The timing of this article was ideal in that it coincided with the time period in which the field of psychology concluded that behaviorism (the doctrine that human action could be understood without reference to consciousness) was dead as an intellectual force. This ended any lingering doubts among scientists about the suitability of a cognitive approach to motivation. This development, plus the positive findings obtained in early goal setting research, led to a further proliferation of goal setting studies. By the time Locke and Latham’s book was published, the number of goal setting studies had exceeded five hundred—and more studies are still being conducted today. Goal setting theory is now generally accepted as among the most valid and generalizable motivation theories in industrial-organizational psychology, human resource management, and organizational behavior. We, and other researchers, are continuing to expand goal setting research into new areas. Recent examples are: the relation of goals to expected satisfaction and to the instrumentality of goal outcomes; goals as mediators of the effects of monetary incentives; goals as mediators of the effects of charismatic leadership; the effects of goal conflict on performance; the relative effectiveness of process versus end result goals; the effectiveness of goal setting on complex tasks; and the relative validity of predictions of behavior based on conscious goals versus subconscious motives.

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