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IEC Women in Power Presents: From Ideas to Action: Turning Goals into Lasting Progress Webinar Recap

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Overview

Setting goals is often the easy part. The real challenge is **maintaining momentum** once daily responsibilities, competing priorities, and unexpected obstacles begin to demand attention. Whether your goals focus on career growth, leadership development, technical knowledge, business performance, or personal improvement, long-term success comes from **creating sustainable habits and taking consistent action**. This guide provides a simple framework for moving goals from ideas into measurable progress.

Why Goals Stall

Most people don't fail because they lack ambition. In fact, high achievers often struggle because they are balancing multiple priorities simultaneously.

- Common obstacles include:
- Limited time
- Competing work demands
- Family and personal responsibilities
- Loss of motivation
- Self-doubt
- Lack of support or resources
- Unexpected changes in priorities

Recognizing these challenges ahead of time helps prevent them from completely derailing your progress.

The Build-Expect-Reset-Commit Framework

Build: Focus on the Next 90 Days

Large goals can feel overwhelming when viewed only through the lens of the final outcome. Breaking them into smaller milestones makes progress more manageable and measurable.

Start with a Long-Term Goal

- Example: Become a stronger leader within the next 12 months.

Then Define a 90-Day Objective: Ask yourself: What can I realistically accomplish in the next three months that moves me closer to that goal? Examples include:

- Leading a project or initiative
- Expanding industry knowledge
- Building relationships outside your immediate role
- Developing a new technical or business skill
- Seeking mentorship opportunities

Narrow It Further: Identify actions you can take this month or this week. Examples include:

- Schedule a development conversation.
- Complete a training course.
- Connect with a new industry contact.
- Spend 15 minutes each week reviewing progress.
- Read one article or chapter related to your goal.

Small, consistent actions often create more progress than occasional bursts of activity.

Expect: Plan for Obstacles Before They Happen

Every goal encounters resistance. Instead of treating obstacles as surprises, anticipate them. Consider:

- What is most likely to interrupt my progress?

- What distractions consistently appear?
- When am I most at risk of losing momentum?

A useful strategy is creating an **If-Then Plan**. Examples include:

- If an urgent work priority disrupts my plans, then I will dedicate at least 15 minutes to my goal that week.
- If I miss a scheduled task, then I will reschedule it within the next three days.
- If I begin feeling overwhelmed, then I will break the goal into smaller steps.

The objective is not perfection. The objective is to **maintain forward movement**.

Reset: Adjust Without Quitting

Many people abandon goals after a setback because they view progress as all-or-nothing. Instead, view setbacks as opportunities to reassess and adjust. When you feel stuck, ask yourself:

1. Is this goal still important to me? Priorities can change. It's important to determine whether the goal still aligns with what matters most right now.

2. What specifically got in the way? Identify the true obstacle rather than making assumptions. Was it:

- Time?
- Skill gaps?
- Competing priorities?
- Lack of clarity?
- Burnout?

3. Does the goal need to change, or does my approach need to change? Often the destination remains valuable, but the path needs adjustment.

4. What is the smallest next step I can take? Momentum is frequently restored by taking one manageable action. Progress may look different than originally planned, but that does not mean progress has stopped.

Commit: Take Action Within the Next 72 Hours- Motivation is strongest immediately after making a decision. Taking action quickly increases the likelihood of follow-through.

Ask yourself: **What is one action I can complete within the next 72 hours?** Examples include:

- Scheduling a meeting
- Beginning a training course
- Researching a topic
- Creating a project plan
- Connecting with a mentor
- Blocking time on your calendar for focused work

The action should be **specific and achievable.**

Build Accountability Into the Process

Accountability helps transform intentions into habits. Consider:

- Sharing your goal with a trusted colleague or mentor
- Creating regular check-in points
- Tracking milestones and progress
- Writing goals down and keeping them visible
- Setting recurring calendar reminders

Many professionals also find success using AI tools to create action plans, organize priorities, and maintain accountability. Helpful prompts include:

- "Break this goal into a 90-day action plan."
- "Help me identify obstacles that could prevent success."
- "Create a backup plan if I fall behind."
- "Suggest the most important action I should take this week."
- "Ask me questions to determine if I should adjust my goal or my approach."

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Don't Forget to Celebrate Progress

A common mistake among high performers is immediately moving to the next challenge without recognizing accomplishments. **Taking time to acknowledge progress can:**

- Reinforce positive habits
- Improve motivation
- Reduce feelings of burnout
- Increase confidence

Success is not only achieving the final result. Success is also recognizing the **milestones** reached along the way.

Key Takeaways

- Break large goals into manageable 90-day milestones.
- Anticipate obstacles and create backup plans.
- Adapt your approach when circumstances change.
- Focus on the next small action rather than the entire journey.
- Build accountability through people, systems, or tools.
- Celebrate progress, not just completion.
- Consistency matters more than perfection.

Remember: Progress does not require a perfect plan. It requires a willingness to take the next step, learn from setbacks, and keep moving forward. Even small actions, repeated consistently over time, can create meaningful and lasting results.