

# Vision and the Goal Achievement Model



## 3.1 The Need for Vision and Goals

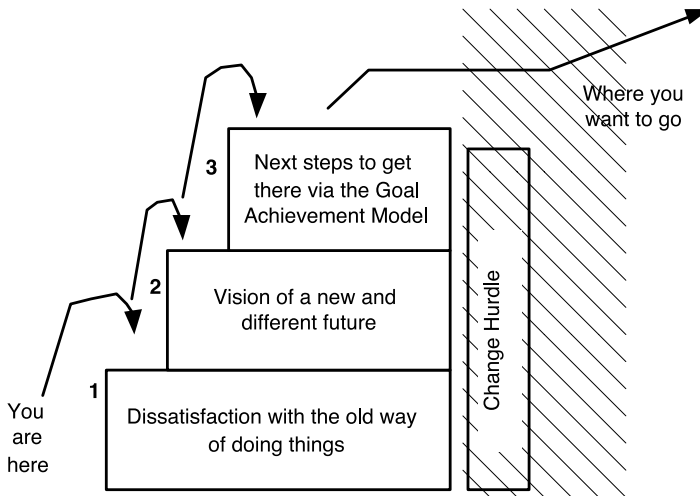
It is said that “if you don’t know where you are going, then you will never know when you have arrived.” I would like to modify this statement and add an additional thought to focus it on the topic of change management. “As a leader within your company, if you don’t know where you are going, then you will never be able to put in place processes that will get you there and you never will arrive.” This statement makes two important points. First you need a vision to define where you want your firm to go. Second, you need a plan that will enable you to get from where you are to where you want to be.

Imagine a company that has in place a very reactive maintenance work culture. Its vision of maintenance is to arrive at work in the morning, find out what broke down over night, and then react by making repairs to the equipment and returning it to service as soon as possible. This firm’s idea of a vision is to have a day when production isn’t complaining about equipment in need of repair, how long it takes maintenance to make repairs, or the sub-standard quality of the repairs.

Now suppose you arrive on the scene as the new maintenance manager. You have recently been hired to bring to the company the techniques you used at your former firm which changed its extremely reactive work culture to one that was reliability focused. In addition, you helped to improve production by reducing breakdowns, and you provided effective and efficient maintenance services by addressing predictive and preventive maintenance strategies vs. the “break it – fix it” mode of reactive maintenance.

As the new maintenance leader, you have three tasks at hand. The first step is to show the organization that what it is doing, while getting breakdowns repaired and production back on line, is not an effective or efficient solution to the maintenance problem. This effort is not simple and is entirely focused on changing the work culture. I will hold off on this discussion for now because it is the topic that is addressed in the balance of this book. Instead, what I want to discuss are the other two tasks: creating the vision of the future (step 2) and providing the plant

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**Figure 3-1 The change hurdle**

with the next steps to achieve it (step3). Figure 3-1 shows the three steps you need to take if you want to get over the hurdle blocking you from successfully changing the work culture.

### 3.2 What Is Vision?

Many reading this book have set visions within their companies. I know I have on numerous occasions and with numerous managers. Before I define what I believe a vision is, let me tell you what I believe a vision is not:

- It is not a long winded treatise
- It is not a statement that is difficult to understand
- It is not a tool reserved only for senior managers
- It is not something fixed in stone never to be changed

Instead, a vision is a clear picture of something that the firm wants to achieve. It is short and to the point, understandable by everyone. The easiest way to tell if a vision is incorrect is to ask a cross section of the employees to state it. If everyone can paint the same picture, then the vision has been set and communicated correctly. Otherwise the process of setting the vision needs to be reworked.

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*In Successfully Managing Change in Organizations: A Users Guide*, I defined vision as follows;

Vision is an idealized picture of a future state, one that is integrated into the organization's culture. It provides a stretch, yet it is achievable over an extended time period with a great deal of work and collective focus by the entire organization. Because it continually evolves, it is never fully achieved.

Let's look more closely at this definition and discuss the component parts.

### **An Idealized Picture of a Future State =**

Vision should be something that people can clearly see. When asked, all employees in the company should be able to describe the same end state – what their firm will look like when the vision is achieved. They may use different words, but the picture they paint needs to be the same.

### **Integrated into the Organization's Culture =**

The vision must be difficult, if not impossible, to alter so that personnel changes can not easily destroy what the collective members have created. Too often the vision is not sufficiently integrated into the company culture. In these cases, a change in management can easily alter or destroy what everyone has worked to achieve.

### **A Stretch, Yet Achievable**

The vision needs to be something that the firm can achieve, but not easily. If it is too difficult, people will become frustrated and give up. If it is not a stretch, then it will be easily accomplished and will not have significant value.

### **Extended Time and a Great Deal of Work**

A vision is not something that can be accomplished in a short period of time. It represents a major shift in how a firm does business. If a vision can be achieved overnight, then it is not sufficiently a stretch for the firm. On the other hand, a worthwhile vision, one that takes a lot of time and requires a major shift in the culture, will take a great deal of work.

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#### Collective Focus by the Entire Organization

It is not enough if just one person, or even a few people, understand and are working to achieve the vision. Instead, the vision must be a collective effort for the entire organization. Only then can it not only succeed, but also be long lasting and beneficial.

#### Continually Evolving, Never Accomplished

Although the vision is set at the beginning, the organization continually evolves; the end-state is never accomplished. In fact, by the time that the initially described end state is reached, a new and evolved end state will have replaced the original.

At this point, a few examples are in order. In 1961 President John F. Kennedy said “It is my plan to put an American on the moon and return him safely by the end of the decade.” While this was many years ago,

Idealized picture of a future state	Safety programs are highly evolved in industry today. A picture of this level of performance related to reliability is certainly an idealized one.
Integrated into the culture	If a reliability program similar to the safety program is put into place, it will be integrated and not easily altered by new management.
Stretch yet achievable	The fact that a similar vision can be achieved for safety clearly points out that a reliability program in the same format is a stretch, yet achievable.
Extended time frame	Programs of this nature can not be achieved overnight, so it fits the extended time frame requirement.
Great deal of work required	If we reflect on the time and effort to improve safety, a similar effort for reliability will certainly take a great deal of work, require organizational focus, and total involvement.
Collective focus required	
Entire organization involvement	
Continuous evolution	Just as with safety, a good reliability program will continue to evolve as people learn from their efforts.

*Figure 3-2 Comparing vision definition to a reliability example*

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Kennedy created a vision for the United States that was succinct and extremely clear. It put into motion a process that not only put a man on the moon by the end of the decade, but evolved into the space program that was responsible for the Shuttle program, missions to the planets, and other NASA-related achievements. All of this in only 21 words!

Let us take one more example that is related to plant maintenance and reliability. Suppose we set a vision for our firm that states, “We will operate and maintain our plant assets in a manner similar to how we address the safety of our employees.” This vision again is very clear and concise. It is easy to remember and paints a very vivid picture of a new and different type of maintenance program. In Figure 3-2 we can examine how this vision fits the definition of vision stated above.

### **3.3 Why Is a Vision Required?**

Without a vision, an organization has no destination or idealized future state. There is nothing to strive for and, quite often, the organization accepts the status quo as being the desired state that it seeks. In the world of maintenance and reliability, this view is acceptable if the status quo is based on a reliability-focused work culture. Although it is true that even in this culture there is always need for improvement, it certainly is better than an organization that believes the “break it fix it” mode is the work culture that it seeks. For companies without a vision of something better, there probably won’t be any dissatisfaction with the current state and, as a result, no growth.

The next question we need to ask, if we agree that a vision is a requirement for organizational growth and cultural change, is who creates the vision of the future? The answer to this question is that the vision is created by the leadership. For reasons that we shall discuss in greater detail in subsequent chapters, it is up to the leaders to set direction – both short term and long term – and then work with the organization to make it happen. A very important part of this effort is to establish the vision for the organization and support the change required to make it work.

The second part – how do we accomplish the vision? – is not as easy a question to answer as it may seem. If the organization believes that the status quo is where it wants to be, then a vision other than what is currently in place will be difficult. If the organization is dissatisfied with its current state, it is headed in the right direction. However, because its collective frame of reference is the same and it shares a common set

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of experiences, it may not make the choice that will optimize its position in the future. So what is the answer?

In order to achieve a breakthrough change, an organization needs external focus. This can be accomplished in two ways; companies usually resort to a combination of both. The first way is to bring in new leadership. This step does not mean that the current leadership is bad, rather that the current leadership is restricted by their organization's culture. When outsiders are brought in to change a culture, they are often met by resistance. The strongest resistance usually comes from the incumbent leadership and role models of the old way or working. They are the ones with the greatest difficulty in seeing the need for the change.

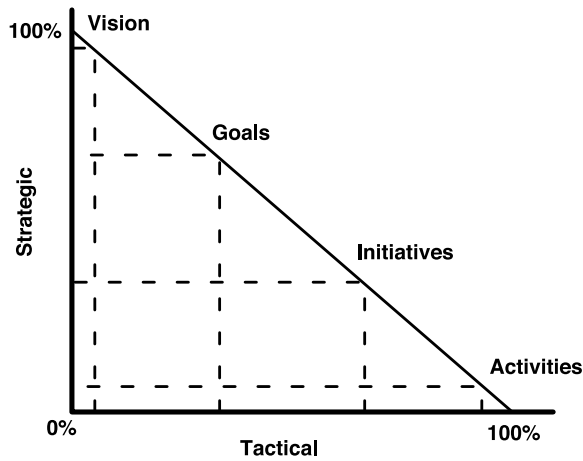
The second way (which usually accompanies the first) is to utilize outside consultants. These individuals have a broad breath of experience. They have seen how companies that are experiencing similar problems have succeeded. In addition, they have seen how change can be accomplished in multiple industries and by employing many and varied methods. They also have experience facilitating change efforts – a very important ingredient for success. For more on how to effectively work with consultants, see my other text *Successfully Managing Change in Organizations: A Users Guide*. The answer that will enable an organization to create the vision it needs to be successful is to bring external influence into the mix.

### **3.4 The Goal Achievement Model**

Once a vision has been created, the next step is to translate the vision into action. This is accomplished by the use of a tool referred to as the Goal Achievement Model. This model enables you to take a strategic concept and convert it into actionable work for the organization. By creating successive levels of detail, you move from a highly strategic concept to one that is tactically focused. The Goal Achievement Model has five parts – vision, goals, initiatives, activities, and measures. The first four are the main components whereas the last is the tracking tool for the model. Measurement will be discussed separately in Section 3.7.

Figure 3-3 shows the relationship among the first four elements of the model. In this figure, the x-axis represents the percentage that each element has as a tactical component. The y-axis portrays the same information for the strategic component. Using this model you can see the relative strategic and tactical percentages that each of the elements pos-

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*Figure 3-3 Tactical vs. strategic*

sess. Note that as you become more tactical (moving from vision towards activities), you interact with subsequently lower levels of the organizational structure.

### 3.5 How the Goal Achievement Model Works

The Goal Achievement Model begins with setting the company vision. This is the cornerstone of the overall process. The next step is to identify several goals that support the vision. The relationship is one (vision) to many (goals). You need to be careful that you select only four or five goals. More than this and the organization becomes awash in too many goals and its efforts are diluted. Too few and the organization will run out of things to focus on as it works through the process. Remember that the goal stage is still more strategic than tactical so that goals are high-level efforts.

Next, initiatives are established based on the goals. Again this is a one-to-many relationship. If you developed four goals and for each goal you developed four initiatives, you would have sixteen initiatives. The initiative stage is more tactical and less strategic.

The last step is the development of specific activities. These are totally tactical in nature and are developed at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy. Again there is a one-to-many relationship. Extending our calculation, if we established four activities for each initiative, we would

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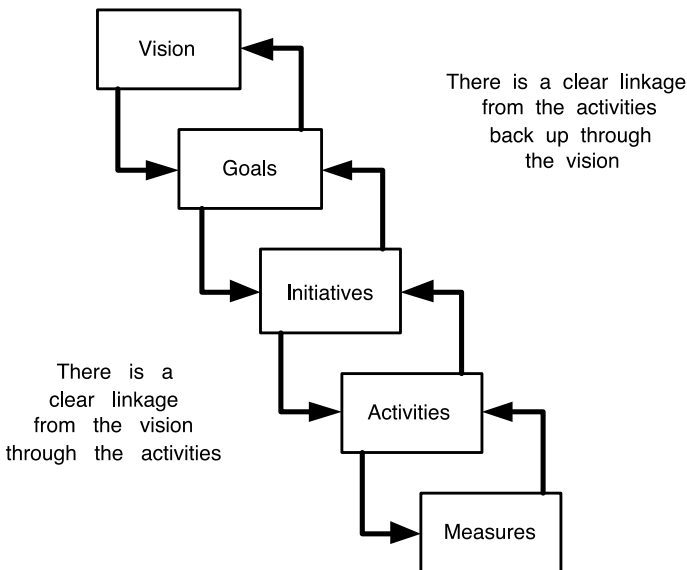
be working on sixty-four activities.

This example points out why we don't develop more than four of five goals at an one time. If there are more than five, it makes sense to complete one or more of them and then take on the others. If you try to address all of them at the same time, you spread the organization too thin and will probably accomplish very little.

As you can see in Figure 3-4, the significant benefit of using the model is that it creates a clear pathway for the organization to see how a vision can create goals which, in turn, can be used to create initiatives and ,finally, activities. There is a secondary benefit from the Goal Achievement Model: Those working on the details – at the activity level - can clearly see how the tasks on which they are working link upwards to the initiatives, then goals, and ultimately the company's vision. As a result, no matter the task, anyone can see how it supports the company's vision.

### 3.6 A Reliability-Based Example

Let us examine the Goal Achievement Model in more detail using a reliability-based example. The full model for this example is shown in Figure 3-5.



**Figure 3-4 Goal Achievement Model – high level**

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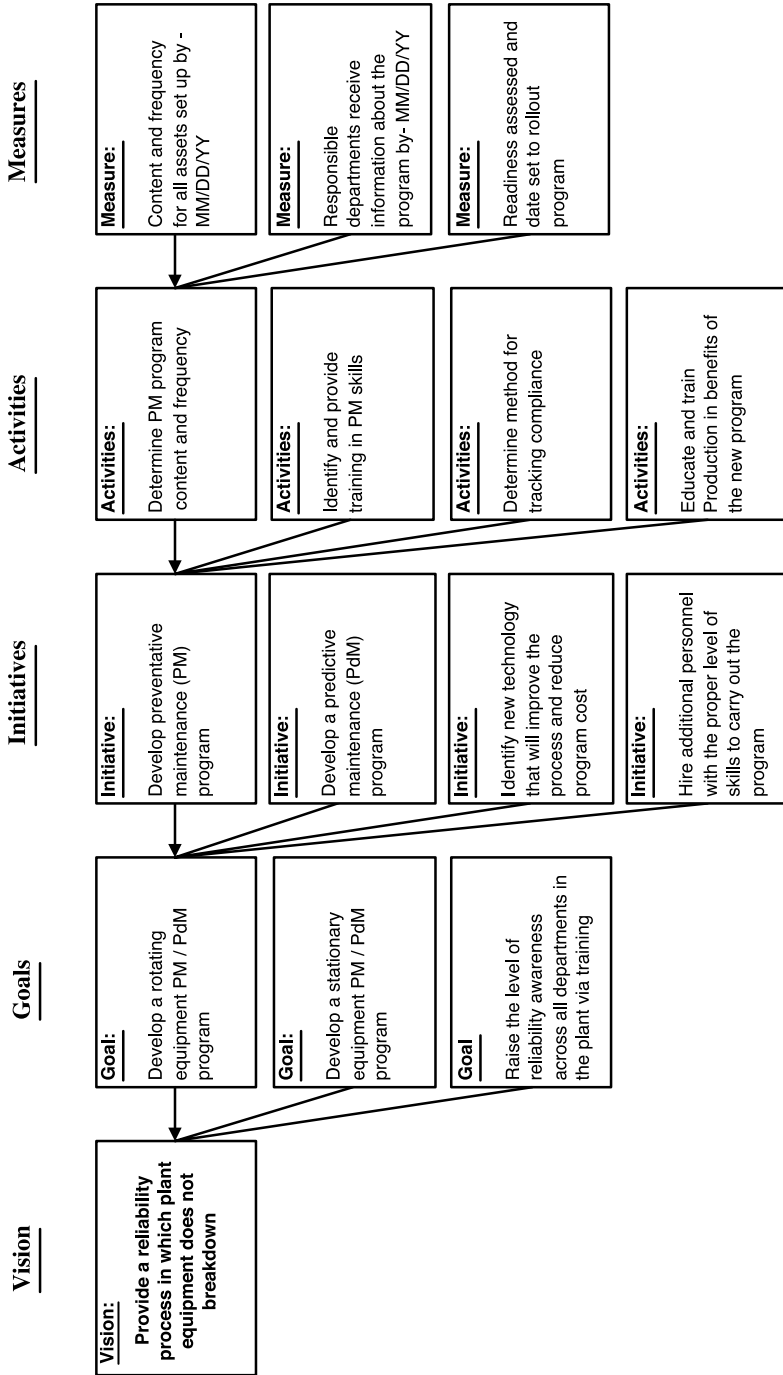
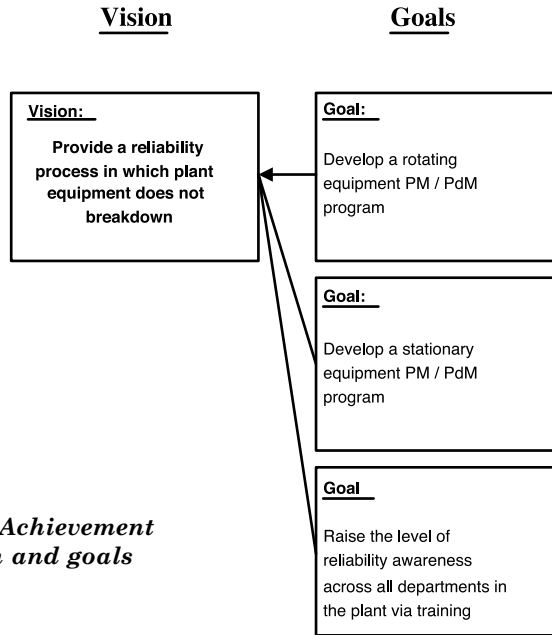


Figure 3-5 Example of full Goal Achievement Model

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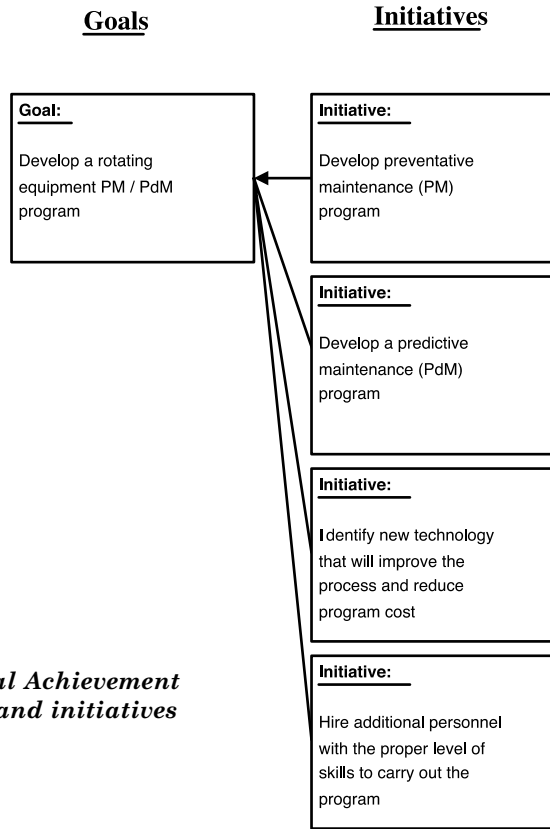
**Figure 3-6 Goal Achievement Model – vision and goals**

Suppose that your plant had very poor reliability. Equipment was always breaking down and maintenance spent most of its time reacting to the failure-of-the-day. Resources were poorly utilized and profitability was suffering as a result. In order to improve this situation, management decided to implement a preventive and predictive maintenance program and set this as a vision for the organization. Management also believed that the Goal Achievement Model would be an excellent way to get everyone involved and part of the new process. With this in mind, the senior staff established goals based on their vision – Figure 3-6.

Continuing with the model, the middle tier of the organization was assigned the task of reviewing the goals. Then separate teams each took on one goal to further develop the initiatives and activities required to drive the work down through the organization.

The rotating equipment team took on the first goal: Developing a Rotating Equipment Preventive (PM) and Predictive (PdM) Program. At their first meeting, they developed several initiatives that they believed would help them develop and implement a program that would improve plant reliability. This goal from Figure 3-6 and the initiatives they created are shown in Figure 3-7.

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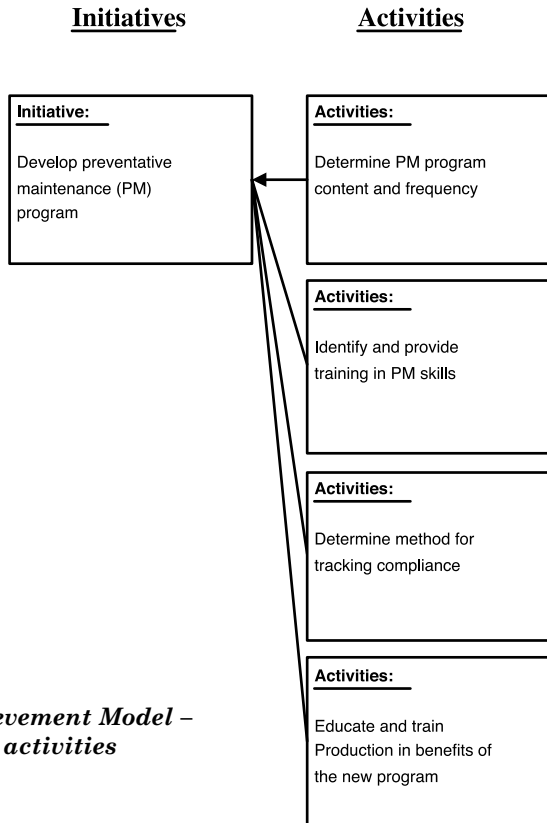
**Figure 3-7 Goal Achievement Model – goals and initiatives**

As we work our way down through the model, you can see that the work tasks get more focused and more specific to what we are trying to achieve.

Once specific initiatives are established, the next step is to engage those at the working level. The model cannot be used only for management. Everyone must be part of the process, working to achieve the vision. Regardless of their work levels, all contribute to the final outcome. With this in mind, the workforce is brought into the picture. Sub-teams are formed to develop and work at the activity level. For our example, we will select one of the initiatives: Develop the preventative maintenance (PM) program. Working on this initiative, the sub-teams developed the activities shown in Figure 3-8

At this point we have reached the bottom level of the Goal Achievement Model. It should be evident from Figure 3-5 that the benefit to management is the ability to clearly see a pathway from their

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**Figure 3-8 Goal Achievement Model – initiatives and activities**

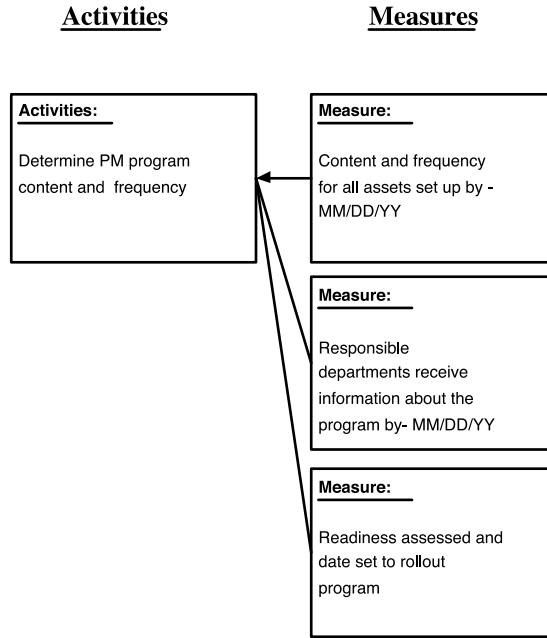
vision all the way down to the activity level. Even more important is the fact that those working at the activity level (the workforce) can clearly see how their efforts contribute to the accomplishment of the specific initiative, which supports the goal, which in turn supports the vision.

This aspect of goal development and accomplishment has been left out of the equation all too often. It leaves the workforce unengaged in the improvement process and results in cultural stagnation. People will work very hard at all levels if they believe that they are adding value; conversely, if they do not believe that their work has meaning and benefits the company, they will generally not work hard at all.

### 3.7 Goal Achievement Model Measures

The discussion of measures requires additional clarity. Once management recognizes the model’s value, they will want to put their own

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***Figure 3-9 Goal Achievement Model – activities and measures***

spin on how it is used and what some of the parts mean. I have seen this done most frequently with the last and most important section: measurement.

Managers work at the strategic level almost all of the time. As a result, their measurements are often at the same level. You may have heard these measures referred to as KPIs or Key Performance Indicators. At times these can be quite nebulous for the rest of the organization. People see the measures, but they are at such a high level that they do not have direct and immediate application for those at the working levels of the organization. For example, some possible KPIs are maintenance as a percentage of the replacement value of the plant, maintenance cost as a percentage of production, and others of the same nature. The problem with these measures is that most of us have no way of reconciling the measure with our day-to-day work activity.

Senior managers are going to want to create similar measures for the Goal Achievement Model. **THIS IS NOT THE PURPOSE OF THIS-PART OF THE MODEL.** The measurement section of the model is designed to track activities. Using the first activity to determine PM

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program content and frequency, you can see in Figure 3-9 that the measures define when various aspects of this activity are going to be completed. This measure enables you to hold people who are performing the activity responsible and accountable for its completion. If I was developing the program content and frequency and I have to complete it by a specific date, then my manager should have a tracking tool similar to the one in Figure 3-9 to make certain this activity was completed.

### **3.8 Final Thoughts**

As you will learn in subsequent chapters, cultural change requires you to address and alter key aspects that are at the very heart of the organization. Changing values, role models, and rites and rituals is a difficult task. However, the Goal Achievement Model can be used as a tool to support and facilitate the changes that you seek. It provides a way to structure the change and engage everyone in the process. Furthermore, if the measurement section is used as designed, it will enable you to hold teams and individuals both accountable and responsible for successful outcomes.