

For a good start

**CRAVE SUCCESS
LIKE AIR**

“Up and reach the places out of sight, Break that to which the brain can do no harm!”¹, wrote Adam Mickiewicz, a famous Polish poet, in the poem “Ode to Youth”. For me, it is a great metaphor for striving to set and achieve great, bold goals. I would like all the readers of my guide - leaders, managers, and business owners - to remember this message as best as they can.

I believe that the goals that we set for ourselves must capture our imagination. They must be a challenge.

For me, the project of *Gazeta Prawna*² was such a challenge, i.e., the creation of a professional, objective and opinion-forming legal and economic journal. I strove consistently for years to achieve this. First, we started to publish more frequently. Then, a bold merger with *Dziennik* was followed by the purchase of shares. This took 20 years, but it was a success. This was my goal: a bold and daring one. But this is the whole sense of doing business, of being a manager: the attainment of ambitious goals.

¹ Translated by Jarosław Zawadzki (https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Ode_to_Youth).

² The translations of the titles of the Polish newspapers and magazines referred to in the book are listed on page 336.

Such a bold goal is also the yardstick of a leader. A real leader is one who is followed by other people, not one who drags or pushes them in front of him or her. If a leader is able to convince their co-workers to embrace their visionary idea, gain their trust and build their faith in its success, then they win. Both they and their team.

At the beginning of every great goal, there is a dream. John F. Kennedy had a dream, declaring in 1961 that - by the end of the decade - an American would have landed on the Moon. Even though NASA had not yet had any experience, even in flights around the Earth! Was this not rushing in where angels fear to tread? Even if this were so, this vision was so exciting that it fascinated tens of thousands of people, who did everything to make it happen.

Similarly impressive are the strategic goals of global business geniuses. That is how you should regard Bill Gates' vision of a computer on every desk and in every home, and Steve Jobs' accomplishments. Initially, no one believed in the vision of Meg Whitman - the head of eBay - when she announced that in five years, the profit of the website would increase from \$400 million to \$3 billion. She made \$4.5 billion. That silenced everyone who had called her crazy. Besides, she was not the only one to be called that. This is the fate of all visionaries who set unprecedented goals for themselves and their teams.

When, a few years ago, during a meeting with Mr Marcus, CEO of the German company Haufe, I heard about his plans to triple the company's revenue in five years, I was stunned. He achieved this goal. Neither will I shy away from assuming today that the Infor Group's revenues will double in

the future. Even now, when the media market is stagnating, competition is getting ever fiercer, and the crisis associated with the pandemic has not faded away. I know this is a big, bold goal, but I have faith that we'll get there. In addition, we have a few other bold goals. We want our store to take eighty percent of our digital product sales, with only twenty percent through traditional channels in 2025.

One could multiply examples of radical goals reached by visionaries, although others have found them impossible. In Poland, we also have many dreamers, who have been able to transform their dreams into ambitious goals, then see their dreams come true. Perhaps, the most spectacular success - on account of its global reach - was achieved by the owners of *CD Projekt*, the creators of *The Witcher*. Dariusz Milek, the founder of CCC, currently the leader of the footwear sector in Central and Eastern Europe, has also fulfilled his dream. Other examples of success are, for example, *InPost* or *Żabka*. These are, of course, only a few, but there are more. We may be inspired by world visionaries, but we must also be proud of Polish entrepreneurs who have shown that the limit of human possibilities is only our imagination.

On the other hand, there are people who have not set themselves bold goals, choosing to set none at all. Either they lack fortitude, self-discipline, and determination, or they are too comfortable to put in the extra effort. That is their choice. Not everyone has to be like Einstein or Jobs. They can enjoy a quiet life and little day-to-day joys. Such people have opted for well-being, instead of the stress accompanying the achievement of great goals.

However, I think that a set of goals - large or small - is worth having, not only in our work, but also in our private lives. Even when we have failed to hit the target, the satisfaction of knowing what can be done is priceless.

Not everyone has the courage, imagination, and determination to reach for the stars (in this case Mars) like Elon Musk. But all must have unwavering faith in the prospect of success. Only then will they achieve their goals.

My favourite parable is when a Tibetan monk spoke of how great this faith must be. His disciple - who had been immersed in a river several times - experienced this in practice. He learnt that success would come to those who craved it like he craved the air when, on his last attempt, the master nearly drowned him.

Therefore, I would like all my readers to strain every sinew to achieve bold goals. I guarantee that these goals will then be achieved. I also hope that my book will be a source of help and inspiration, however modest.

At ryszard.pienkowski@infor.pl, I shall be waiting to hear what inspiration readers found in my book, and what they managed to achieve. I shall be more than happy to answer any questions.