

# SMART Goals

## Tips for writing effective action plans

**Specific** – Name the exact output or result and corresponding actions.

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 goal would be, "Make my sales goal." But a specific goal would say, "Ask every customer open-ended questions to help determine eyewear needs and make product recommendations based upon those needs. Meet with my manager twice per week to review results, discuss progress, and overcome obstacles."

**Measurable** – Quantitative: Identify the standards or measures that you will use to evaluate: numbers, amounts, percentages, timeframes, and targets. Qualitative: Describe the features that make the results excellent – ease of use, customer opinion, etc.

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?

**Attainable** – Set stretch objectives that provide enough challenge, but also are realistic and based on meaningful work.

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 capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

You can attain most 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.

**Relevant** – Create Objectives that directly and positively enhance the job function and relate to larger organizational strategies. Objectives must add value.

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. But be sure that every goal represents substantial progress.

Ask yourself what conditions would have to exist to accomplish this goal.

**Timely** – Identify timelines for completion and interim milestones or deadlines.

A goal should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it there's no sense of urgency. If you want to hire a part-time associate, when do you want to hire them by? "Someday" won't work. But if you anchor it within a timeframe, "by May 1st", then you've set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal.