



WHO'S CALLING YOUR SHOTS?

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*This is the first of two articles – the second, titled ‘**When good goals go bad**’ is available in the Real Estate Coach Library.*

New Zealand is a sporting nation. We've got the All Blacks, the rowing pair of Hamish Bond and Eric Murray, and the delightful Lydia Ko, to name but a very few. Thinking about or sporting elite led me to wonder, what motivates a successful sportsperson? Is it the individual? The team? The coach? The sponsors? The fans? The competitors?

In real estate, you're in a similar situation. You, as a licensee, are the individual player, and you have the capacity to motivate yourself to higher and better performance levels. If you're a salesperson, you also have a manager (the equivalent of your coach), who has probably spent time with you discussing your goals, and helping you set appropriate performance standards and measurements.

We could say that your clients are your sponsors. After all, they're the ones paying you when you succeed. And the customers are your fans. Clients and customers, sponsors or fans - if they don't like your performance, they are likely to take their allegiance elsewhere, just as individual sports sponsors and fans sometimes do. And that allegiance usually goes to another agency, or someone else within your own agency - your competition.

Goals and glory

I've often watched as new recruits to real estate set goals that are likely to be far above their ability to achieve. Motivation is high, but there's an unreal expectation of actual performance.

Raw motivation alone is not sufficient to ensure success. A new entrant, who has not yet established the networks, or developed the full complement of skills, is hardly likely to achieve at the same level as a highly-respected, experienced performer. However, this expectation is one of the reasons many new entrants leave real estate prematurely.

It's usually the result of lack of preparation and research. The person has failed to ask basic but crucial questions before they started. Often, they didn't even know what questions should be asked.

In most cases, we are perfectly capable of setting our own goals. But to do so, we need sufficient information on which to base our decisions. Information about the state of the market, the commitment and sacrifices we are personally prepared to make, and the support available to us to help reach our goals.

What drives you?

As part of your goal development process, **ask yourself a critical first question**: What is driving me to succeed? Is it money? Is it the acquisition of emblems of pleasure, such as holidays, homes and cars? Is it recognition among family, friends, colleagues or the industry as a whole?

Perhaps it's a need to prove something – to yourself or someone else. To be able to say, 'I might have failed in the past, but now I'm a success!'

Some people even set goals that confirm their ability to fail. They may do so inadvertently, but by setting goals that aim for under-performance, they're giving themselves permission. They do this by saying things like 'The market isn't any good right now, so I can't expect to achieve what I've done in the past,' or 'I'm not going to give up the things I value just to pursue work goals.'

Is your desire to succeed flexible? What are you willing to sacrifice – time, money, integrity? Are you an 'always go by the book' person, or are you willing to push beyond the usual limits?

The key is to find a balance between comfort and challenge: between aiming too low, and staying in your comfort zone, and setting yourself up for almost inevitable failure. You also need to know for certain the lengths you will go to achieve a target.

Who drives you?

Have you ever watched a young person who's only playing a particular sport because Mum or Dad wanted them to? They go through the motions, try to do well, but their heart is clearly not in it.

The same applies in real estate. **Are you driven by someone else?** A spouse or family member, especially one who is, or was, a high achiever in real estate. Or your boss. Or competition with one or more colleagues in your office or agency.

If your manager, or someone else, has determined your performance goals they may have inadvertently set a standard that is too high or too low for your present ability. These goals may also not be congruent with other goals in your life.

You might have nodded and made all the right moves through the goal-setting meeting, but been thinking to yourself, 'This is nonsense.' Perhaps you're planning for a much higher level of achievement; perhaps you're planning to take time out to study, or just need an extended break.

Your clients may be asking for levels of performance that you simply can't generate alone. For example, if they're unwilling (or unable) to contribute to a marketing campaign, or won't pay attention to genuine price feedback, they can seldom expect the same outcomes, in terms of visitor numbers or offers, as a client who has made a significant investment, or faced the (sometimes harsh) realities of the market.

You will encounter customers who want not just a bargain, but a steal. Do they get more of your attention than your clients? Does that motivate you to 'play a little dirty' with your clients? Is satisfying customers over clients an easier route to achieving your goals?

It's always easier to maintain and achieve goals that are internally driven. Those you set yourself. That's because when you genuinely want something, you're more motivated to learn the skills necessary to achieve. And learning then becomes easier.

The player / coach relationship

But, the mere fact of internal motivation is seldom enough to achieve at the highest level.

Any player can kick or hit a ball or shoot goals. And, with sufficient practice, they might become quite good. But they seldom see their performance as it actually is. That requires an external viewpoint. Someone who can identify the small, sometimes almost imperceptible areas where improvements can still be made.

This may be from your manager or agent, or an in-house or external coach or mentor.

The coach can teach, guide, cajole and rant, but they remain forever fixed on the sideline, never stepping onto the field or court to play the game itself. You, the player, are still ultimately responsible for your performance.

It's up to you

Start with a critical analysis of your motivation. Why do you feel the way you do about your work?

If you are involved in participatory goal-setting, make sure you only agree to goals that fit within your personal context – things you are genuinely able to achieve. But also be prepared to rise to the challenge of improvement, as well. There's nothing to be gained by standing still.

Whether you see yourself as a solo player, or as a member of a team, nobody else can play your game for you. Listen to the boss, the clients, the customers, and your coach or mentor. But remember, you are individually accountable.

Train hard, play strong but fair, recognise and value the inputs of those around you. But, ultimately, you are accountable for your own performance. **You must call your own shots.**

This is the first of two articles about setting and achieving goals.

*In the second article, we'll explore the negative side of goals and goal-setting. It's called **'When good goals go bad'**.*

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