

S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

SMART is a well-established tool that you can use to plan and achieve your goals. While there are several 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.

How to Use SMART

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?

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?

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?

Tip:

Beware 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?

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?



Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-Bound
Make sure your goals are focused and identify a tangible outcome. Without the specifics, your goal runs the risk of being too vague to achieve. Being more specific helps you identify what you want to achieve. You should also identify what resources you are going to leverage to achieve success.	You should have some clear definition of success. This will help you to evaluate achievement and also progress. This component often answers how much or how many and highlights how you'll know you achieved your goal.	Your goal should be challenging, but still reasonable to achieve. Reflecting on this component can reveal any potential barriers that you may need to overcome to realize success. Outline the steps you're planning to take to achieve your goal.	This is about getting real with yourself and ensuring what you're trying to achieve is worthwhile to you. Determining if this is aligned to your values and if it is a priority focus for you. This helps you answer the why.	Every goal needs a target date, something that motivates you to really apply the focus and discipline necessary to achieve it. This answers when. It's important to set a realistic time frame to achieve your goal to ensure you don't get discouraged.

S.M.A.R.T. GOALS WORKSHEET

Crafting S.M.A.R.T. Goals are designed to help you identify if what you want to achieve is realistic and determine a deadline. When writing S.M.A.R.T. Goals use concise language but include relevant information. These are designed to help you succeed, so be positive when answering the questions.

INITIAL GOAL	Write the goal you have in mind
S	What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal?
SPECIFIC	
M	How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal?
MEASURABLE	
A	Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? What is the motivation for this goal? Is the amount of effort required on par with what the goal will achieve?
ACHIEVABLE	
R	Why am I setting this goal now? Is it aligned with overall objectives?
RELEVANT	
T	What's the deadline and is it realistic?
TIME-BOUND	
SMART GOAL	Review what you have written, and craft a new goal statement based on what the answers to the questions above have revealed