

# Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals

**S**pecific    **M**easurable    **A**ttainable    **R**elevant    **T**imely

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**Specific** - A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six "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.

**EXAMPLE:** A general personal goal would be, "Get in shape." However, a specific personal goal would be, "Join a health club and workout 3 days a week."

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**Measurable** - Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal.

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as: How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

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## **Attainable**

Goals must be realistic and attainable by normal teams. The best goals require the team to stretch a bit to achieve them, but they are not extreme. That is, the goals are neither out of reach nor below standard performance. Goals that are set too high or too low become meaningless, and will be ignored. When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals. To set an attainable goal you must answer the "H" question:

- How: How can the goal be accomplished?

You can attain almost any goal you set when you plan your steps wisely and establish a time frame that allows you to carry out those steps. Goals that may have seemed far away and out of reach eventually move closer and become attainable, not because your goals shrink, but because you grow and expand to match them. When you list your goals, you develop your self-image. You see yourself as worthy of these goals, and develop the traits and personality that allow you to possess them.

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## **Relevant**

To be relevant, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both willing and able to work. A goal can be both high and relevant; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be. However, be sure that every goal represents substantial progress. A high goal is frequently easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seem easy simply because they were a labor of love. Your goal is probably relevant if you truly believe that it can be accomplished. Additional ways to know if your goal is relevant is to determine if you have accomplished anything similar in the past or ask yourself what conditions would have to exist to accomplish this goal.

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## **Timely**

A goal should be grounded within a time frame. A goal must have a target date. Commitment to deadlines helps teams to focus their efforts on completion of the goal on or before the due date. Goals without deadlines or schedules for completion tend to be overtaken by the day-to-day crises that invariably arise in an organization. With no time frame tied to it, there is no sense of urgency. To set a timely goal you must answer the sixth "W" question:

- When: Establish a time frame.

If you want to accomplish a goal, when do you want to accomplish it by? "Someday" will not work. However, if you anchor it within a timeframe, "by January 1st", then you have set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal. A deadline too far in the future is too easily put off. A goal that is set too close is not only unrealistic, it is discouraging. Long-term goals are simply a description of what you want for yourself in the future -- say about 3 to 5 years out. The best way to define them is to give examples: graduate college, earn a promotion, buy a first home, etc. A goal is not a plan; it is more like a wish list with (hopefully) a basis in reality. Then set short-term goals to reach that plan.

- What can I do 6 months from now?
- What can I do 6 weeks from now?
- What can I do today?