



How to Set SMART Goals

A Special Report by The Career
Success Doctor

Welcome

Welcome to this short, special guide on goal setting using SMART goal principles. In this guide you will discover:

- Why goals are important
- The SMART goal formula
- Examples of SMART and not SMART goals
- Reasons why people don't get their SMART goals
- Techniques for making your SMART goal even more powerful
- Additional resources.

Why do we need goals?

We need goals for many reasons. Goals provide motivation and desire. They also give our minds a focus and direction. When you have no goals, you have no focus, and you accomplish very little. According to Jack Canfield, vague goals get vague results. Which means specific goals get specific results.

Once you've set your goal, you need have a plan to achieve it, and you then need to take action. One of the biggest reasons that goal-setting fails is that people don't take action. There are several reasons for this, which we'll discuss at the end of this report.

What Is The SMART Goal Formula?

One of the best 'formulas' for creating good specific, measurable goals is the SMART formula. Depending who you read, you'll find many definitions of SMART. Here's what I use.

S – Specific. What specifically is it you want? Also: Stated in the positive (so you focus on getting what you want rather than avoiding what you don't want), Stated as if you already have it and Stretching.

So, rather than 'I want to be thinner' identify how thin you want to be. 'I want to be dress size 10, or collar size 15 inches or weigh 150 lbs'. It's also worth specifying how you want it. For example, with weight loss, you probably want to do it in a way that is healthy, so that you look and feel good during the process and once you have achieved your goal.

It's worth spending time really thinking through this aspect of your goal.

M – Measurable. How will you know when you have it? What will your evidence be? Also, Meaningful and Motivating. If your goal doesn't excite you, it's unlikely that you'll put much effort into achieving it. Using the

weight example, the measure might be: I have just stepped on to the scales and they register 65kgs, or I have just got into a 34" waist pair of jeans and they fit perfectly.

Measurable means you need to put some measures in. It might be something you can literally measure, like weight, or income, or it might be something people will say to you, or something you see, hear, feel or say to yourself.

A – Achievable. If you set yourself something that is totally unattainable, you'll end up demotivated. At the same time, you want to make it stretching, so you'll have a real sense of achievement when you get it.

Often this is just a yes or no question – is this achievable? However, you can also use it to identify the Actions you intend to take. How will you get down to a size 10?

R – Realistic. We all need some level of stress, but you don't want to set the bar so high that you just stress yourself out. Make sure your goal is do-able.

Also, Relevant – how is this relevant to you, your career and your life? Again, this is often just a yes or no answer. You might also think about how it will affect the important people in your life – will they support you in achieving it?

T – Time-bound. When do you want it by? Put a date on it (day, month and year) because, as my mum always says, tomorrow never comes

So your full goal, when you write it out might read something like this.

'It's 30 June 2010 and I am standing on the scales in my bathroom. They are registering my weight as 128 lbs. I look and feel 10 years younger than I am, and I'm feeling really healthy with lots of energy. Three people have recently commented on how great I am looking. I have enjoyed my exercise programme of 3 visits a week to the gym, and I have cut out sugar completely. I will be continuing my programme of exercising 3 times a week and eliminating sugar to maintain my new-found shape.

Examples of SMART goals

To help you design your SMART goals, here are a couple of examples. For each example, I give you a 'not-SMART' version, then the SMART version, and the goal written out in an 'as if now' format.

Example 1

Not SMART version: I want to make more money	
SMART VERSION	
S	Earn \$100,000 per year net of tax from a job which I find stretching and motivating, and which I do well.
M	(How will I know when I have it?) Record of earnings over last 12 months. Feel stretched, motivated, enjoyment. 360 Feedback from team members that they enjoy working for me. Direct feedback from my boss that I am doing an excellent job.
A	(Is it achievable/actionable?) It's achievable. Actions: apply for promotion to senior manager post in logistics division; attend 'leadership for senior managers' course; apply for 3 similar jobs
R	Realistic? Yes-providing I take action
T	By When? 31 March 2012

Stated 'as if now' my goal might now read:

'It's 31 March 2012, and I am looking at my earnings for the last 12 months. Net of tax and deductions my income was \$100,000. I attended the leadership for senior team members course, applied for the senior manager job in logistics division and got it. I'm thoroughly enjoying the job, and feel really motivated by it. Staff have given me average 4/5 on my 360 feedback with positive comments, and my line manager has told me how pleased she is with my work.

Example 2

Not SMART version: I want to run my own business with happy customers

which leaves me time for the kids.	
SMART version	
S	I have set up my gardening business. Average monthly gross turnover in year one: \$,5000/month. We are on target to make a 20% net profit in the first 12 months' trading. 20% of business is coming from customer referrals and customers say we offer a good service. I spend a full, quality hour a week-day with the kids, and a full day every weekend.
M	Monthly accounts . Cash projections. Customer feedback forms give rating of 3/5 or better. Responses to 'where did you hear about us' show 20% are referrals. I'm very busy, but I know I have made the right decision.
A	Achievable – yes. Actions: carry out market research, develop business plan which identifies actions for business set up (including marketing). Follow through on actions identified in the business plan
R	Realistic – challenging, but do-able. Will have to work evenings and weekend, but family is on board with this and I can work round the kids. I have promised to spend a full day every weekend with the them.
T	By when? 30 June 2012

Stated 'as if now' my goal might read:

'It's 30 June 2012. My gardening business is up and running. I have just looked at our accounts for the year to date which show we are grossing \$5,000 a month (average). We are on target to make a 20% profit in the first 12 months' trading. We regularly score 4/5 or 5/5 on customer satisfaction forms, and 20% of our new business is referrals from existing customers. We are following the business plan, and have achieved all the targets identified in it, and completed all the actions to date. I have been working evenings and weekends, but have been able to take time off to spend a full day every weekend with the kids. This is definitely one of the best decisions I have ever made.

Reasons Why People Don't Get Their SMART goals

There are a number of reasons why people don't get their SMART goals. Assuming you have a well formed goal, that is SMART, then the biggest single reason for failure is a failure to take action.

Here are some key reasons why people don't take action.

- Fear. It's easy to set a goal and plan your actions on paper (or on your computer or touch-screen). It's a very different thing to take those actions. Some people become paralysed by fear.

While you are designing your goals and your action plan, ask yourself what part (if any) fear plays in limiting you. If it does, you may find coaching useful to help you release the fear and move on.

- Limiting beliefs. We often limit ourselves by the beliefs we hold. For example if you set a goal to earn \$60,000, but you don't believe you are worth \$60,000, then you may find that you are not motivated to take the actions you need to take.

Again, coaching can help you identify and release any limiting decisions.

- Not taking responsibility. It's important you take responsibility for the results you get in your life. If you have a tendency to blame others when things don't turn out as you had hoped, then you give away your power.

'Oh, the reason I didn't get my promotion was because my boss is a fool.' Maybe the reason you didn't get the promotion is that your boss knows you think he/she is a fool and didn't want to give additional responsibility to someone who had so little respect.

- Not believing in the goal. If you don't truly believe in the goal, you won't be motivated to go for it at 100%. For example, if your goal is not your own, if you are pursuing it because your mother/father/sister/lover says you ought to, or because you think it is what they want, you may fail at the first hurdle.
- Setting a goal that depends on other people. You can't force other people to take the actions necessary for you to get your goal. For example, if your goal is to do with promotion, you do not have full control over the outcome. The decision is made by someone else, and they may have very good reasons for not promoting you.

Similarly, if you are applying for a new job, and you don't get, there may be good reasons why they gave it to another candidate. I once applied a job at a University. The Head of Department really wanted me to work there, but unfortunately the funding for the project was pulled and he didn't have the budget to employ me.

Learn to recognise when you miss your goal because you didn't take action, or you didn't take the right actions, and when you miss your goal due to circumstances beyond your control. Don't beat yourself up for things you can't influence, but do take responsibility for the things you can influence.

Exercise

What are your career goals for the next 3,6, and 12 months?

For each goal, WHY is this important to you? What will it mean for you?

Write them out using the SMART formula.

What actions do you need to take in order to achieve these goals?

Create an action plan for each goal. For each action you identify, make sure you also include the date by when you will complete it.

Here is a format you can use.

Action	Target Date for Completion	Review Date	Date Completed

How To Make Your SMART Goal Even MORE Powerful

OK, so now you have your SMART goal, here's how you can make it even more effective. It's a technique that successful sports people practice, the world over. As Tony Robbins says, actions make the difference, but if you don't have the mindset, you won't have the motivation and you'll give up too soon.

Decide what the last step is – the point when you actually know you have succeeded in getting your goal. If you can't think of anything, go back to your 'M' and see what you put there.

Create a picture of you as you succeed in getting your goal. Make the picture as vivid as you possibly can, using all your senses: sight, hearing, touch, feelings, what you're doing (and with whom), smell, taste, what you hear in your own head. Make it really real.

Look at the picture, see yourself in it, and position it in the place where it is most vivid and believable. You may need to move it nearer or further away, up, down, left, right. You may need to change the size, the brightness or turn it into a movie, add a frame or make it completely panoramic. Whatever it takes.

If you are having difficulty in creating a picture, it is most likely because you don't totally want or believe in the goal, or you're frightened of failure. Consider your 'why'. How meaningful is it to you, truthfully? Is it your own goal, or a goal you think you should have?

Try creating some goals which you can afford not to get, by way of practice.

When the picture is totally believable, step into it and take a look around. See it, hear it, feel it, smell it, taste it. Then step out again.

In your mind's eye take the picture and hold it in both hands. Take 4 deep breaths. With each out-breath, fill the picture with energy and life. Float out into the future to the date and time you want your goal. Let it drop down into your future. Notice how your future changes. Float back to now.

If your goal is related to success in a sport, or performance or any kind, you can also 'rehearse' your goal. Every night, before you go to bed, imagine yourself succeeding. Again, it's got to become real and vivid, so you need to employ all your senses. A friend of mine, who wanted to find 'Mr Right' did this night after night for several months, and when amazed when the man who did show up matched her picture perfectly.

And finally...

I hope you have found this report useful. Having clear goals that truly motivate you is so important for your success. Take a look at these 2 videos if you want to find out more about motivation in general.

[Tony Robbins Interview With Frank Kern And John Reese \(youtube\)](#)

[Dan Ariely: What Makes Us Feel Good About Our Work](#) (TED talks)

If you are interested in having a complementary career strategy session with me, or you want to know about my career success courses, please [contact us](#).

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