Twitter Thread by Isaac Souweine



Isaac Souweine
@sonofsarah



Giving a talk on goal setting and OKRs this morning @Montrealinc.

Presenting it as a thread here to get more leverage on it and to think out loud. Here goes! ■

1. Goals are strategy in action. Strategy is your plan to win. Goals turn that strategy into measurable tasks that can advance you toward winning.

2. Goals help you win by forcing you to prioritize. There are lots of ways to win. Some are more immediate than others. Goals force you to choose the most important things to do now.

3. Goals help you win by creating alignment. Not everyone has the same idea of how to win. Goals force everyone to agree on a single plan.

4. Goals help you win by creating accountability. There's lots to do in a startup and its easy for things to slip and slide. Goals help enforce clear ownership.

5. Goals help you win by providing a map of your company to investors. Did you achieve what you set out to recently? And what will you do with the money you raise? Goals answer these questions.

6. So goals are good! But how to be good at setting goals? For starters, it's not the system, it's the user. Into OKRs, great. Learned a different approach? That's cool too. The inputs and application are what matter, not the format.

7. What are good inputs? First, they are measurable. You can count them. It is clear and objective when they've been completed. The data to assess performance is readily available.

8. Second, they are the right level of hard. Some goals should be 100% hittable. Others should be stretch. It depends on the context. Whatever the case, know what kind of goal you're setting so you can set expectations appropriately.

9. Third, they are the right length. Some goals last two weeks, some a month, others a quarter, others a year. Each can be useful in the right setting. Be intentional about time frame.

9. Fourth, they have clear owners. Who will deliver this goal? Who will support? Who needs to be involved? Use RASCI or whatever else works, but make sure someone signs up for everything.

10. Fifth, they are at the right level of abstraction. Some goals are for an entire company. Others are for teams or individuals. Know what level you are working at and work to make sure the systems fit together. For group goals, break them down for ownership.

11. If your inputs are good, then you can turn to good application. First, someone needs to be in charge of the system itself. Goal setting and tracking is a little biz ops machine. Someone needs to mind and drive it.

12. The first rule for the goal setting machine is easy accessibility. If data is needed to assess, it should flow. The goals themselves should be easy to reference and repeated regularly.

13. Goal setting also needs its own calendar. When will the goals be set and how long will that take? What are the steps to complete? When will they be assessed and debriefed? How will that inform the next set?

14. Finally, goal setting systems needs to evolve intelligently. Three people in your company? Keep it simple. Raised a round and grew to 10? Maybe need more structure. Even once you pick a method like OKRs, your usage will change over time.

15.If you can embrace good inputs and good application, the system you choose doesn’t matter too much. OKRs are widely used with good reason - simple, scalable, large community. But they are just one method. Pick what works.

16. OK that's a wrap! But one final point. I looked up goal setting quotes to close this thread and it made me realize that in popular culture goal setting is a lot about "motivation" ie pushing yourself to excel.

17. In my view this is not super relevant for startups bc high levels of motivation are a precondition. So I view goals much more as "tools to manage motivation". That said, everyone loves a good motivational poster! So here you go. RIP Sean Connery, one of the greats.



MOTIVATION

There's always a new challenge to keep you motivated. ~ *Sean Connery*

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