## Setting SMART Goals

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Goals should be specific in order to be effective but also simplistically written. They should clearly define what needs to be accomplished.

Goals should be clear, concise and concrete, and they should have a desired outcome. If a goal is not specific, it won’t be measurable.

To set a specific goal the following six “W” questions must be answered:

1. **Who** – Who is involved?
2. **What** – What needs to be accomplished?
3. **Where** – Identify a location.
4. **When** – Establish a timeframe.
5. **Which** – Identify requirements and constraints.
6. **Why** – Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

Goals should be measurable so that there is tangible evidence that it has been accomplished, a yardstick for measuring or evaluating the success or completion.

What metrics or data will be used to determine if the goal was met?

A measurable goal is one that has definite criteria for success. A good rule for determining a goal’s measurability is to answer the following:

1. How much?
2. How many?
3. How will I know when the goal is accomplished?
4. Indicators should be quantifiable.

Goals should be achievable; they should stretch the employee slightly so they feel challenged but defined well enough so they can achieve them.

Is the goal attainable and achievable? An employee should be able to attain the goal with effort and commitment.

Does the employee have the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities needed to achieve the goal? Are resources available?

While a goal should not be too easy to achieve – an employee shouldn’t become demotivated because the goal is impossible.

Goals should measure relevant outcomes, not just activities. The goals should matter. A relevant goal can answer yes to these questions:

1. Is the goal worthwhile?
2. Is it the right time?
3. Does the goal align with broader goals?
4. Is this employee the right employee?
5. Why is the result important?

Goals should be linked to a timeframe that creates a practical sense of urgency, or results in tension between the current reality and the vision of the goal. Without such tension, the goal is unlikely to produce a relevant outcome. A time-bound goal will usually answer the question:

1. When does the goal need to be accomplished?
2. What can be done today?
3. What can be done within six weeks?
4. What can be done within six months?

Goals should have definite starting points, time duration, and ending points.

A deadline too far in the future is too easily put off. A goal set too close is not only unrealistic, it is discouraging.

### Additional Resources:
- UA Performance Evaluation Guidelines
- 10 Steps for Conducting Successful Performance Evaluations
- Supervisor TIPS for Completing the Performance Evaluation
- Coach to Improve Performance: Providing Constructive Feedback

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