2 were unknown. The investors correctly pulled the plug. It turned out to be the right thing to do, although it was difficult for the founders to accept when the decision was made.</p>
Slide 42	Plan for the Unplanned	<p>Finally, here is the Five-Step Process with the Risk Assessment added! It is based on anticipating bad things and then taking action to avoid them. This requires a very different mindset than we are accustomed to, but it can save a tremendous amount of heartache and help us to avoid failure. We do it all the time as the driving example showed. All that we have to do is apply the same mental process to our business planning.</p> <p>The optional Sixth Step can help quantify and prioritize these activities.</p>
Slide 43	CxO-Atlas Website Article Organization	<p>The CxO-Atlas website content is free to browse and read each Article’s Abstract. Members can browse, read, and download any articles, tools, or presentations on the site. Members can also interact with a private AI chatbot by asking questions</p>

		and responding to the answers. The chatbot's responses are based on the site's uploaded content.
Slide 44	Relevant CxO-Atlas Website Articles	Many articles on the CxO-Atlas website discuss the material covered in this presentation. This is a list of some of them.
Slide 45	Finding Articles	<p>There are multiple ways to find articles on the site.</p> <p>From the Article Search Option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the article number or title. • Enter a few keywords to get a list of articles that meet the keyword criteria. <p>From the Volumes Option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select the appropriate volume based on the brief description. In this case, Volume 8, Tools and Presentations, and then scroll through the table display, reviewing the article titles and quick summaries. <p>From the Home Page:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The six newest published articles as well as the six most viewed articles, are listed. Clicking on any of them will provide direct access to the article.
Slide 46	Final Comment	<p>Listen to others but, at the end of the day, it is your company, do what you think and feel is the best.</p> <p>I have worked with several dozen, perhaps hundreds, of entrepreneurs over the years. Not one of them, including the majority that did not succeed, never said that they did not enjoy the journey.</p>