

SMART Goal Setting

You will benefit from goals and objectives if they are SMART:

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Realistic
Timely

Specific

Defining specific goals helps you determine what you are going to do and helps you focus your efforts. Goals should be straightforward and emphasize what you want to happen. Specific is the **what, why, and how** of the SMART model.

Make sure the goal you set is specific and clear. Instead of setting a goal to lose weight or be healthier, set a specific goal to lose 1-inch off of your waistline or to walk 5 miles every week.

Measurable

For every big-picture or outcome goal, there are usually several smaller process goals. These smaller goals are the measurements by which you track your progress toward the outcome. **If you can't measure it you won't be able to manage it.**

Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. This way you will stay on track and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs on your continued efforts toward reaching that big-picture goal.

Attainable

An attainable goal should feel like it stretches you slightly but not so much that it seems out of your grasp. If the goal is too far out of reach, chances are your commitment to it will wane. Although you may start with the best of intentions, the knowledge that it's too much for you will inevitably prevent you from doing your best.

Try to identify goals that are important enough to you to figure out ways to make them happen. You will develop the attitudes, abilities, and skills to reach them after you've broken them down into specific and measurable parts.

Realistic

Realistic means "do-able," not "easy." It means that the learning curve is not a vertical slope, that the skills needed to do the work are available. Devise specific, measurable, and attainable process goals that require some effort but won't set the stage for failure before you can achieve the outcome goal.

Timely

Set a timeframe for the goal: next week, in three months, by graduation. Putting an end point on your goal gives you a clear target to work towards. If you don't, the commitment will be too vague. It tends not to happen because you feel you can start at any time. Without a time limit, there's no urgency to start taking action now. Remember that the timeframe needs to be **attainable** and **realistic**.

*Doran, George T. "There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives."
Management Review, Nov 1981, Volume 70 Issue 1*