

Goal Setting (SMART Goals)

Use the SMART goals process for establishing goals for employees. This process can help make sure that both Managers and Employees share the same understanding of goals set during performance review conversations.

Let's differentiate between **Goals** and **Duties**:

- A **DUTY** is a statement of an employee's normal work output, a clearly established responsibility or requirement of an employee's job. Duties are found on an employee's job description. Examples include maintaining a database, preparing travel requests, and scheduling meetings.
- A **GOAL** is a statement of specific work-related achievement to be accomplished within a specified time frame. See examples below.

You may set routine, problem-solving, or innovative goals, or very likely a combination. These are described below:

- **Routine (Normal Work Output; Duty)**

While all duties on a job description are not likely to be listed under Goals/Duties, there may be a duty or responsibility that is so pertinent to the employee's job that the you decide to include it as a major focus area. An example of a routine goal: *To prepare the monthly production statistics report.*

- **Problem-Solving (Quality Improvement)**

You might have set a goal to improve a work process, behavior or function. An example of a problem-solving goal: *To improve the readability and format of the production statistics report.*

- **Innovative (Something New)**

Perhaps you have ideas for new ways for the employee to perform work or carry out his/her areas of responsibility. An example of an Innovative goal: *To create a new electronic Template for preparing the monthly production statistical report.*

Goals should be written so that they describe how the results are to be obtained, how results will be measured, and when the work will be done: They should be **SMART**:

Specific: (Use an action verb, e.g., to develop..., to design..., to implement..., to produce...) Make sure the goal specifies what needs to be done, with a timeframe for completion, e.g., *resolve patron complaint on overdue processing error within 24 hours of receipt.*

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- Definition of how and what needs to be done
- Clear Understanding

Measurable: (Contains numeric or descriptive measures that define quantity, quality, and cost) How you will know your employee has been successful in meeting this goal, **e.g.**, *Process 30 books by end of each work day.*

- Behavior: observable actions
- Quantity: number or amount
- Quality: how well the result meets the criteria; what it's like when it's right
- Cycle time: time from request to completion
- Efficiency: resources used to get the result
- Flexibility: will accommodate special needs

Achievable (Within employee's control and influence; a "stretch" yet feasible) Is the goal achievable by your employee? Can they complete the goal as you stated in the timeframe you originally outlined?

- Authority or control to meet the goal
- Influence to meet the goal
- Resources to meet the goal
- Environmental support to meet the goal

Results-Focused (Measures actual outputs or results (not activities) such as products, deliverables, and accomplishments)

Time-Bound (Identifies target date) How often the employee should work on this task or by when the employee should accomplish this goal.

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- Specific date
- Calendar milestone
- Relative to the achievement of another result

Here are some examples of goals using **SMART**:

- To reconcile the department financial reports by the fifteenth of every month with no increase in reconciliation errors.
- To install a new computer system by planning work so that one operator is online at all times, by November 1st.
- To reduce overtime in the department from 150 hours per month to 50 hours per month by the end of the fiscal year with no increase in incident reports.

ARE these SMART?

Read each statement below and determine if it is SMART. If not, why not?

Goal: To understand the student registration process by June 1, 2005

➤ *Is this SMART?* No. "Understand" is not a results-focused output. Instead, consider what the understanding will enable the employee to do.

❖ **Better to state:** To register students using the new student registration process to be able to assist with registration on peak days by June 1st.

Goal: To improve team morale by the end of the calendar year.

➤ *Is this SMART?* No. How does one measure team morale? Is this within the employee's control and influence?

❖ **Better to state:** To research, develop, and submit recommendations for improving department communications by the end of the calendar year.

Goal: To become actively involved in the college's restructuring process.

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➤ *Is this SMART?* No. What does actively involved mean? How will you measure this?

Better to state: To represent the department in the restructuring process by attending restructuring team meetings ensuring the department's interests and needs are addressed. Communicating issues that will affect department personnel in staff meetings, and alerting department managers when issues require their involvement. This will be done through the duration of restructuring process to ensure that the department needs are considered.

Goal – To learn Access database software by the end of the 1st quarter.

➤ *Is this SMART?* No. What's really the goal? Is it "to learn" access or to actually apply it?

Better to state: To develop a customer database using access software that will include customers' demographic and contact information. The database will be tested by the end of the 1st quarter and implemented for department use by May 15. This will allow department to more readily contact customers when needed.

Worksheet for Developing SMART Goals and Duties

For each goal or duty, answer the following questions:

- ❖ **What?** Describe what the result or accomplishment will be.
- ❖ **How?** Describe the process you will take to achieve your goal.
- ❖ **Why?** Describe why this particular goal/duty is important or relevant.
- ❖ **When?** Establish when the goal/duty will be completed as well as any interim steps.

Reference:

Stanford University. (2008). www-sul.stanford.edu.

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