blog.roboflow.ai /how-to-win-pioneer/

#### **How to Win Pioneer**

3-4 minutes

Pioneer is an online startup accelerator where companies are chosen based (partially) on weekly peerreview of progress updates. Roboflow has now been #1 on the global leaderboard for 18 consecutive weeks. In this post, I'm going to reveal our secrets and tell you how you can dethrone us.

Note: this post was originally a reply to a Hacker News comment.

### Step 1: Set Clear, Measurable Goals

Each Sunday you'll declare what you hope to accomplish in the week ahead. Setting concrete goals is the first step to a good update. Your goals should be things that the voters will be able to clearly understand and judge whether you completed them or not.

Goals of the form "start x", "think about y", or "continue z" are not good. *Anything* could fulfill them. You will lose out to competitors whose goals are "launch x", "deploy y", or "complete z".

Good goals should be just on the right side of manageable. If you're not routinely completing all of your milestones, you should try to set more realistic goals the next time.

### Step 2: Exceed Them

Hard work is necessary (but not sufficient) for winning the tournament.

We never publish goals that are governed by forces outside of our control. Getting revenue, press, and users aren't deterministic. Instead of setting goals on these outputs, we set goals for the inputs (like doing demos, pitching journalists, and publishing content).

The 2nd-order outputs are *great* bonus items for your end-of-week updates!

# **Step 3: Communicate Clearly**

The Pioneer community consists of all sorts of people with various backgrounds. Developing effective communication skills will help you not just in the tournament but also when fundraising, selling, and explaining what you do to your mom.

This is a valuable skill. If people don't understand what you do it's going to make it very hard to get them to vote for you. Don't use jargon. Give details on your accomplishments (don't just copy/paste your goals and change them to the past tense).

One Pioneer-specific tactic we use is emoji bullet points. This lets people easily match up our stated goals with our progress report.

## **Step 4: Show the Receipts**

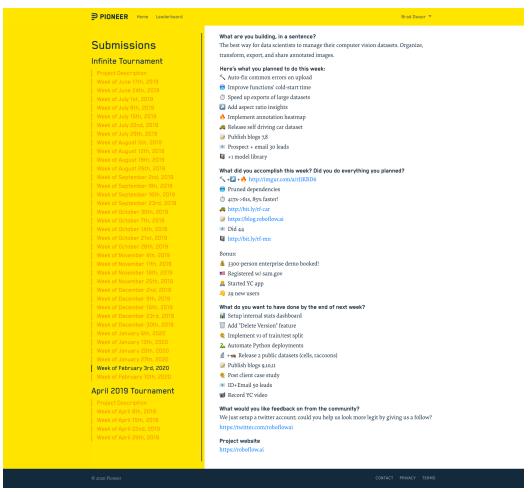
Pioneer supports links in the updates; use them. If you said you were going to blog, don't just say "posted to our blog", link to the post!

We link to an imgur album each week showing screenshots of new features and additions. We also include screenshots of our stats dashboards and relevant tools when applicable.

Tip: Bit.ly shortlinks are helpful for adding links while remaining under Pioneer's character limit.

## **Example Update**

So what does that look like when you put it all together? Here's one of our recent Roboflow Pioneer updates that kept us in first place on the leaderboard for another week:



A link to the referenced album for convenience: https://imgur.com/a/rJiKBD6

### That's it.

Do those things and we'll see you on the leaderboard.