



To : Seafarers Our Ref : Mentoring Letter 9 – Goals & Objectives
From : Marine Mentor Date : 28 February 2020

I'm a firm believer in setting goals and objectives. After all, as a famous Cheshire Cat once sagely advised, it doesn't really matter much which way you go if you don't care much about where you are going. I would be very surprised if many knew which cat I'm talking about, but we all need a vision of where we want to be and then to establish it as our mission to get there.

Mentoring is voluntary, and offers no material reward. You may have a really good idea of where YOU want to be in a few years' time, but have you thought how mentoring others can help you achieve some of your own goals? You will want to improve your own leadership as well as man-management skills, your people skills, and your confidence. All of these will happen naturally as you embrace mentoring.

But, what about the Mentee? You are probably going to be working with younger officers much of the time, who may not have given their goals much thought, other than to get their Master's or Chief's ticket, and maybe gain command, or go ashore, or whatever. Their goals are most likely short-term for now though, like getting through their studies, promotion, getting married, buying a house, fancy car, etc. This is a good starting point as a Mentor and is a great opening for a conversation about mentoring. Of course, you will very likely find that you will set new goals, and that their goals may become your own. After all, as I said previously, there is so much satisfaction to be gained by being witness to a Mentee achieving his goals – with your support. You will share in his or her success, simply in the knowledge that you made a difference in his life. That is reward enough.

You will need to set yourself some short-term goals, such as:

- Get to know him/her. What is his/her background? What generation? (see guidance below.) What personality type do you think he or she is?
- Assess Mentee's current level of competence. A carefully conducted BWK and/or appraisal will help you in this.
- Assess the Mentee's strengths and weaknesses.
- Provide guidance and support by creating an atmosphere of openness where meaningful communication and trust can exist.
- Assist the Mentee in identifying objectives/goals.
- Assign the Mentee specific tasks/assignments aimed to develop skills or accomplish specific objectives/goals.

That sounds a bit like jargon, but simply put, if you're say Master, in the case of say 3NO's, a good place to start the actual mentoring is by spending time with him or her watching benignly over his/her shoulders when in heavy traffic. (You probably already do for your own sake, but now you'll be doing it specifically to help him grow his confidence.) Let her¹ know that she has the con, and that you are not merely observing her, but are there to guide if necessary. Talk through situations with her, affirm her when she's done a good job, and if need be, show her how she could have done better. You can encourage her to read Witherby's Passage Planning Principles, and Passage Planning Practice, and the relevant chapter in the Nautical Manual. Share some your own experiences with him on how things may not have gone well once on a

previous voyage (not necessarily the same ship,) and then set her (or him) him assignments such as preparation of Passage Plans. There are many suitable subjects for a 3NO, preparation of Passage Plan on the ECDIS, proper ECDIS settings, crossing safety contour, the list is endless. Allow the CNO to handle the vessel during times of manoeuvring, such as anchoring for example, and extend that to the 2NO later. Spend time with the CNO, after all he is your understudy and needs to learn from you. Show him by example how a good leader gets the best out of his men, and how to build a sound working relationship with Charterers, Owners, agents, Port State Authorities and so on. The list is endless for both Decksides and Engineers.

Longer term goals would include:

- Ensuring that your officers conduct their duties responsibly
- Inculcating a sound code of professionalism in your officers
- Improve officers' self-confidence
- identify and resolve potential obstacles to junior officers
- provide professional guidance to junior officers
- provide leadership role model for junior officers
- Define clear developmental focus
- Assist in defining and achieving career goals
- share relevant knowledge and experience with junior officers
- guide junior officers in conducting their duties responsibly
- assist junior officers to develop professional networks (SOMMSA, Naut. Inst.)
- enhance junior officers study progress
- demonstrate/model how a junior officers might develop greater initiative, self-confidence, increased independence, and self-reliance
- Advise how to balance work and personal life

For those junior officers following these letters, please do think about your own role. Of course you can apply all the above quite easily with those junior to you, but are you open to being mentored? Do you show an interest? Are you receptive to what your senior officer is doing for you? Remember that he (or she) spent time as a Junior officer once, and does not expect you to know everything. If you try to project that you do, he will see right through you. So, as those questions, be open to the knowledge and experience he or she is sharing, respect the fact he's doing it voluntarily and willingly, and accept it as a gift.

Kind regards,

Mike Melly

¹ No gender bias!

NEXT: mentoring tips