

Goal setting



What are some examples of goals that you have set and achieved in your work and personal life?

(Maybe you did not think of them as 'goals', possibly more like plans, schemes, dreams or objectives.)

Using the power of goal focus to work smarter



Goal setting is an important method of: Deciding what you want to achieve in your life. Separating what's important from what's irrelevant, or a distraction. Motivating yourself. Building your self-confidence, based on successful achievement of goals.

Steps to goal achievement

Here is a step-by-step planning process, taken from a series of such sequences, which will help you to clarify and develop almost any goal, personal or organisational. First, there are three basic principles to be aware of. Your goals must be considered stretching but realistic (by you at least), written and positive, stating what you want, not what you don't want.

Realistic yet challenging.

You must make your goals and objectives believable and achievable. Goals should have a 50/50 chance of success. Each goal must be aimed at the next logical step on the road to accomplishment.

Written goals.

When you write it down, you make it concrete. When you don't write it down you avoid making a commitment. Rules for written goals: 1) positive, 2) clear and specific and 3) use vivid language.

Identify the 'HOW'.

Take time to consider the 'how' that will lead you to the 'what', especially considering :

- Knowledge.
- People
- Skills.

Make a plan.

A plan is a list of activities, which is organised by priorities. Time spent in planning usually reaps big dividends in effectiveness. Plan regularly and relentlessly.

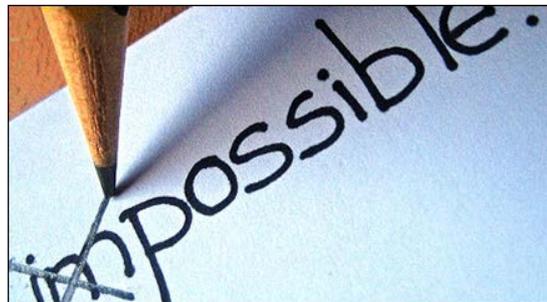
Identify the roadblocks.

'Road-blocks' come to instruct, not to obstruct. List the obstacles that you can foresee and set priorities on these.

Action.

How badly do you want what you want? Are you really prepared to do whatever it takes and try until you succeed?

Begin it NOW. Success comes from actions – identify one thing that you can do right NOW, TODAY, to start you on your course towards this goal. Be creative in solving and improving processes.



SMART Goals for improved performance



SMART goals: Specific – Measurable – Attainable – Relevant – Time-bound

- SPECIFIC: make it clear and well-defined – what, why and how
- MEASURABLE: be precise so success is clear; monitor progress
- ATTAINABLE: consider resources, knowledge and time
- RELEVANT: sustain focus by linking to other goals
- TIME-BOUND: have a deadline and milestones to work towards

Goals – a few key points

- To achieve a goal or a vision, you must plan how to make it happen.
- You cannot 'do' a goal or a vision. Instead you must do the things that enable it - usually several things, in several steps.
- A goal without a plan remains just a goal - many people have visions, intentions, ideas, dreams which never happen, because they are not planned.

A plan makes things happen.

Goal planning can be especially helpful in improving yourself, your team or company. It drives innovation and ideas. A good plan identifies causes and effects in achievable stages. These need not necessarily be very detailed or time-bound, unless the aim requires it.

Having a clear aim begins to define the plan.

For example: a large-scale short-term aim requires a plan with detail and strict timescales, whereas a goal to achieve a personal life change within five-to-ten years requires much less detail and scheduling, provided the crucial causes and effects stages are identified.

Plans can also be structured in different ways according to individual preference and the various planning tools/ methods which exist. Detailed people prefer detailed plans. Intuitive people prefer broader more flexible plans. Choose a planning format that you are comfortable using - and adapt and develop it as you need.

For example, there is no point in adopting a complex spreadsheet if you'll not enjoy using it. Conversely, if you want to analyse lots of details, then choose a format which will accommodate this. Whatever planning format you prefer, all plans begin as a simple outline, like the planning template provided here. Beyond this, you can add more detail and structure to suit your aims and preferences, but you must begin with a clear goal, and an outline of what will make your goal happen.

Whatever the aim, all good plans tend to include:

- A clearly defined aim.
- Linked steps or stages or elements - resources, actions, knowledge, etc - the factors of cause and effect.
- Relevant and achievable proportions and timings (for steps, stages, elements)

Note that the overall aim or vision does not have to be limited or constrained. Where aims and visions are concerned virtually anything is possible - for an individual person or an organization - provided the above goal planning criteria are used.

Use a simple outline, goal planning template and process, which can be used as the full planning method for certain personal aims, or as an initial outline planning tool for the most complex organisational vision. Make sure it is structured in stages. You can add more stages and elements (in other words the factors which cause things to happen) as necessary. If any element is too big to imagine realistically achieving in one go, then break it down into further elements. Even the most ambitious goals and plans are achievable when broken down and given time. A plan to achieve a goal or vision is normally best developed by working backwards from the aim.

Ask yourself at each stage of the plan: "**What must happen before this?**" Then plan to achieve each element, working back in realistic bite-sized elements, to where you are today.

Short-term SMART goals

Set short-term as well as long-range goals. Breaking down any long-term goals into smaller more attainable goals helps to promote achievement and success. Short-term goals are important because they allow us to see immediate improvements in performance and thereby enhance motivation.

Long-term goals

These can be set in many different areas such as your personal development, career and work, financial and family or personal lifestyle.

1. Firstly, you decide what you want to do with your life and what large-scale goals you want to achieve.
2. Then you break these down into the smaller and smaller targets that you must hit so that you reach your lifetime goals.
3. Finally, once you have your plan, you start working towards achieving it..

SMART Goal Checklist

The following resource can be used for evaluating district goals to ensure they meet the SMART goal criteria:

SMART GOAL

SPECIFIC

- Uses action word(s) to describe what the district is going to do
- Describes what the district wants to accomplish
- Is clear about what the district intends to do for all persons and designated person population
- Specifies when the district is expecting to see change

MEASURABLE

- Identifies the indicator of what the district will see when it reaches the goal
- Ensures there are data that will be collected to demonstrate appreciable change (in quantity or quality) that can be calculated

ATTAINABLE AND ACHIEVABLE

- Stretches the district to improve but is possible to attain
- Targets the population(s) that data show is in greatest need

REALISTIC AND RELEVANT

- Implementation is possible within the capabilities of the district
- Goal is consistent with the mission
- The bar is set high enough for significant achievement
- Goal is the most important and significant aspiration of the district to improve person learning
- The goal does not contradict other goals

TIMELY

- The goal has an end point
- Time frame for accomplishment of the goal is realistic