

Awesome Special Missions (ASMs)

By Phil Olley

The key to the way we approach our goals is the way in which these goals are presented. Goal-getting is all about goal-setting. The sad fact is, the vast majority of people, teams, businesses don't get their goals because of the way they set their goals.

Why do people often labour over small short-term goals, getting themselves stuck in a quagmire, and never really making the changes they want to make, or achieving those things that are really special to them? They set a target, soon forget it, or become bogged down, and they never finish it. Whereas others seem able to set big goals, and create a new level of super-performance, generating extra-ordinary breakthroughs, with focus, energy, boundless enthusiasm, passion and positivity.

As well as the fact that many people don't have a long term vision or goals, when it comes to setting their short term goals most people set themselves too many, and they make them too small. They end up overwhelmed, and making only incremental progress. It is better to make just a few big breakthroughs than to be overwhelmed by having so many goals that it's impossible to focus on them or keep track.

Let's consider how you can embark on a few short term goals, or projects as some would call them, in order to achieve tangible breakthroughs.

Well, first up, the term "Projects" is too dull a word for me, I'm afraid, and rekindles images of third year geography lessons. Hardly dynamic! So, I use the word ASM - or Awesome Special Mission. **ASMs** are short-term Breakthroughs which unlock specific doors to lead to your long term objectives.

Perhaps the best way to define an Awesome Special Mission is that it must have an immediate impact (a very specific and tangible result) and it must have a lasting effect (it's sustainable, and has an impact on the overall long term growth of say a business, or a team, or an individual).

So why the term "ASM"?

1. ASMs are **Awesome** because they represent the accomplishment of stretching goals and significant feats. The target is big, and to use the modern parlance, "awesome". Setting such a big goal should give you butterflies in your stomach. Some people think that is fear, and they shrink away from, or even dismantle, the goal before they've started. But, that "Butterfly moment" is in fact the first sign you are excited by the goal, and that's critically important! It should be a big enough goal that others might describe you as "mad" for going for it. And we all know that "mad" stands for "Making a Difference". So yes, your ASMs should be "Mad"

2. ASMs are **Special** because we want to be proud of them... for the whole team to look back on them in years to come and say, "Do you remember when we did x....", or for you personally to have a special pride in what you achieved. And why not make them feel special by allocating a codename to the mission, like a military operation!

And 3. they are **Missions** because they engage our hearts and minds. We care about them, deeply. They take absolute priority in terms of our focus, time, and energy. Like military operations on a raging battlefield - the enemy machine-gun bunker which must be taken out, at all costs. Like the hostage siege which must be broken. No place for faint hearts, or long drawn out meetings to think about, pontificate, postulate on what must be done next. Once the start line has been crossed it's all **action**. And all ***productive action***.

I suggest a three-month focus on around 3 ASMs (some people can do 5, or 6; some prefer just 1 or 2). That's a short enough timescale to inject some urgency, and make early action essential. It's also long enough to make the missions substantial, so that they will have an immediate impact and a lasting effect.

So, what are your 3 most important goals RIGHT NOW? Why not turn these into Awesome Special Missions for the next 3 months.

In business terms it could be setting a particularly huge quarterly sales goal, overhauling the systems in the business, or completely transforming the service you offer, or breaking into a whole new market.

And your ASMs don't just have to be business-related. For example, you might set a fitness ASM, of say running a 10 kilometre charity run, or a marathon (depending on your starting level). Or even an ASM to learn a new language, or to write a novel... you know, the one you always wanted to get round to writing.

There's an almost super-human focus and energy generated when you are passionate about a mission. You become absorbed by it, as if nothing else matters, and that's when you can't help but succeed. And don't forget to set a reward for achieving them.

Whatever your ASMs, I wish you the very best of luck with them!