

## "SMART" & "SMARTER" Goal-Setting

There is no clear consensus about precisely which five or seven keywords should be used or mean in any given situation. Generally accepted *Typical* and *Potential* keywords include:

Letter	Typical	Potential
S	Specific	Significant, Stretching, Simple
M	Measurable	Meaningful, Motivational, Manageable
A	Attainable	Appropriate, Achievable, Agreed, Assignable, Actionable, Ambitious, Aligned, Aspirational, Acceptable, Action-focused
R	Relevant	Results-oriented, Realistic, Resourced, Resonant
T	Time-Bound	Time-oriented, Time-framed, Timed, Time-based, Time-boxed, Timely, Time-specific, Time-tabled, Time-limited, Trackable, Tangible
E	Evaluate	Ethical, Enthusiastic, Excitable, Enjoyable, Engaging, Ecological
R	Re-Visit	Rewarded, Reassess, Re-evaluate, Recordable, Rewarding, Reaching

Choosing certain combinations of these labels can cause duplication, such as selecting 'Attainable' and 'Realistic', or can cause significant overlapping as in combining 'Appropriate' and 'Relevant' for example.

Reference: Paul J. Meyer describes the characteristics of SMART goals in "*Attitude is Everything*".

### SPECIFIC

A goal or objective needs to be specific and supportive of a more general goal or priority. This means the goal is clear and unambiguous, without vagaries and platitudes. To make goals specific, they must describe exactly what is expected, why achievement is important, who's involved, where it's going to happen, and which attributes are important.

A specific goal will usually answer the five "W" questions:

- What: What do I/we want to accomplish?
- Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.
- Who: Who is involved?
- Where: Identify a location.
- Which: Identify requirements and constraints.

### MEASURABLE

Criteria are needed for measuring progress toward goal attainment. If a goal is not measurable, it's not possible to know whether progress is being made toward completion. Being able to measure progress helps us stay on track, reach target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs continued effort that may be required to reach an *ultimate* goal. Choosing the right metrics is essential. For example, to win a football game requires a team to score the most points, not gain the most yards. You get what you measure.

A measurable goal will usually answer questions such as:

- How much?
- How many?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

## **"SMART" & "SMARTER" Goal-Setting (cont'd)**

### **ATTAINABLE**

Goals should be realistic and attainable. An attainable goal may stretch an individual or group to achieve it, but it need not be extreme. One exception is BHAG's: Big Hairy Audacious Goals ... perhaps an ultimate goal or a strategic priority or a goal that may require a series of successful goals to ultimately achieve. Attainable goals are neither out of reach nor below standard performance. Our most important goals cause us to figure out ways to *make* them come true. We *will* develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. Theory suggests that an attainable goal causes goal-setters to identify even previously overlooked opportunities to bring themselves closer to goal achievement.

An attainable goal will usually answer the questions:

- How: How can the goal be accomplished?
- What: What resources will be needed? Are they available? If not, can we get them?

### **RELEVANT**

A goal whose achievement doesn't matter or doesn't deliver something important is meaningless and wasteful of limited resources. A Bank Manager's goal to "make fifty peanut butter and jelly sandwiches by 2:00pm" may be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, and Time-Bound, but lacks Relevance. Support is often needed to accomplish a goal ... eg, resources, a champion voice, someone to knock down obstacles, etc ... but relevant goals will generally receive the needed support.

Relevant goals (when met) drive individuals, teams, and organizations forward. A relevant goal is one that supports or is in alignment with other goals (eg, strategic priorities).

A relevant goal can answer yes to these questions:

- Is this goal aligned with, or supportive of, our strategic priorities?
- Is this goal worthy of consuming our limited resources?
- Is this the right time?
- Am I the right person? Is this the right committee? Is ours the right church?

### **TIME-BOUND**

If a goal is important, it should be time-bound and have a time frame, or target date, for completion. A commitment to a deadline helps to focus efforts on goal completion on or before the due date. This part of the SMART goal criteria is intended to prevent goals from being overtaken by day-to-day crises that invariably arise. A time-bound goal is intended to establish a sense of urgency.

A time-bound goal will usually answer the questions:

- When should or must the goal be accomplished?
- What can/must be done now?
- What can/must be done in x days ... y weeks ... z months?