

SMART GOALS

A SMART goal is a goal that is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time based. In other words, **a goal that is very clear and easily understood.**

SPECIFIC

The goal must clearly state **what** is to be achieved, by **whom**, **where** and **when** it is to be achieved. Sometimes it may even state why that goal is important.

Not all of these questions will apply to every goal, but it is important to ask all the questions in order to assess how specific your goal is and make it as clear as possible.

MEASURABLE

Measurability applies to both the end result and the milestones along the way to attaining a goal. It answers the question of quantity – how much, how often, how many?

This is often true when it comes to goals. Sometimes it is difficult to measure a goal, but at such times there is usually an indirect measure that can be applied.

ATTAINABLE

You should ensure that the goals you set are achievable.

Firstly, you must believe that you can manage to do what you are setting out to do. If you set goals that are unbelievable even to yourself it is very unlikely you will achieve them.

This is equally important when setting goals for a group, such as in the corporate setting. If the people for whom the goals are being set do not believe they are attainable, it is unlikely they will work wholeheartedly towards achieving them.

Agreement and participation in the SMART goal setting process is important in such cases to ensure that most people are happy with how realistic the goals are.

Secondly, the goals must be possible, all things being equal. There is no point setting a goal to float in the air and defy gravity using only your mind, for instance. No matter how hard you try this won't be achievable.

Be careful however, that you do not limit yourself based on what other people believe to be achievable or not. Set your own standards by understanding your own abilities, strengths and weaknesses.

RELEVANT

Your goals must be relevant to what you want to achieve in the short term and the long term. Understanding your organizational or personal vision, mission and purpose is critical in this respect.

Sometimes you can be tempted to do something simply because it is easy and sounds great, only to discover later on that it has no long term importance to what you want to achieve as an individual or an organization.

Do those things that are most important and in line with your long term vision and mission.

TIME-BASED

This sometimes overlaps with the goal being Specific, but it aims to ensure that you put a time-frame to your goals. Someone said a goal is a dream with a time-frame to it. Simply deciding by when you want to achieve something can be a good motivator. It can prevent you from procrastinating because you know that you are working to a deadline.