

Goal Setting Made Easy – A Proven Goal Setting Strategy

Whether it is the start of a new year, you are starting a new job or you are starting another new stage in life, it is always a great time to talk about goal setting. Goals and goals setting can be challenging, especially if your goals cause you to stretch more than you have stretched in the past.

I have a proven goal setting strategy that will help you set AND complete challenging goals.

SMART Goals

First, for your goal to be obtainable, it MUST be a SMART goal. SMART is an acronym.

Specific Goals

The “S” stands for “Specific”. Specific goals are clear, concise, and easy to understand.

An example of a specific goal would be to say, “This year we will increase the profit by 20% by eliminating down time between shifts, reducing lost and unaccounted for merchandise, and increasing employee productivity and efficiency.” You can break that goal into parts and set smaller goals for each part.

In contrast, a similar non-specific goal would be to say, “We want to make the organization better this year.” That goal leaves many questions. How will you make the organization better? What changes will you make? How can you know if you reached your goal if you don’t know what your goal is?

Specific goals explain exactly what you want to do and how to do it. They are NOT lofty, ambiguous, “up in the air” goals that are difficult to understand.

Measurable Goals

The “M” stands for measurable. When a goal is measurable, it is quantifiable. In the example, the increase in profit by 20% is a measurable quantity. At the end of the year you can easily determine if you increased the profit by 20% or not. If your goal is not measurable, there is no way to determine if it was successful or not.



Attainable Goals

The “A” stands for attainable. Goals should make you stretch beyond what you felt was possible, but still be attainable. A goal that is far beyond your capacity will likely lead to discouragement and demotivate you from completing goals in the future. Attainable goals are challenging and require concerted effort to complete but promote growth and progress.

Relevant Goals

The “R” stands for relevant. Goals should be relevant to your current purpose. For example, a college student should set goals relevant to their classes and major. A parent should set goals relevant to their success as a parent. A leader should set goals relevant to their leadership objectives and success. Whatever you are doing, your goals should be relevant.

Timely/Time-bound Goals

The “T” stands for timely or time-bound. Goals should have a specific deadline. If you set goals without a deadline, you will most likely fall short of accomplishing them. Whether it is a product launch, the start of a new activity, a weight loss program or some other type of goal, all goals should have a deadline so you have a goal for completion.

The Plan

Once you have created SMART goals, the second and equally as important part of goal setting is the plan. One can create the perfect SMART goal, but without a plan to accomplish the goal it will never be completed. In order to complete your goals, there are five main parts of the plan that must be executed.

1. Create an Action Plan

First, create an action plan for your goals. The action plan should have specific steps and milestones you work towards to complete your goals. Sometimes the plan can be very extensive for large long-term goals, while other times it can be short and somewhat simple. The key is to have an action plan you can follow as to complete your goals.

2. Schedule the Goals into Your Life

Once you have created the action plan, the second part of the plan is to schedule your goals into your everyday life. Take steps towards completing your goals on a regular basis. Depending on the goal, that may be daily, weekly, monthly, or at some other frequency. That time frame can also change based on benchmarks



throughout the goal. What's most important is that the goal is scheduled into your life.

3. Take Action

Third, you must take action. Follow through on your plan by taking the steps outlined in your plan. Think of the time you scheduled time in your day, week, or month as a commitment to yourself that you must follow through on. As you begin and continue to take action, your confidence in yourself and your ability fulfill your goals will grow.

4. Review the Goals Regularly

Fourth, review your goals regularly. When you review them, identify your progress and determine whether or not you are on track. If you are not on track, identify steps you must take to get back on track. Then do your best to follow through.

If while reviewing your goals, you determine that the action steps took longer than anticipated or you got off track due to other causes, take time to modify your plan so you can continue your progress towards completion.

5. Refresh the Goals

The fifth step is to refresh your goals. There are only two valid reasons to stop working towards accomplishing your goals. Either you complete the goal, or the goal is no longer relevant. For those reasons, it is important to refresh your goals. When you complete your goals or find they are no longer relevant, refresh them by creating new goals or modifying them to align with your new purpose. By refreshing your goals as needed, they always stay relevant and are worth completing.

Goal Setting: 5 Keys to Create The Effective Plan

Now lets take a deeper look at the Plan! When setting a goal, it is imperative that you create a plan to complete your goals. Depending on the nature of the goal, the plan can be short, simple, and to the point. It can also be very long, complex, and require many people and steps to complete. What's most important is that you have the appropriate plan for your goal.

Although each goal is different and requires different levels of complexity, there are five keys to creating an effective plan regardless of the size of your goal.



1. Create a Clear Picture of the Desired Outcome

Another way of putting it is to “Begin with the end in mind” as Stephen R. Covey would say. When you create a clear picture of the desired outcome, you define what the outcome should be and what success should look in these three terms:

- Complete failure - “I’ll close up shop and go home.” If this happens, you will end the goal and completely re-think what you are doing.
- Expected/desired outcome - this is the result you hope to see
- Over the moon success - more successful than your wildest dreams

Identify key factors to obtain the desired outcome. For complex goals, there will be many factors that determine success or failure. For small and simple goals, on the other hand, there may only be a few factors that determine success or failure.

2. Create Specific Milestones/Benchmarks

The second key is to create specific milestones or benchmarks. Identify what you expect to accomplish and by when. This goes hand in hand with creating deadlines for your goals. When you work on your goals, there will usually be a beginning, middle, and end. The specific milestones and benchmarks will help you determine the beginning, middle, and end. Throughout this process, set check points to follow up and review your progress.

3. Determine Resource Requirements

For your plan to be successful, the third key is to determine resources requirements. Here are some categories the resources will fall into: time, money, people, equipment, and technology.

Let’s take a closer look at questions to ask regarding each resource category:

- Time: How much time will be required throughout the plan? Will it be consistent throughout or will there be peak times and times of limited to no involvement? Will it be all your time or will it involve other’s time?
- Money: How much money will be required for the plan to be successful? Where will the money come from; donors, your day job, savings, sales, or some other source?
- People: Can you do this goal by yourself? Do you need help from others? Do the people that will help you have specialized skills or abilities? Do you need a large number of people for a single task or a series of tasks?
- Equipment: What equipment do you need to complete your goal? When to you need it? How much will it be used?
- Technology: What technology do you need? Is it currently available? If so, what does it take to get your hands on it? Is it expensive?



4. Identify Potential Resource sources

Once you have identified your required resources, the fourth key is to identify potential resource sources. This sounds similar to point three of determining resource requirements, but it is different because you need to identify where you will get the resources. Will the resources come from your own efforts and equipment? Or, will they come from others? If they come from others, will you be able to hire local experts or will you outsource the work to others that can be based anywhere?

When you understand potential resource sources, you have a better understanding of the size and complexity of the plan and you know who you will depend on throughout the project.

5. Identify Potential Roadblocks

Since most goals depend on something or someone else, the fifth key is to identify potential roadblocks. Potential roadblocks can be related to any of the points listed above. Some example roadblocks are:

- People falling through
- Not enough people
- Inadequate or untimely funding
- Equipment malfunctions
- Technology that isn't available
- The list goes on and on...

Because there are so many potential roadblocks, it is important to identify the most likely roadblocks. For the most likely roadblocks, identify potential contingency plans that can be utilized if specific roadblocks are encountered.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this goal setting process is proven to help you reach your goals. You must first set SMART goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely or time bound. Once you have set SMART goals, follow the five steps to complete your goals. The five steps are:

1. Create an Action Plan
2. Schedule the Goals into Your Life
3. Take Action
4. Review the Goals Regularly
5. Refresh the Goals

I really hope you can put this proven goal setting method to good use in your life!



Every plan is not the same because every goal is different. What's important is that you keep the five important factors in mind so create the most effective plan. As a recap, the five points are:

1. Create a Clear Picture of the Desired Outcome
2. Create Specific Milestones/Benchmarks
3. Determine Resource Requirements
4. Identify Potential Resource sources
5. Identify Potential Roadblocks

I hope these steps will help you create a more effective plan so that you can reach your goals.

Resources

For more information on goal setting, check out the following resources:

- [Goal Setting Made Easy — A Proven Goal Setting Strategy](#)
- [Goal Setting: 5 Keys to Create The Effective Plan](#)
- [10 Reasons People Fail To Complete Their Goals](#)
- [Goals 101: 5 Steps to Ensure Successful Goals](#)
- [Relevant Goals: Are Yours Up To Date?](#)
- [Podcast Episode #5 — SMART Goal Setting for Leaders](#)
- [Podcast Episode #30 — Goal Setting Made Easy - Make Your Goals Successful!](#)

