



# PRACTICE PRODUCTION WHITEPAPER SERIES

By Roger P. Levin, DDS



DENTIST AS CEO SERIES:

- GOAL SETTING —  
A CRITICAL CEO FUNCTION

Levin Group<sup>Inc.</sup>



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# GOAL SETTING—A CRITICAL CEO FUNCTION

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## Introduction

Goal setting is the secret of the most highly successful people in the world. CEOs use goal setting to drive performance and attain success. While vision describes where the implant doctor wants the practice to be in approximately three years, goal setting is the road map to achieving the vision.

**Goal setting motivates individuals to turn aspirations into accomplishments. That's why it's one of the most powerful skills that a CEO can develop.**

How does goal setting work? A goal describes a desired result. Goal setting opens the mind to possibilities. Many people never bother with goal setting because they do not know how to achieve that result. If they did, they would have already achieved it. The concept of "How" scares most people. Because when they do not know how they will accomplish something, they usually won't set goals or even take the first step. CEOs, on the other hand, set goals and then figure out the "How" later.

Once a goal is set, the mind understands that there is a desirable result to be achieved. If the goals are not reviewed regularly, the mind will forget all about them and the likelihood of achievement is extremely small. Conversely, if the goals are reviewed regularly, the mind becomes open to possibilities as to how the goals can be achieved. Whether the individual setting goals hires experts, reads a book, or attends a class or seminar, that person is more open to understanding how a goal can be achieved. To make goal setting work in your practice and in your life, follow these five simple rules:

### 1. Goal setting requires that goals be written.

I believe that implant doctors should have at least 10 goals for each important area of their lives. CEOs will set goals specifically for their companies, as implant doctors need to do for their practices. By setting 10 goals for the practice, implant doctors will cover the most important areas that will propel the practice toward their vision. Keep in mind that a critical function of goal setting is to achieve the vision.

When goals are written down, they are no longer just a vague idea—they become something tangible to be achieved. It is very difficult for CEOs (and that includes implant doctors) to maintain goals in their head. By writing them down, goals can be reviewed weekly to determine if progress is being made.

### 2. Goals must be measurable.

When goals are established, they cannot simply be a generalized wish list. Measurement means that you can evaluate a goal at any point in the future and determine whether progress has been made or the goal has been accomplished. Nothing feels better than checking off an accomplished goal.

Examples of practice goals include:

- Increase implant production by 18%
- Increase implant referrals by 25%
- Increase practice profitability by 22%
- Expand the number of referring doctors by 15%
- Reduce overhead by 3–5%
- Reduce taxes by 4%
- Hire consultants to revise practice systems

These are some of the typical goals that implant clients express to Levin Group consultants. Each one of them is measurable. It will be easy to tell if they have been accomplished or not.

### 3. Goals must have deadlines.

In addition to being written and measurable, goals must have deadlines. No deadline, no goal. Deadlines create commitment. This motivates CEOs to work on solutions for achieving the goal. If you have forever to achieve a goal, there is not much motivation to accomplish the objective because there are always other matters deemed more important.

Conversely, if a goal has a deadline, the implant doctor feels motivated to come up with solutions. That might entail attending a seminar or reading a book. If time goes by and the deadline comes closer and the individual still has no idea how to achieve the goal, the implant doctor may be compelled to find a mentor or hire an expert who can guide the doctor on how to accomplish the goal. Deadlines motivate doctors to achieve the goal by spurring them to discover solutions on how to reach their objective.

### 4. Goals must be read at least weekly.

Based on my own experience as a CEO and meeting and working with other CEOs, I have found that successful CEOs typically review their goals daily. It is one of the first things that they do every morning in planning their day, week, month and year. These individuals use goal setting to focus on activities that will lead to the achievement of those objectives.



If goals are not read at least once a week, it becomes challenging to remember what they are or work on possible solutions. CEOs know that their time should be spent working on activities aligned with the goals they want to achieve. For implant doctors, the situation is different.

Implant doctors go to work every day and spend the bulk of the day acting as producers. When an implant doctor is not with a patient, there is simply no production and no production means no profit. Implant doctors do not necessarily have the option of sitting around all day and working on activities to move toward their goals. This makes the weekly review even more critical because implant doctors need to set aside specific time to focus on how to achieve their practice goals.

I believe that implant doctors have a much more challenging job leading their practices compared to high-level CEOs. Due to the nature of their profession, implant doctors—unlike CEOs—spend the bulk of their day “on the front line” providing services to consumers (i.e., patients). Doctors actually have to achieve their goals and move toward their vision in about two percent of their overall time.

The only silver lining is that most implant doctors work less than 40 hours a week. By putting a small amount of additional time into the strategy, vision and goal achievement, implant doctors can generate a huge return on investment in terms of financial rewards and professional satisfaction.

### 5. Surround yourself with experts.

Implant doctors as CEOs need to surround themselves with experts. All highly successful people recognize early that there is a point where they cannot do it all, should not try to do it all, and if they do it all, they will reach an absolute plateau and never move past it. Bill Gates didn't build Microsoft by doing everything himself. Implant doctors wait far too long to bring experts into their lives. Perhaps it is because as clinicians we are trained as do-it-yourself professionals. Perhaps it is because of our personalities that we like to micromanage every aspect of our practices. Perhaps it is ego, as it is for many CEOs that believe we can do it better than everyone else. Whatever the reason, it is an extremely limiting factor.

Here are the questions that every implant doctor needs to ask: Where do I want to be? Who can help me get there? Who has done it before? Different levels of expertise can help you achieve more challenging goals in your practice and in your life.

### Conclusion

Goal setting is a critical activity for any CEO. To be effective and motivational, goals must be written down, measured frequently, and deadline-driven. And they must be reviewed at least weekly with the team. Achieving difficult goals is how you lead your practice to greater success. Are you on the path to get there now? Good CEOs use all available assets to reach challenging objectives and build highly successful businesses.



Dr. Roger P. Levin is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Levin Group, Inc., the leading dental practice management and marketing firm in the United States. Levin Group delivers premier comprehensive consulting solutions that result in Total Practice Success™ for dentists and specialists in the U.S. and around the world.

A third-generation dentist, Dr. Levin is one of the profession's most sought-after speakers, bringing his Total Practice Success™ seminars to thousands of dentists, implant doctors and dental professionals each year. Since founding Levin Group in 1985, Dr. Levin has been a pioneer in developing the practice management and marketing systems that lead dentists and specialists toward creating the ideal practice—A Levin Practice™.

Under Dr. Levin's leadership, Levin Group consultants provide clients with strategies that work and with results that last. Dr. Levin serves on the Boards of the Friends of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, the University of Pennsylvania School of Dentistry and the National Museum of Dentistry. In 2004, Dr. Levin was named an Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year in Maryland. He writes for numerous dental publications and has authored more than 50 books on growing successful dental practices.

Since 1985, Dr. Levin and Levin Group have shown thousands of dentists, implant doctors and their teams how to build a Levin Practice™ and continually increase practice production and profit, create a low-stress environment, develop high professional satisfaction and build the pathway to financial independence.

Levin Group is headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland, and has a second location in Phoenix, Arizona. For more information on Levin Group's programs and services, visit [www.levingroupimplant.com](http://www.levingroupimplant.com).