

SMART Goal-Setting

S_{pecific}

Goals should be straightforward and emphasize what you want to happen. Specifics help us to focus our efforts and clearly define what we are going to do.

Specifics encompass the *what*, *why*, and *how* of the SMART SMART model. Diagnostic questions include the following:

- *What* are you going to do? Use action words such as direct, organize, coordinate, lead, develop, plan, build, etc. Is the outcome clear?
- *Why* is this important to do at this time? What do you want to ultimately accomplish?
- *How* are you going to do it? (By...)

Ensure the goals you set are very **specific, clear, and easy to understand**. For example, instead of setting a goal to lose weight or be healthier (vague definitions when trying to implement action), set a *specific* goal to lose one inch off your waistline or to walk two miles in a specific number of minutes.

M_{easurable}

If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. In the broadest sense, the entire goal statement is a measure for the project; if the goal is accomplished, then it is a success. However, there are usually several short-term or small measurements that can be built into the goal.

Choose a goal with measurable progress, **so you can see the change occur**. How will you see when you reach your goal? Be specific. "I want to read three books of 100 pages or more before my birthday" shows the specific target to be measured. "I want to be a good reader" is not as 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 the continued effort required to reach your goals.

SMART Goals:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Results-oriented

Time-based

Achievable

You probably won't commit to achieving goals you set which are too far out of your reach. Although you may start with the best of intentions, the knowledge that it's too much for you means your subconscious will keep reminding you of this fact and will stop you from even giving it your best.

A goal needs to stretch you slightly so you feel you can do it and it will need a real commitment from you. For instance, if you aim to lose 20 pounds in one week, we all know that isn't achievable. But setting a goal to lose one pound the first week, and subsequently aiming to lose a second pound the next week will keep it achievable for you. It is also measurable. The feeling of success which this brings helps you to remain motivated.

Results-Oriented

Regardless of the measures selected as the strategic targets/objectives, the organization must be focused on the results the measures represent and not just on undertaking the activities and doing. **“Doing” or “making an effort” isn't sufficient – results are required.**

An ability to instill a high level of commitment to the strategic success of the organization and all its components creates an atmosphere where there is a constructive pressure to achieve. This pressure to achieve must be accompanied by a culture that mandates “doing the right things” – operationally, financially, ethically, and at all other decision points. Achieving results at any cost, even sacrificing the future to hit today's targets, is destructive to the overall intent and long-term vision of the organization.

When an organization is able to achieve performance consistently and to reach its desired outcomes, then momentum builds within the organization and beyond. High performance begets high performance. The expectation of the organization becomes success. Each person's role and the expectation to perform provide motivation and support for moving the organization forward.

Examples of results-oriented objectives:

Based upon customer results, I will develop an action plan to address key areas of dissatisfaction and achieve 2% improvement in customer satisfaction, measured through our customer evaluations, by November 1, 2008.

Develop a plan and begin implementing the plan no later than 50 days after receiving the deficiency report. For example, “Develop a plan that rates our customer service and begin implementing the plan no later than 50 days after receiving a valid report about customer complaints.

Time-based

Set a timeframe for the goal: for next week, in three months, by June 30, etc. Putting an end point on your goal gives you a clear target to work toward. It also makes the goal measurable.

If you don't set a time, the commitment is too vague. It tends not to happen because you feel you can start at any time. Without a time limit, there's no urgency to start taking action now.

Time must be measurable and attainable.

SMART Goals: “Line-of-Sight” Goal-Setting

A vital component of high performance is clarity of expectations. Every employee's goals must align with the strategic goals of the University and the department. In addition, they should also be in alignment with the supervisor's goals and his or her supervisor. This is called “line-of-sight” goal-setting, in which the connection from the employee to University goals is clearly defined.

Employees must understand their roles, what is expected of them in those roles, and how they contribute to WVU's success. Line-of-sight goals have the following benefits:

- Employees and their managers are clear about responsibilities, so misunderstanding or confusion about roles is minimized or eliminated;
- Employees understand how their work impacts and benefits the University;
- Managers can better allocate resources for projects and ongoing tasks;
- Energy and resources can be focused on the most pertinent priorities; and,
- Redundancy and, therefore, inefficiency can be minimized or eliminated.

While the supervisor has final approval, every effort should be made to establish goals with employees through a collaborative process. The more the employee buys in to the process, the more successful goal completion becomes.

- ✓ Establish mutually agreed-to goals that add value.
- ✓ Recommend and recognize behaviors that are aligned with organizational business plans.
- ✓ Establish milestone review dates, such as the following:
 - Phases of a software installation completed by (month, date, year)
 - Number or percentage of departments or employees trained
 - Number of buildings or vehicles serviced
 - Number of new employees recruited

“Employees should understand how their work impacts and benefits the University.”