

Australasian Leadership Institute *Leadership Magazine*



**HOW TO SALVAGE YOUR
NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS**

**HOW TO RECEIVE
FEEDBACK**

**THE SECRET OF
CONTINUOUS
SUCCESS**



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**HOW TO SALVAGE
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Mark Wager is an experienced Leadership Coach with nearly thirty years experience of developing leaders across a range of industries and countries.

Mark is accredited in the MBTI suite of tools and is a professional member of NZAPT (New Zealand Association of Psychological Type) NZIM (New Zealand Institute of Management) and NZATD (New Zealand Association of Training & Development).

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How To Salvage Your New Year Resolutions

It's now the beginning of February and if you are one of those people that have already given up on your New Year resolutions then you are not alone. Research has shown that 75% of resolutions will fail by the end of January and 90% will fail by the end of the year leaving only 10% who will follow through with their resolution. Despite people's good intentions to make positive changes to their lives whether it's a personal change like losing weight or giving up smoking or even a business resolution such as increasing sales or getting a promotion the reality is that there's a 90% chance that you will fail. It doesn't have to be this way, with just a few changes to your approach you can become one of the 10% and realise the benefits of your hard work and live the life you want.

Define success

The most common mistake that people make when making resolutions or just setting goals in general is that they don't clearly define success. Some of the most common goals are losing weight or making more money both of which are vague, how much weight? How much money, \$100, \$100,000? and when is this going to be done by? The goals that work are the ones that are so clear you know definitely when it's been achieved which means the goals can be easily visualised and what you can visualise you can achieve.

Be brave, be bold

I work with a lot of businesses and individuals, helping them achieve their goals and during this time I've learnt that the best goals are the ones that are just out of reach at the start. What you need to look for is to set a goal 6-10% beyond your current ability. If the goal is lower than this range then it's too easy to achieve and you quickly lose motivation. If the goal is higher then you quickly lose belief when you consistently fail to achieve, it's the range between 6-10% beyond your current ability that produces the best results.

Believe in yourself

Your level of achievement will always be limited by your level of self belief. If you want to raise your performance in order to meet your goals then you will need to raise your level of self belief. If you lack confidence then you will miss the opportunities that life presents to you. I know people who are looking for a promotion and when they read the job description they seem to have only seven out of the ten required competencies so don't apply yet there are others who look at the same job description and see that

they only have three of the desired competencies but tell themselves that they have the three most important competencies and apply anyway. Ask yourself which person is likely to get the promotion?

Make your goals visible

To achieve your goals you have to live your goals and they have to be part of your life and be as visible as possible. The more the goals are on your mind, the more focussed and aware you will be of them. If it's a personal goal then write it down and post it somewhere around your house so that you see it, either on the refrigerator or by the side of your bed so that you see it every morning. If it's a business goal make sure the team can see it every day and here's another tip. Always word your goal as if it's a statement. For example instead of saying I will increase my sales by x amount within the next year, instead write your goal as on xx date my sales will be xx. The more positive and visible your goals are the greater the chance you will achieve them.

Have the right habits

Every great journey consists of many small steps. To reach your goal you need to know what your small steps are, what are the daily habits that you need to do in order for the long journey to be realised. Ask yourself if you want to lose weight what do you need to do each and every single day for this to happen. If you want a promotion then what do you need to do at work, how do you need to behave each and every single day. When you are able to answer this question then you will find out the same lesson that every other successful person has learnt and that is, success is never achieved through a grand gesture, it's achieved through a series of many small and sometimes mundane tasks. Get your daily habits right and success will follow.

If you have already failed your New Year resolutions then don't be disheartened and don't wait until the end of the year to set new goals, you can set them today and by using the tips above you can become one of the few people who not only sets goals but makes them happen.

Develop A Winning Mindset: 1 Day Workshop Meetings on the Terrace	09/02/17 Thu 9 Feb
How To Create & Lead A Highly Effective Team Regus	10/02/17 Fri 10 Feb
Leading Through Change: A Mark Wager Workshop Meetings on the Terrace	16/02/17 Thu 16 Feb
Leading Through Change Regus	17/02/17 Fri 17 Feb
How To Effectively Manage Conflict: A Mark Wager Workshop Regus	22/02/17 Wed 22 Feb
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Dealing With Poor Performance: A Leadership Workshop Regus	24/02/17 Fri 24 Feb
Executive Presence: How To Become An Inspirational Leader Regus	27/02/17 Mon 27 Feb
Executive Presence: How To Become An Inspirational Leader Meetings on the Terrace	28/02/17 Tue 28 Feb
2017 New Zealand Leadership Programme Regus	13/03/17 – 06/06/17 Mon 13 Mar – Tue 6 Jun
2017 New Zealand Leadership Programme Meetings on the Terrace	23/03/17 – 30/06/17 Thu 23 Mar – Fri 30 Jun
The ALI Emerging Leader Programme Regus	31/03/17 – 29/09/17 Fri 31 Mar – Fri 29 Sep
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The Leading Through Change training is available as an one-day public workshop, an in-house programme or as individual leadership coaching.

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How To Receive Feedback

The journey to become an effective leader is a long and difficult one. There are many barriers that prevent leaders fulfilling their potential which explains why there are such a few great leaders in business. Of all the barriers the most significant one to overcome is to close the gap between how leaders are perceived by their team as opposed to how they see themselves.

With every situation there is the reality and then there is different people's perception of it. For everyone the reality is the same but because we are all complex and unique individuals we have different perceptions of the same reality. This perception differs from person to person and influences our actions causing us to react differently to the same situation. Our unique perception is largely based on our prior knowledge, beliefs and values. Imagine a scenario outside of work, a teenage child comes home later than the agreed time. How do the parents react? Some may think it's natural to instantly hug the child because they were worried about them and thought there may have been in an accident, yet others may react angrily because they hadn't been called and their instructions to come back by a certain time were disobeyed. People react differently to the very same situation. What is true in life is also true in leadership and the most successful leaders are the ones that can understand how people's perception of them differ from their own perception of themselves.

Understanding oneself allows a leader to read the situation and adapt their behaviours accordingly. The only way to do this is by getting feedback.

There are two significant challenges in getting the necessary feedback to improve as a leader. The first is getting the feedback in the first instance and secondly, interpreting the feedback correctly. People are reluctant to give their leader feedback because they are unsure about how the leader will react and this problem and this gets more challenging higher up the corporate ladder. When I coach Executives this is one of the first areas we work on. The second challenge about interpreting feedback in the most effective way after it has been received is equally if not more important. Here are a few tips for leaders.

Be aware of your own bias

When we receive feedback it's natural for people to focus on the feedback that is closest to their own deep held perception. This bias can cause issues as the leader may discuss feedback by becoming defensive and "explain away" the comments. This leader then misses out on valuable feedback which can tell them the whole story instead of just their personal view. Leaders only improve when they have the full story.

There is an old story that demonstrates how dangerous it can be to lead without knowing the full story. It's origin is varied and has many different versions but the core story remains the same. Six men are blindfolded and are asked to tell what an elephant looks like by touch only. The blind man who feels a leg says the elephant is like a pillar; the one who feels the tail says the elephant is like a rope; the one who feels the trunk says the elephant is like a tree branch; the one who feels the ear says the elephant is like a hand fan; the one who feels the belly says the elephant is like a wall; and the one who feels the tusk says the elephant is like a solid pipe. Each blind man thought their perception was right but all failed to see the whole picture and therefore the reality of the situation is missed.

Leaders need to know the reality of the situation even if it's not the reality that they want. Have the courage to be open to others people's views even if their views differ from their own. This is not an opportunity to argue but a chance to find ways to become better.

Look for credibility

For every situation there will be a wide range of different perceptions and the greater the number of people involved the wider the range of feedback. No matter what happens some people will love and some will hate with the majority of people falling somewhere on the scale between. The key to success is knowing which is the right feedback to listen to and the answer depends on the credibility of the source.

The most effective feedback comes from the most credible sources. The best way to determine if a source is credible or not is to look for an explanation behind the comments and whether that explanation contains specific behaviours. Anyone can say anything and to them it's valid and needs to be respected but unless the comments can be supported by specific examples then it's difficult to use that feedback to make improvements.

If a leader has someone who is willing to give feedback then that person is a valuable resource and they need to be encouraged to provide as much feedback as possible.

One of the best pieces of advice that I've heard is that whenever someone gives you a compliment use that opportunity to say thank you and ask for what in their opinion is the one thing that you could do better. It's important to note that while compliments make you feel good, constructive criticism is more important as it can help you become a better leader.

There is no criticism only feedback

I always tell the leaders I coach that the most valuable feedback they will ever receive is the feedback that they didn't want to hear. All development starts at the stage which in leadership psychology is called "unconscious incompetence" you don't know what you don't know so the most valuable feedback is therefore going to highlight what you are currently unaware of and this can be difficult to hear. This means it's vital that you don't react in the moment and give feedback time to digest.

When someone respects you enough to give you feedback it's important that you don't argue for several reasons,

firstly you are likely to discourage people from giving you further feedback, secondly like the blind men and the elephant the viewpoint of the person for them is valid even if you agree and thirdly you may well think differently about the comments when you've had time to absorb and think over the comments. The best response for all feedback is a simple "thank you"

Taking time to think over feedback is valuable as it turns criticism into feedback. When contemplating ask yourself is the feedback a "blind man and the elephant situation" and is only said because they don't see the whole picture? Other useful information to find is whether other people raised similar comments to you? Is this something you already knew, was there a limitation and are there other people who you can ask to verify the feedback and do they agree with the comments?

Wherever the feedback comes from whether it's from a boss, a follower, a colleague or from a Leadership Coach like myself it's a wonderful opportunity for a leader to develop. Yes criticism can hurt and it can be emotional but if you open yourself up to these comments then at the same time you open yourself up to become the leader you have the potential to be.



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The Secret Of Continuous Success

Earlier this year Leicester City football club achieved the greatest upset in the history of sport. Starting the season as 5,000 to 1 underdogs they beat the more famous and richer football clubs such as Manchester United, Liverpool, Chelsea and Arsenal to win the English Premier League. A few months after this remarkable success a new season has started and with a quarter of the season gone Leicester City has found it difficult to repeat the achievements they had earlier and are currently near the bottom of the league table.

One of the greatest achievements in history was when NASA (The National Aeronautics and Space Administration) landed on the moon. Apollo 11 was the first manned mission to land on the moon on 29th July 1969 just a few months short of the goal set by United States President John F Kennedy who in 1961 told the world that they would

achieve the seemingly impossible feat by the end of the decade. In the preceding years morale within NASA dropped with employees reporting a lack of motivation and focus.

Any level of success is difficult if it requires a large amount of hard work, talent, determination and a fair share of luck yet no matter how difficult success is it's nothing compared to how difficult it is to have success time and time again. Success is difficult but continuous success is almost impossible. What happens is that the most successful teams have a shared goal to which they aspire to reach, the best and most effective goals are ones that seem to be just out of reach, something which requires everyone to work together and push themselves to have any chance of success yet when the seemingly impossible goal becomes possible then what happens next.

If it was a movie the credits would role and the movie ends with a happy ending but in real life the team continues and has to deal with what happens next which in many cases they find that success is difficult to repeat.

Whenever a team achieves a goal their perception of that goal changes, what was once perceived as impossible is now without doubt is possible because it's been done and when a goal is perceived as possible then there's a lack of motivation to complete it. This lack of motivation spreads throughout the team and leads to a reduction in performance. This is natural and as humans we are designed to act this way. Just imagine anything you have achieved in life. A common achievement is learning to drive. Think back to the first time you passed your test and drove your car. Do you remember that feeling you had? The happy feeling you felt, the sense of pride and excitement what you felt was a chemical called Dopamine. When you achieve anything your brain releases Dopamine into your system. This is nature's way of encouraging you to progress and do new things. This helped our ancestors to explore new lands yet there is a downside. Going back to the driving example, remember the happy motivated and

excited younger you driving your car for the first time and now think of the last time you drove the car, did you feel the same? No! you didn't because Dopamine is only released when you achieve something new and by now you've driven your car many times that jumping in your car and taking a trip is easy and isn't much of an achievement. We are wired this way and it happens in all walks of life and teams in business are no exception. So what can a leader do?

What takes you to success doesn't keep you successful

When you achieve success celebrate and enjoy the feeling. Success is difficult so embrace at the moment but once that moment passes, you need to start the hard work again and it's a difficult kind of work compared to what made the team successful in the first place. Firstly you need to set a new goal, you need to stand on the shoulders of your great achievement and aim higher. It's not a surprise that Leicester City who are struggling in the league are currently doing very well in the Champions League which is a tournament that is arguably bigger than the Premiership and is contested by the best football clubs in Europe. For NASA they are going through an upsurge in motivation and focus now that within the past year

they have publicly spoken about the desire to land a man on Mars. The lesson is that you achieve a goal and never set the same goal again. Always look forward and always aim higher.

Don't rebuild, instead reestablish

The teams that achieve success time and time again find the failures within every achievement. They don't allow the glory of success to blind them from seeing areas of improvement. I tell leaders not to be afraid of making changes after success. It's easy to be wary of making changes because you don't want to risk going backwards but this is the kind of thinking that guarantees future failure. One of the reasons why the All Blacks rugby team continue to be successful year after year despite the team changing personnel is when a star player leaves or like last year a group of players is that they don't see change as rebuilding but instead as reestablishing. This means instead of starting again they take the lessons of previous achievements and use them to aim higher than before and are fully aware evolution is the key to success. The lesson to remember here is to use current success as a starting point for future success and don't be afraid of change, be brave because it's this kind of courage that

made the team successful in the first place.

To have a successful team is an ambition of every good leader but the ambition of a great leader is to create a legacy, a legacy of continued success year after year. Regardless of your ambition whether you want to reach for the moon or just learn to drive the most important thing to remember is that success is just a stepping stone for future success so be brave and always look forward to more and more ambitious goals.



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- MORE CONFIDENT
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Mark Wager is an experienced Leadership Coach who utilises his knowledge of leadership psychology to show teams and individuals how to fulfil their potential. It was when Mark applied these strategies and techniques in his personal life that he developed the mental skills to achieve his goals. In a year he lost 30 kgs (66 lbs) in weight and started his own successful business. As a result Mark now spends time as a Mind Coach sharing his knowledge of how people can unlock the motivation, confidence and focus that success demands regardless of the nature of their goal.

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