



Your 90-Day Sprint...

Taking Control of Your Life and Plan

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We are only in the first quarter of the year, and Beyond Insurance has already received calls from agents and brokers complaining that they have started to wander from their New Year's resolutions.

While some of these individuals simply failed to set goals, most are falling short or not making visible progress because their visions and goals lack clarity, substance, structure, and meaning. To cut to the chase, these talented professionals desire a strategy to move consistently toward their goals without feeling overwhelmed or indecisive. In this article, I will share a strategy that I discovered a few years ago that will let you reap the rewards of your New Year's resolutions. This strategy is called the "90-Day Sprint."

The 90-Day Sprint will yield immediate results. Specifically, it will enable you to:

- Focus on a defined time period with smaller, achievable steps
- Work with a renewed sense of energy and urgency
- Kick off each quarter with a clear vision of success
- Achieve goals sooner and celebrate victories more often
- Build confidence and momentum

The 90-day sprint is a concept that will allow you to achieve specific goals with a “sprint mentality” rather than “marathon thinking.” Marathon runners describe this mentality as “endurance thinking.” After the race begins, they sometimes get into the mindset of running without a sense of meaning. Are you running without clarity and urgency? Are you in the midst of another year of goals without short bursts of energy to achieve your objectives? If this is the case, the 90-day sprint may be your answer. And the good news is that it only will take a few tweaks to change your mindset and give you a huge lift in productivity. The 90-day sprint will give you short bursts of energy...a different way to pace yourself within the year-long goal-setting process.

Your First Step Forward

The first step forward is to focus on your confidence level. If you lack clarity about your goals, you’ll never gain momentum or lift.

Self-confidence is an attitude that is characterized by a positive belief that you can take control of your life and of your plans. It is a belief in your abilities. Confidence is the state of being certain that a chosen course of action is the most effective given the circumstances. People who are self-confident are those who acknowledge their capacity to do something and then proceed to do these things. They do not rely on the approval of other people in order to affirm their existence. It is enough that they know they have the capacity and the potential to do something, and the guts to do it no matter what others may say. People who are self-confident take advantage of opportunities that come their way.

To be successful in the business of insurance and risk management, you must be confident. Confident in your approach. Confident in your communication skills. Confident in your team. Confident in your technical know-how. Confident in the manner in which you deliver your services. Confident in the face of rejection. And confident in your goals. Learning how to be confident is one of the most important life skills you will ever acquire. It impacts your happiness, success, and well-being. Without confidence, your momentum and progress will be impaired.

Self-confidence can be a self-fulfilling prophecy, as those without it may fail or not try because they lack it and those with it may succeed because they have it. Confidence can be built and is not simply something that is instilled upon you at birth. According to recent Stanford research, confidence is a learned behavior. Additionally, when you believe in yourself and display a confident attitude, your performance improves dramatically.

This research, called “achievement goal theory,” demonstrates that some people lack confidence and consider annual goals a challenge to their self-image. For them, each time they hit a setback or fail to achieve a goal, it becomes a personal threat. Therefore, they only pursue goals that they can complete easily – and avoid any experiences that challenge them to reach their full potential.

You will enhance your level of confidence by setting realistic and meaningful goals that you can achieve in a shorter, more specific time frame. Having said that, the 90-day sprint will require you to take necessary risks, increase your activity level, and learn new things. It is important to note that the research gives evidence that confidence is the byproduct of incremental, constant, and consistent improvement toward goal actualization.

The 3-Month Action Plan

To grow more confident and create tangible results, I have made it a habit to create 90-day action plans. When I focus on a three month segment, I gain instant clarity about my visions and make distinct progress toward my goals. The process of developing a new action plan every three months also enables me to pause, reflect, connect and re-energize on a regular basis.

Why 90 days? Beyond Insurance has discovered that many well-intentioned professionals set annual goals, yet, don't begin working in earnest until it is too late. In other words, they procrastinate.

Your 90-day action plan will remove procrastination from the equation. It will give you a set goal with a time limit that will cause you to take action today.

Additionally, there is a psychological lift when you set a 90-day goal because it provides you with a horizon – a tangible line in the future that you can “see.” It is short enough for you to imagine how it could impact your “today,” but far enough in the future for you to have time to achieve it.

How to Start

Begin by determining your 90-day sprint period. Start next week, next month, the first day of April (Q2). After the start line is in sight, consider using a system with the acronym SMART:

S – Specific: Define your goals with specificity. Who is involved? What do you want to accomplish? Where will it be done? Why are you doing this? What constraints and/or requirements/resources do you have?

M – Measurable: Track your progress and measure the outcomes. How much, how many, and how will you know when your goal is accomplished?

A – Attainable/Achievable: Make sure the goal is reasonable enough to be accomplished.

R – Relevant: Are your goals worthwhile? Is each goal consistent with the future vision of success you have established? Does each goal fit within your 90-day sprint?

T – Timely: Did you set a time limit or deadline? *Ex.* I will complete this step by month/day/year. Did you establish a sense of urgency to complete it in the next 90 days?

Make certain you have written your goals down on your 90-day action plan. Then, share your plan with your spouse, manager and team members. A study done at Dominican University

shows empirical evidence for achieving goals in three ways: accountability, commitment, and writing goals down.

1. By committing your goals to paper, you vastly increase your chances of achieving them. A group who wrote their goals down were almost **50%** more likely to achieve them than a group who only thought about the goals they wanted to achieve.
2. People who make a commitment to a friend or peer to attain them are **64%** more likely to actualize their goals. By making a public commitment, you will accomplish your goals more often than those who never share them.
3. People who provide progress reports are **76%** more likely to achieve them. The positive effect of accountability was supported by the study. People who send weekly progress reports accomplish significantly more than those who do not.

Next, go back and review your goals. Ask yourself about each one: “What can I accomplish during the next 90 days that will move me closer to my vision of future success?” Aim to lift yourself and your expectations. Your confidence will grow exponentially.

Next, ask yourself, how would my spouse, manager, and team react if I were to achieve these goals during the next 90 days? If you are unsure, ask them. They’ll give you feedback that will help you hone and sharpen your goals even before you begin working on them.

Starting Your Sprint

Once you have your 90-day goals, follow three steps every working day for the next three months:

1. **Prioritize your goals.** List your goals on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being most significant to you at this point in time – the one that will give you the highest return on your investment of time, and 1, meaning it is not a priority right now.
2. **Re-read your goals.** Ask yourself, “Upon further reflection, how important is the goal?” At this point, you may want to tweak the goal and aim a little higher. Push yourself to stretch as high as you can go.
3. **Choose a high-priority goal for the first day of your 90-day sprint** – make it the one with a huge ROI. Schedule it first thing in the morning. Commit to it as an appointment you *cannot break*.

At the end of 90 days, you’ll have accomplished an amazing amount and grown in so many ways. You will also realize that you can continue to stretch farther and do more. You will start expecting more of yourself and feel immensely more confident in your abilities.

The 90-day sprint is not only a proven concept, but also a change in mindset. After you conquer the first 90-day sprint, do the next one. You’ll find that you’re gaining traction. And you’ll discover that you’re shooting higher and more accurately. Your 90-day sprint...taking control of your life and plan!

About the Author

Scott Addis, CPCU, CRA, CBWA is the CEO of Beyond Insurance and is recognized as an industry leader having been named a Philadelphia finalist for *Inc. Magazine's* "Entrepreneur of the Year" award as well as one of the "25 Most Innovative Agents in America." Beyond Insurance is a consulting firm that offers leadership training, cultural transformation, and talent and tactical development for enlightened professionals who are looking to take their practice to the next level. Since 2007, the proven and repeatable processes of Beyond Insurance have transformed individuals and organizations as measured by enhanced organic growth, productivity, profitability, and value in the marketplace.