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## What Are Your Top Ten Most Crucial Goals

**By Raymond E. Pinard**

When working with clients I am often asked, “where do we start?” Clients, especially new ones, want to start as many projects as possible, leading to project overload. In the end, nothing gets done well, and the management team is overwhelmed with B-level work that does not bring money in the door. Then the owner is upset, and around in a circle we go.

Frequently, clients look for the silver bullet that will be the next big thing to catapult their business to success. After 32 years in the business world, I have seen many breakthroughs, unique value propositions and, with the advent of the Internet, many new ways to conduct business and broaden markets. But I have never seen a silver bullet. The perpetual search for the silver bullet leaves many business owners frustrated.

So, how does a business owner achieve great results in a measured fashion without overburdening his or her team and becoming frustrated when nothing gets finished? The key is in realizing that there is only so much you can do and to set realistic goals.

I begin by asking the client, “out of all these things you want to accomplish, what is going to bring in revenue in the near-term and the long-term, and what will not bring in revenue?” This leaves us with three lists: 1) near-term revenue, 2) long-term revenue, and 3) no revenue but nice to have. Now we are making progress.

After quizzing the owner and team members about the items on these lists, I understand the purpose of the action items and the necessary human and financial resources. Then I retreat to do my thinking.

My goal is to deliver a document to the owner titled *The Top Ten Most Crucial Goals*. Normally these are goals to be achieved over the next twelve months. Some goals can be achieved sooner than that. For instance if one of the goals is to put together an effective Internet commerce campaign, that could be completed in about six months with tune-ups thereafter. Hiring a VP of Sales may take three to four months. Opening new markets or launching new products could take up to twelve months.



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Based on what I learned from the owner and the various team members, plus my knowledge, opinions, and examination of the situation, I present what I view as *The Top Ten Most Crucial Goals*. Along with the list of goals, I note issues that must be considered, research to conduct, teams to form, and the steps to take in order to achieve each goal. The document may be only two to three pages long. Clients don't want phone book sized reports; they want clear, succinct, action steps that will move them towards accomplishing their goals.

In my experience, clients are so happy to have a clear roadmap, they normally make no corrections to my plans. We do revisit the plans weekly, monthly, or quarterly to measure progress, review deadlines, resource needs, etc. And we make adjustments as we go.

What are *The Top Ten Most Crucial Goals* for you and your company this year?

If you need clarity around this issue, not sure where to start, or just need to talk about it, call or write. I'd be happy to discuss your situation.

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