

Setting Goals the SMART Way

In my role as sales manager, it is important to set goals not only for the people I manage, but also for myself. Whether you are a manager, or an employee who is trying to maximize your performance, SMART performance goal setting is extremely important. SMART goal setting involves goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time based.

My company stresses a simple formula for writing SMART goals: *to do what, by how much, by when.*

Let's take a look at how you should use this formula as you craft your SMART goals.

To do what...

Specific – Results that we would like to accomplish must be defined. Use action verbs to describe how specific goals will be measured:

- Increase
- Complete
- Conduct
- Attain
- Achieve
- Improve

By how much...

Measurable – Define achievement with a quantifiable standard. For example you need to be able to answer:

- How much?
- How many?
- How much faster?
- How much better?
- Cost how much less?

Achievable – When setting goals, we must remain positive and attempt to get the most from ourselves and our employees. However, sometimes we need to keep goals achievable in order to maintain a positive attitude. "I want to increase sales by 200% over the first quarter". This may sound good, but a more realistic and achievable goal would be better.

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Relevant – As a manager or an employee, your goals must be linked to the business strategy of your organization. You may set a goal to finish top three in an upcoming chili cook-off. While that is specific, measurable and quite possibly achievable – it is not relevant to your professional development (unless, of course, your job revolves around making chili!).

By when...

Time based –All goals need a target date for completion. Goals without a time commitment are too vague, and tend to get pushed off in favor of the day-to-day distractions that pop up on most days. Use specific time frames such as:

- End of year
- End of quarter
- Monthly
- Daily

We all know how important it is to set goals for our professional development. You will get the greatest benefit if you are SMART with your future goal setting.

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