

SMART GOALS

Would you get on a plane if you didn't know where it was going? Probably not. When planning a trip, most people have a destination in mind. The same can be said for achieving the goals we want in our personal and professional lives. If we set goals, especially SMART goals, we are more likely to achieve them! It also helps to write goals down and to review them, not unlike a trip plan with an itinerary and places to visit.

So what's a goal? Simply, a specific and measurable accomplishment to be achieved within a specific time. Goals can be as simple as paying bills on time so as not to incur penalties to complex ones, to get retrained for a more challenging job.

A SMART goal is one that is:

Specific

Measurable

Attainable or Achievable

Relevant or Realistic &

Time Bound.

For example, if you wanted to learn a new language, your goal could be:

Specific – "I would like to gain proficiency in French"

Measurable – "...At the intermediate level..."

Attainable – "To be able to communicate in most common situations"

Relevant – "...For my upcoming business trip to France"

Time bound "...By September 15th..."

Specific - A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. Setting specific goals answers the "W" questions:

Who: Who is involved?

What: What do I want to accomplish?

Where: Identify a location.

When: Establish a time frame.

Which: Identify requirements and constraints.

Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

For example: A general goal would be, "Get a promotion." A specific goal would be: "Increase my sales output by 20% and take sales classes to be considered for senior sales manager by the next performance review session."

Measurable – Set out concrete criteria for measuring progress toward reaching each of your goals. Measuring helps you stay on track. How do you measure? Well if you are learning a language you could write an exam, if you are trying to improve at work you could set criteria that you and your manager agree would be good measures of your success. To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as.....How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable - You can attain most of your goals if you break the goal into steps. Make sure it is a goal you can reach. Trying to become CEO in 2 years after graduating from university is probably not attainable or achievable.

Realistic - To be realistic, a goal must represent one that you are *willing* and *able* to do. Sometime we set "stretch goals," goals just further than we think we might be able to achieve in order to motivate ourselves or others but don't make it so big that you'll set yourself up for failure.

Time-bound – Goals need to have deadlines associated with them. You can set progress steps on your calendar but also give it a deadline. Without a deadline we are less likely to work towards a goal.

Here are some additional tips to setting your goals:

- ✓ Define them in terms of results or conditions to be achieved not in terms of activities to be performed.
- ✓ Write using action phrases such as "complete by," "replace with," "achieve," etc.
- ✓ State in positive language what is to be done, **not** what is to be avoided.
- ✓ Design objective to utilize current resources and skills.
- ✓ Write in quantifiable terms that are easily measurable and easily reported.

Need more information on SMART goals? Contact Laura Jacob at Pro Way Development 203.961.0227 or laura@prowaydevelopment.com