

Part 1: Read the article below, then define S.M.A.R.T. goals in your own words in the section just below.

SMART Goals

How to Make Your Goals Achievable

The trouble with not having a goal is that you can spend your life running up and down the field and never score.– *Bill Copeland*

Do you ever feel like you're working hard but not getting anywhere? Maybe you see little improvement in your skills or achievements when you reflect on the last five or 10 years. Or perhaps you struggle to see how you'll fulfil your ambitions during the next few years.

Many people spend their lives drifting from one job to another, or rushing around trying to get more done while actually accomplishing very little. Setting SMART goals means you can clarify your ideas, focus your efforts, use your time and resources productively, and increase your chances of achieving what you want in life.

In this article, we'll explore what SMART goals are, and we'll look at how you can use them to achieve your objectives.

What Does SMART Mean?

SMART is an acronym that you can use to guide your goal setting.

Its criteria are commonly attributed to Peter Drucker's [Management by Objectives](#) concept. The first known use of the term occurs in the November 1981 issue of *Management Review* by George T. Doran. Since then, Professor [Robert S. Rubin](#) (Saint Louis University) wrote about SMART in an article for The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. He stated that SMART has come to mean different things to different people, as shown below.

To make sure your goals are clear and reachable, each one should be:

- **Specific** (simple, sensible, significant).
- **Measurable** (meaningful, motivating).
- **Achievable** (agreed, attainable).
- **Relevant** (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based).

- Time bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive). Professor Rubin notes that the definition of the SMART acronym may need updating to reflect the importance of efficacy and feedback. Some authors have expanded it to include extra focus areas; SMARTER, for example, includes **E**valuated and **R**eviewed.

How to Use SMART Goals

Paul J. Meyer, businessman, author and founder of [Success Motivation International](#), describes the characteristics of SMART goals in his 2003 book, "[Attitude Is Everything: If You Want to Succeed Above and Beyond](#)." We'll expand on his definitions to explore how to create, develop and achieve your goals:

1. Specific

Your goal should be clear and specific, otherwise you won't be able to focus your efforts or feel truly motivated to achieve it. When drafting your goal, try to answer the five "W" questions:

- **What** do I want to accomplish?
- **Why** is this goal important?
- **Who** is involved?
- **Where** is it located?
- **Which** resources or limits are involved?

Example

Imagine you are a marketing executive, and you'd like to become head of marketing. A specific goal could be, "I want to gain the skills & experience necessary to become head of marketing within my organization, so I can build my career & lead a successful team."

2. Measurable

It's important to have measurable goals, so that you can track your progress and stay motivated. Assessing progress helps you to stay focused, meet your deadlines, and feel the excitement of getting closer to achieving your goal.

A measurable goal should address questions such as:

- How much?
- How many?

- How will I know when it is accomplished?

Example

You might measure your goal of acquiring the skills to become head of marketing by determining that you will have completed the necessary training courses and gained the relevant experience within five years' time.

3. **Achievable**

Your goal also needs to be realistic and attainable to be successful. In other words, it should stretch your abilities but still remain possible. When you set an achievable goal, you may be able to identify previously overlooked opportunities or resources that can bring you closer to it.

An achievable goal will usually answer questions such as:

- How can I accomplish this goal?
- How realistic is the goal, based on other constraints, such as financial factors?

Example

You might need to ask yourself whether developing the skills required to become head of marketing is realistic, based on your existing experience and qualifications. For example, do you have the time to complete the required training effectively? Are the necessary resources available to you? Can you afford to do it?

Tip:

Beware of setting goals that someone else has power over. For example, "Get that promotion!" depends on who else applies, and on the recruiter's decision. But "Get the experience and training that I need to be considered for that promotion" **is** entirely down to you.

4. **Relevant**

This step is about ensuring that your goal matters to you, and that it also aligns with other relevant goals. We all need support and assistance in achieving our goals, but it's important to retain control over them. So, make sure that your plans drive everyone forward, but that you're still responsible for achieving your own goal.

A relevant goal can answer "yes" to these questions:

- Does this seem worthwhile?

- Is this the right time?
- Does this match our other efforts/needs?
- Am I the right person to reach this goal?
- Is it applicable in the current socio-economic environment?

Example

You might want to gain the skills to become head of marketing within your organization, but is it the right time to undertake the required training, or work toward additional qualifications? Are you sure that you're the right person for the head of marketing role? Have you considered your partner's goals? For example, if you want to start a family, would completing training in your free time make this more difficult?

5. Time-bound

Every goal needs a target date, so that you have a deadline to focus on and something to work toward. This part of the SMART goal criteria helps to prevent everyday tasks from taking priority over your longer-term goals.

A time-bound goal will usually answer these questions:

- When?
- What can I do six months from now?
- What can I do six weeks from now?
- What can I do today?

Example

Gaining the skills to become head of marketing may require additional training or experience, as we mentioned earlier. How long will it take you to acquire these skills? Do you need further training, so that you're eligible for certain exams or qualifications? It's important to give yourself a realistic time frame for accomplishing the smaller goals that are necessary to achieving your final objective.

The Pros and Cons of SMART Goals

SMART is an effective tool that provides the clarity, focus and motivation you need to achieve your goals. It can also improve your ability to reach them by encouraging you to

define your objectives and set a completion date. SMART goals are also easy to use by anyone, anywhere, without the need for specialist tools or training.

Various interpretations of SMART have meant that it can lose its effectiveness or be misunderstood. Some people believe that SMART doesn't work well for long-term goals because it lacks flexibility, while others suggest that it might stifle creativity.

Key Points

SMART is a well-established tool that you can use to plan and achieve your goals. While there are a number of interpretations of the acronym's meaning, the most common one is that goals should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound.

When you use SMART, you can create clear, attainable and meaningful goals, and develop the motivation, action plan, and support needed to achieve them.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals in my own words: (type your work here)

Setting goals

Now that you understand about goals and objectives, it is time to decide on some specifics. Remember: **goals that are consistent with your values, interests, and lifestyles are more likely to be achieved.**

In reaching your goals, is there anything that you can do right away? What, specifically? What can you realistically have accomplished one week from today? What can you do within the next month to implement or reach your goals? Goals can help you guide you where you want to be, when you want to be there.

Career goal setting is not as intimidating if it is broken down into smaller chunks containing short-term, intermediate, and long-term objectives.

Here are seven tips to help you set reasonable goals and to begin to achieve them.

1. **Be specific and concrete.** The more specific you get, the easier it is to meet your goals. Plan small steps and specify *what* you will do within each of the four career development quadrants (***Self-discovery, Investigation, Decision-making, and Implementation***), and *when* you will take each step.
2. **Visualize.** Close your eyes and picture yourself taking action to meet them. Live with your goal. Does it *feel* right?
3. **Put goals in writing.** This brings reality into your goals and greatly increases your chance of attaining them.
4. **Build time frames into goals.** Set deadlines for yourself and revise the deadlines freely. They are not set in cement. Create steps in your time frames and write these steps into your daily calendar or "to do" list.
5. **Create a support system.** Tell family, friends, and faculty of your goals, and ask for support.
6. **Personalize your goals.** What is the benefit of reaching this goal? Turn action items into things you want to do for yourself.
7. **Evaluate.** Track your successes and stumbling blocks. Give yourself credit and positive feedback. Recognize which goals you are not meeting and ask yourself why this is. Do your plans still fit your personal career goals?

Whenever you achieve something worthwhile, you probably have consciously or sub-consciously realized a goal. Goals are useful as they keep you focused on your specific purpose. They can act as reminders, incentives or as steps that can assist you in doing the things you want to do.

The Purpose:

Goal setting is used widely; it is used by top-level athletes, business-people and high achievers in all fields. Goal setting can also be a more formal process for career and personal planning.

The process of setting goals and targets for your career allows you to:

- ❑ Stay focused on your objective
- ❑ Decide what is important for you to achieve in your life and to start, step-by-step, achieving these goals.
- ❑ Be in control of where you go in life. By reflecting on and then recording exactly what you want to achieve, you know what you have to concentrate on to do it.
- ❑ Separate what is important from what is irrelevant. Goal setting helps you work out what not to concentrate on, what decisions to choose in relation to your goals, and keeps your focus away from distractions.
- ❑ Motivate yourself to achievement. It gives you long-term vision and short-term motivation. It focuses your acquisition of knowledge and helps you to organize your resources.
- ❑ Track and record your progress and achievements.
- ❑ Increase your self-confidence as you develop your level of competence in achieving your goals. This is very important, as self-confidence is critically important during the job searching process and many organizations place a high value on this quality.

How to Begin Setting Goals:

You can create goals on several levels. You can create larger scale, overarching goals related to your personal and career wants and needs. You can then create sub-goals and tasks under different areas of the larger goals. You can also create short, medium, and long-term goals. Once you have stated and recorded your goals, you can break them down into the smaller targets and tasks that will take you towards your long-term goals. Once you have a plan, you start working towards achieving it.

Pick up a pen and a piece of paper and jot down the goals you want to reach. Look at each goal and evaluate it. After writing your goals down, read the following information on SMART goals. Make any changes necessary to ensure your goals meet the SMART goals criteria.

Part 2: In the spaces provided below please list one **Short Term SMART Goal** (to happen within the next two months). Then list one **Medium Term SMART Goal** (2 months to 3 years). Finally, list one Long Term SMART Goal (Beyond 3 years). Each of these goals needs to follow the SMART format.

My Short Term SMART Goal:

My Medium Term SMART Goal:

My Long Term SMART Goal: