

Writing & Implementing **S.M.A.R.T.** Goals

Developing sound goals is critical to managing your own performance as it relates to you achieving something or getting somewhere. Each year you will set goals for the upcoming year, and you will ensure you create S.M.A.R.T. goals that support your vision of that goal being accomplished. A S.M.A.R.T. goal is defined as one that is specific, measurable, achievable, result-oriented, and time-bound. Here is a definition of each of the S.M.A.R.T. goal criteria:

Specific: Goals should be simplistically written and clearly define what you are going to do. Specific is the *What*, *Why*, and *How* of the S.M.A.R.T. model.

Example:

By March 1, 2018, implement a new performance management system you will adopt, with clearly defined processes you will use to evaluate your performance, in order to hold yourself accountable to stay the course and accomplish your goal(s).

Explanation of Example:

What = "Implement a new performance management system you will adopt"

why = "in order to hold yourself accountable to stay the course and accomplish your goal(s)"

how = "with clearly defined processes you will use to evaluate your performance"

Measurable: Goals should be measurable so that you have tangible evidence that you have accomplished those goals. Usually, the entire goal statement is a measure for the project, but there are usually several short-term or smaller measurements built into the goal.

Example:

By March 1, 2018, implement a new performance management system you will adopt, with clearly defined processes you will use to evaluate your performance, in order to hold yourself accountable to stay the course and accomplish your goal(s).

Explanation of Example:

The essential metric is whether or not the system is operational by March 1, 2018.

Achievable: Goals should be achievable; they should stretch you slightly so you feel challenged, but defined well enough so that you can achieve them. You must possess the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to achieve the goal. You can meet almost any goal when you plan your steps wisely and establish a timeframe that allows you to carry out those steps. As you carry out the steps, you can achieve goals that may have seemed impossible when you started. On the other hand, if a goal is impossible to achieve, you may not even try to accomplish it. Achievable goals motivate! Impossible goals de-motivate!

Example:

By March 1, 2018, implement a new performance management system you will adopt, with clearly defined processes you will use to evaluate your performance, in order to hold yourself accountable to stay the course and accomplish your goal(s).

Explanation of Example:

In order for you to reach this goal, you must have a skill set, in this case in the area of performance management, that allows you to understand the nature of the goal, and the goal must present a large enough challenge for you to remain interested in - and committed to - accomplishing it.

Result-oriented: Goals should measure outcomes, not activities.

Example:

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Explanation of Example:

The result of this goal is a process that allows you to more competently evaluate your performance and accomplish your goals, not the individual activities and actions that occur in order to make the goal a reality.

Time-bound: Goals should be linked to a timeframe that creates a practical sense of urgency, or results in tension between the current reality and the vision of the goal. Without such tension, the goal is unlikely to produce a relevant outcome.

Example:

By March 1, 2018, implement a new performance management system you will adopt, with clearly defined processes you will use to evaluate your performance, in order to hold yourself accountable to stay the course and accomplish your goal(s).

Explanation of Example:

March 1, 2018 provides you with a time-bound deadline. The concept of writing S.M.A.R.T. goals is very important for accomplishing individual goals – be it short or long-term. It is also critical for ensuring you stay on track, and be consistent until your goal is accomplished.

The following questionnaire will assist you in creating S.M.A.R.T. goals. Begin by writing your goal as clearly and concisely as possible. Then answer the related questions. Conclude by revising your goal, in the space allotted.

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Questionnaire

Goal:

1. **Specific.** What will the goal accomplish? **How** and **why** will it be accomplished?

2. **Measurable.** How will you measure whether or not the goal has been reached (list two indicators)?

3. **Achievable.** Is it possible to be achieved? Have others done it successfully? Do you have the necessary skills, abilities, and resources to accomplish this goal?

4. **Result-oriented.** What is the reason, purpose, or benefit of accomplishing this goal? What is the result (not activities leading up to the result) of the goal?

5. **Time-bound.** What is the established completion date and does that completion date create a practical sense of urgency?

Revised Goal:
