

Look to the Horizon

Kristy Alleman

Setting annual goals is one secret for continually growing your career

A few years ago, I was having a conversation with a mentor when I realized that working hard was not the same as growing and developing my career. Even if I worked hard and continued to perform well, it would still not be enough to get me to the next level.

Upon my realization, I made a point to follow some crucial steps to help gain direction and clarity on how to enhance my career and develop a plan for my future. Whether you are looking to improve on your performance in your current role or advance your career, setting goals and creating a development plan is beneficial to everyone.

Setting Goals

Setting goals is an important step in identifying what you want to accomplish and creating a roadmap to success. I like to say, "You never get what you want unless you know what it is first." We have all heard of setting SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound), but how do you prioritize these goals? Where do you start?

When I am setting goals, I think about how I will benefit from the goal, its impact and what resources I need to achieve the goal. At Starbucks, we have a Partner Development Plan, which is a conversation tool to help set goals, discuss them with your supervisor or mentor, and track your success over time. It is a good idea to set three to five goals per year that impact various aspects of your career, such as public speaking, enhancing business acumen, improving communication skills or increasing knowledge of building equipment.

Some of my key goals over the past few years have been to attain my CRFP, work on strategic pillar teams and continue to improve upon my performance, which includes public speaking. I was able to achieve my public-speaking goal a few months ago when I was approached to develop an education session for RFMA's annual conference. I used my knowledge and experience from studying for my CRFP to present a "road map" on how to succeed and become a CRFP-certified restaurant facility professional. Since my presentation, I have also been fortunate enough to be recognized within my company, which has led to even more growth opportunities.

Development Opportunities

Development opportunities are activities that lie outside your normal core workload that add to your collective knowledge and experience. I've been focused on my career development for the past three years and have learned that it is a journey. You do not become a leader or master a new skill overnight; it takes time, effort and practice.

Within restaurant facilities, you can find fantastic development opportunities through educational classes, within certification programs and by job-shadowing vendors or co-

workers. All of these opportunities can help you enhance your knowledge base and your overall development within restaurant facilities.

Some development opportunities may be clear, but other times you have to create your own opportunities to grow and develop. Last year, I learned about the Women's Development Network at Starbucks, and I decided we needed a regional chapter for our Texas and Oklahoma partners. I had been waiting for a chapter to get started when I thought, "Why don't I just start it? I can do it!"

The Women's Development Network has been a great opportunity to develop skills that I do not use on a daily basis. It's also given me the opportunity to meet and work with new partners. It is important to seek out development opportunities at your company, in your community and through professional organizations such as RFMA, Toast Masters and local LinkedIn groups. The work I have done with RFMA this past year has challenged me to step out of my comfort zone and be vulnerable, providing me with a very rewarding experience.

Mentors and Advocates

Mentors and advocates are people who will give you honest feedback and guidance, and who will share your success with others and support your career goals. Finding a mentor and an advocate is key to enhancing and developing your career. You can look for mentors and advocates within your company, as well as in your industry through networking and professional associations.

Having a mentor or being a mentor can be an incredibly rewarding experience. You have an opportunity to learn and observe different behaviors and communication styles, and challenge your own thought processes. Through the speaking opportunity at RFMA 2016, I not only achieved my goal, but also became a mentor to some of my Starbucks co-workers and other industry professionals who want to attain their CRFPs. Even if you already have a mentor, it is important to continue to build relationships and network across business teams so you can view your business from all perspectives.

Doing More

Setting goals, developing opportunities, and finding mentors and advocates are just some of the key steps in enhancing your career and planning for the future. Another key to your career development is to continually challenge yourself to do more. It is easy to get stagnant and complacent within your role. When you feel that starting to happen, change up your routine and find a new challenge.

Whether it is starting a new chapter in a professional organization like the Women's Development Network, volunteering for a community event or following an idea through to the end, inspiration and challenges can lie anywhere. I hope you enjoy and share your development journey with others and remember, as my sister Heather likes to say, "Rising tides raise all ships!"

Kristy Alleman, CRFP, PAC, FMC, is a Divisional Facilities Representative for Starbucks. Alleman's goal is to streamline processes and workflow management for capital projects, working on divisional projects as needed. She designed and created a SharePoint-based process to maximize efficiency and provide data analysis and project management in a centralized location. She also manages the emergency equipment replacement program to expedite business critical pieces of equipment in an efficient manner while ensuring adherence

to company standards. In addition, she created and developed a project management tool and database to be used nationwide for facilities capital management.