

BHAG — It's Not a Four-Letter Word!

Of all the acronyms one comes across as an MPS&A employee, the one that's perhaps least musical to the ear is one that was just recently introduced — **BHAG**. This unfortunate grouping of letters stands for **Big Hairy Audacious Goal**, which, without context, makes about as much sense as its acronym.

The term BHAG was coined by authors Jim Collins and Jerry Porras in their best-selling book "Built to Last, Successful Habits of Visionary Companies." What they described as a "Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal" is a goal that challenges the very nature of a business' existence. It's a call to action that might take years, even decades, to achieve. And it should resonate emotionally with those working for the company, to inspire them to keep striving toward that possibly distant destination.

One of the most famous examples of a BHAG was made by [President John F. Kennedy](#) on May 25, 1961. He said, "This nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth."

Now, *that's* a BHAG. Was the goal big? Well, yes, going to the Moon would be the most complex endeavor in human history. Would it be hairy? Yeah, flying through outer space to land on another celestial body is pretty hairy. Was it audacious? You bet, especially when you realize that Alan Shepard became the first American in space just 20 days before Kennedy's speech.

When the decision was made to launch the MAPS project to transform our company into a services business, creating a BHAG was an important first step. A transformation like this can't happen overnight, and a BHAG can help focus our attention on the overarching goal during what will almost certainly prove to be a long, challenging journey.

Our BHAG is, "Become the #1 service provider of pharmacy business solutions by 2020." It hits all the marks — it's a big goal (become the #1 provider), its hairy (there are a lot of other service providers in the marketplace), and it's audacious (we have five

years to reach our goal).

As the MAPS project moves forward, now and years into the future, we can all refer back to the BHAG to make sure we're on the right path. If we're doing something that isn't going to help us Become the #1 service provider of pharmacy business solutions by 2020, we need to ask ourselves, "Wait, why are we doing this?"



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