One of the best ways to stay motivated.

1 December 2018

Now you might be wondering what on earth I am doing writing about being motivated in December. After all December is the month when people are winding down, relaxing, looking forward to their holidays and doing nothing in particular. Unless you are like me and December is not your holiday time. What I do want to do though is introduce you to an exercise that is very good to do at the end of the year. Actually, it is good to do throughout the year, but makes a lot of sense to do at the end of the year as well

Track your Progress

One of the most powerful ways to become or stay motivated is to track your progress. Especially when life sucks and it feels like you are going nowhere, or possibly even backwards. That is why sports teams have a scoreboard. You get immediate feedback on where you are. Each time you score, a point is added. And it feels good. It is also why so many people strain to set a new personal best time or score. There is a drive in us humans to want to push a bit more, to do a bit better. So track your progress. And the end of the year is a good time to do it. It is after all a time when many of us are reflecting on the past year.

Tools you can use

There are two tools you can use. In fact I am sure there are more that you can come up with. Both are visual tools. They are visual because it works well when we can see something constantly. Putting your performance contract in the bottom drawer is not helpful because you forget about it. You want a visual tool in front of your eyes that is tracking your progress. Sales teams do it. Call centres run numbers constantly as to how well they are doing. You can do it for any job. You just have to list each item as it gets completed.

Tool 1:

The one tool is just to list each item or task completed. Like a scoreboard you just add the point/task/item you have completed. You can do this even if you are doing a research job.

Write down a list of everything that needs to be done to complete the project. Then post up a big piece of paper and write down each item as it gets done. Write down the percentage complete once you have completed this task. So with each task you finish, you will have a higher percentage complete. Have this poster in front of you. You can use pictures, colours, symbols etc, to make it more interesting if you want to. Just make sure you keep this in front of you and write on it or paste on it items completed. Keep it up to date. When you are feeling down and fed up you can look at it and track what you have done so far. If you are someone inclined to procrastination, this can even help you get moving.

Tool 2:

The other tool is also a visual poster board type of thing. This is a road. Literally draw or print a road. It can have mountains and lakes, flooding and dangerous animals along the road if you want it to. Make it fun. Then each time you complete a task tick it off as another piece of road covered. Or you can even get a magnet and move the magnet along as you complete more tasks and move along the road.

These are tools you can use with your teams, your departments, and heck even with your family if you are so inclined, as well as with yourself. The main thing is to have something in your line of sight that you are focused on. It will get you going and inspire you to want to complete the journey. You may even be able to tell a story about it when it is finished.

Chart your progress for 2018

For the end of year purposes, what I would particularly like you to do is notice how far you have come. No matter how down or disappointed you may feel about the past year, when you write down everything you have done and add to it everything you have learned about your job, the world, being more successful, about yourself, etc, you will be surprised at just how much you have grown. And there is nothing more motivating than seeing that you really have come a long way. Even if it doesn't feel like it.

Have a wonderful December and celebrate your successes and how far you have come this year.