



Your road to considerable wealth Begins with a pen (or a keyboard)

Like clockwork, it happens every year.

You go to your gym the first week of a new year, and you swear you've walked into the wrong place. Where did all these people come from? Yet by about the middle of the month, things have mostly returned to normal. New Year's resolutions last an average of three weeks.

Studies show that only 10 percent of us commit our resolutions to paper. Yet, eight in 10 people who document their resolutions stick with them all year. There is strong evidence suggesting that when we put our goals in writing, we have a much greater likelihood of success.

A compilation of research studies conducted by sources including *Harvard Business Review*, *Forbes*, and *The New York Times* reveals:

- About four percent of business owners attain “considerable wealth” during their careers
- About four percent of business owners have written goals

Think there's a connection? Daydreaming about our goals is easy...easy to blow off, that is.

As a catering consultant, hearing a client say, “I want to create an operations manual for my business,” is the equivalent of the personal trainer hearing their client say, “I want to lose 20 pounds.”

Both are common battle cries.

Both have enormous upsides.

In the vast majority (about 96 percent) of cases, both are never realized.

I was almost a decade into my career before I began documenting my business goals. However, when I did start this practice, I realized immediate progress. I began taking action on the ideas that had been marinating in my mind for years. Coincidentally, creating an operations manual for my catering business was at the top of my goals list.

I committed to paper some of the core business theories I practiced and others that I wanted to implement. While these are practices can benefit a cross-section of business models, I think they are particularly integral to a successful corporate catering business.

Systems

Systems and processes are the building blocks of a successful business. Every facet of an operation is part of a system that can be managed or improved by applying correct principles. A systems approach to building a successful business eliminates employee indiscretion and replaces it with detailed procedures, standards, and accountability, as well as a method for measuring results.

Michael Gerber, author of *E-Myth*, says it best, “Let systems run the business and people run the systems.”

Documentation

Systems documentation—putting everything in writing—is a detailed, thorough strategy for all key routines, daily tasks, and backup plans that are part of a business. The step-by-step information should be organized in a three-ring binder and be accessible and understandable to all employees.

Consistency

Consistency is giving customers what they want—every single time. Repeat business is the golden goose of corporate catering. Creating a successful brand means positively affecting what customers think and how they feel when they hear the company name. Consistency in product and service is mandatory.

Next, I tackled standard operating procedure (SOP) for our most commonly sold item, the assorted sandwich platter. As this excerpt from my book *Lessons Learned from our Mistakes* explains, this was a long overdue problem area that needed attention.

Situation: Defining “assorted” sandwiches. (Customers often ordered “20 assorted sandwiches.”)

What we thought then: Assorted means assorted. The sandwich maker will produce an appropriate variety.

What we know now: If Ms. Carnivore is the sandwich maker, “20 assorted” might include two vegetarian sandwiches (too few). And, if Mr. Vegetarian is the sandwich maker, “20 assorted” might include 10 vegetarian sandwiches (too many).

Lesson learned: Consider “assorted” a recipe term that requires definition and documentation. The assortment should

See Michael Rosman at CSES2016



Michael Rosman will be speaking at CSES2016 in Las Vegas, NV, March 13–16, 2016. Registration is open! Go to conference.catersource.com for more information!

be consistent regardless of who the sandwich maker is.

Below is the formula (specs) that we decided on for “Assorted Sandwiches (20)”:

- (4) Turkey (20%)
- (4) Chicken Salad (20%)
- (4) Vegetarian (20%)
- (3) Tuna Salad (15%)
- (3) Roast Beef (15%)
- (2) Ham (10%)

And there we had it. Done! “Assorted” was defined. We finally had a system to ensure the best selling item on our menu would be consistent. I wondered why we waited so long.

Thus began a committed process of putting everything, starting with our goals, in writing. Over time, the SOPs matured into a blueprint for running the all areas of the business including food, employee, operational, and administrative policies and procedures.

Over the years, a detailed, thorough, and regularly updated operations manual has increased our bottom-line profit margin by, incredibly, four percent—identical to the percentage of business owners who put their goals in

writing and attained considerable wealth during their careers.

You can do this

Commit your goals to paper. If you’d like some guidance in turning them into reality, you can begin right here, right now. This one action will (not “may”) be invaluable for the future success of your business.

Complete this sentence:

“By the beginning of the summer (six months from today), one significant business goal I want to check off my list is: _____

Email your response to: Michael@thecorporatecaterer.com

Subject line: Six-month goal

I will personally respond to you within twenty-four hours.

Remember, commitment means doing what you said you were going to do, long after the mood you said it in has left you. **CS**

Michael Rosman is a member of the Catersource Consulting Unit. If you would like information about these services or to schedule him for an onsite consultation at your location, please email Carl Sacks at csacks@catersource.com. His book, *Lessons Learned From Our Mistakes - and other war stories from the catering battlefield* is available through Amazon. He can be reached at michael@thecorporatecaterer.com.