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2 If you are interested in getting hold of a copy of our ebook on Goal-setting which outlines step-by-step process for setting  
3 empowering goals that drive you to action, please sign up on our website: <http://www.results-matter.co.uk/products.html>  
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## 5 **New Year Resolutions:** 6 **Why Some Achieve Theirs, Others Give up**

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8 When we make our New Year resolutions, most of us are driven by what we think we *should*  
9 *do* (lose weight, give up smoking, find a better job, etc). Some of us have strong will power  
10 (a left brain activity), and will drag ourselves out of our bed at 6 AM to visit the gym or  
11 throw away all the cigarette packets or go on a diet. And most of us will follow these new  
12 regimes and changed lifestyle for a few weeks or months and then suddenly find dozens of  
13 reasons why we can't continue: need to spend more time with family, my boss being horrible  
14 in office, girlfriend not liking 6 AM wake up call, the lousy English weather, Gordon  
15 Brown's economic policy, global recession, and so on.

16  
17 And then back to life as usual. Until next time.

### 18 **Write Down Your Goals**

19 How many times do you think that people try to achieve their new goals before they give up?  
20 The average is less than one time. Most people give up even before making the first attempt.

21  
22 In his book *What They Don't Teach You In The Harvard Business School*, the author  
23 describes a research conducted between 1979 and 1989 on students graduating out of the  
24 school. In 1979, the graduates of the MBA programme were asked if they had set clear,  
25 written goals for future and made plans to accomplish them. Only 3% of the graduates  
26 reported having written goals and plans, and another 13% had stated that they had goals, but  
27 not in written form. The rest 84% had no specific goals at all, apart from their focus on  
28 graduating out of the management school.

29  
30 A decade later, in 1989, the same members of the class who had by then settled in their career  
31 were interviewed again. The researchers found that the 13% who had goals, albeit unwritten,  
32 were earning on average twice as much as the 84% of students who had no clear goals in  
33 1979. But the most surprising findings was that the 3% of graduates who had clear, written  
34 goals and plans when they left Harvard were earning, on average, ten times as much as the  
35 other 97% of graduates who had no written goals.

36  
37 What makes written goals so powerful?

38  
39 The answer lies in the fact that the process of putting goals down on paper forces you to ask  
40 questions which help clarify in your own mind as to what the goals is, how important it is for  
41 you, and what obstacles you might face. In fact writing down goals also helps in breaking  
42 down big long-term goals into small chunks which provide clarity of steps when it comes to  
43 taking action.

1  
2 But more importantly, I have found that the process also has an important effect on how our  
3 mind grapples with future plans we make for ourselves. The planning process itself is a left-  
4 brain (our rational brain, conscious mind) thinking, but the process of putting the plans down  
5 on paper makes an impact on our *sustained commitment to act* which requires our sub-  
6 conscious (right brain) to be fully engaged. Only when the sub-conscious is fully awake to  
7 the rational plans (need to lose weight, make a career change, etc) we make for ourselves, can  
8 we get the drive and momentum to keep going.

### 9 **Make Your Goal a *Must***

10 The primary difference between high achievers and low achievers is “**action-orientation.**”  
11 Men and women who accomplish great things in life are intensely action-oriented. If they  
12 have an idea, they take action on it immediately. The factor that distinguishes those that move  
13 to take action consistently from the others who ‘wish to achieve something’ is simple: the 3%  
14 of the Harvard students were *committed* to succeed and made this *a must – did whatever was*  
15 *needed*; while the rest 97% belonged to the category of general population who *like, wish,*  
16 *want, hope* to succeed. The latter group will work within their comfort zones, and when  
17 challenged, will find excuses why something cannot be done. They *want* to lose weight, but it  
18 is not a must. They would *love* to make more money and *wish* to take charge of their lives,  
19 but they could live without these. The moment something becomes a ‘must’ instead of a  
20 ‘should’, you will commit to it.

### 21 **4 Ps of Goals**

22 The first step in getting what you want is to know exactly what is it that you really, really  
23 want. Most people say that they want to be successful in life, yet ask them what they want to  
24 achieve and most would say, ‘I want to be healthy’, ‘I want to be happy’, ‘I want to have  
25 more money’, ‘I want a better job’, ‘I want to have less worries’.

26  
27 Unfortunately, our brain doesn’t quite follow this language. Being the CPU with over 100  
28 billion neurons, our brain, like a supercomputer, does expect clearer commands to make any  
29 sense of what it is being asked to do. In the seventies and eighties, a huge amount of research  
30 was carried out by several psychologists<sup>1</sup> on how the most successful people set their goals  
31 and went on to achieve these. They identified four key factors that made goals *powerful and*  
32 *must:*

- 33 • Prove-able – Goals must be specific and measurable: want to be ‘rich’, ‘successful’  
34 etc are not measurable; some people will consider themselves rich with a thousand  
35 dollars in their pockets, for some a few credit cards in their wallet is enough to give  
36 them a feeling of being rich.
- 37 • Positive – goals must be stated in positive terms. Our brain does not understand  
38 negative commands: instead of saying ‘I want to *lose* weight’, write down ‘I (want to)  
39 weigh xxx stones’.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Dilts, John Grinder and Richard Bandler were pioneers in this field – the latter two created what is now known as Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

- 1 • Present tense – goals must be stated in present tense, as though you had already  
2 achieved these goals. For example, you would write, “I weigh xxx stones.” Or, “I run  
3 my own business with a turnover of xxxx.”
- 4 • Personal – must be personal to you; i.e., it is in your control. Instead of saying ‘I  
5 would like my company to give me a raise’, state as ‘I have exceeded my sales target  
6 by 25% and therefore I want to ask for a raise’.

7  
8 **Summary:**

9 There are three essential principles to follow in goal-setting in order to ensure that you stay  
10 committed to the goal(s) you set:

- 11 1. Write down the goals on paper.
- 12 2. Ask yourself if the goals are ‘Must haves’ or simply wish list.
- 13 3. If your goals are ‘must’, make sure you state the goals  
14
  - 15 • In specific, measurable terms;
  - 16 • As positive statements;
  - 17 • In present tense
  - 18 • As personal to you.

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20  
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24 [matter.co.uk/products.html](http://www.results-matter.co.uk/products.html)