

Goal and Objective Setting

At the beginning of the New Year we often set resolutions. These could be about what we want to do, achieve or become. Often by the time we get to this time of year, we may have broken them or slipped in our purpose. We were full of good intentions, but somehow we don't follow through or we weaken in our resolve. This can be due to a variety of reasons, but if we were to think more carefully about what it is that we want and how we are going to get there, it will make our aim easier to achieve.

It is important to be clear about what we want to achieve and why we want to achieve it. That means changing your resolution to a goal or objective. The goal has to have relevance to you, it can't just be wishful thinking. You have to make sure that it is going to be achievable in terms of your capabilities. Identify what is it going to do for you and what the results will deliver or provide for you. You also need to be clear about how you will go about it, how does the goal break down. By making sure you think about these factors, you make the goal manageable.

How to set goals using the four feature approach

Often when talk about setting goals we use the acronym SMART - we are going to discuss this later.

- A goal, can relate to business or your personal life and the same principles apply.
- If you are identifying business goals, how do they relate to the work that you do?
- Do they fit within your departments or organisational objectives?
- If you are a manager will your goals have an impact on the team that work for you?
- You also have to identify whether the goal is a short or long term aim, or whether they are simple or complex.
- If they are complex and long term do, they need to be broken down further into sub goals so that you have lower level targets to aim for and for you to see the results being delivered as you progress. This will also help you stay motivated.

There are just four features that you need to write down to create a goal plan:

1 - What?

- Write a detailed statement of what the goal is, make the goal sound both necessary and compelling.

2 - Why?

Describe fully:

- Why do you want to achieve this goal?
- Why is this goal important to you?
- What will you gain by achieving this goal?
- How will you feel when you have achieved it or how will you feel if you do not achieve it?
- What is the alternative?
- How does it fit in with other goals or plans?

3 - When?

- When do you want to achieve this goal?
- Is it part of a larger goal?
- Could the late start of this goal impact the completion of your whole plan? Create realistic start and finish dates.

4 - How?

- Action plan.
- If necessary, the goal needs to be broken down into clearly defined actions and tasks.
- Ensure that you enter the plan into the way you manage your time, so that you can allocate time to the goal and monitor its progress.

Use Creative Visualisation

Creative visualisation, known to ancient sages and religious mystics for centuries, and now more recently adopted by Olympic athletes, has been proven to be effective and successful in creating compelling futures. In many ways we live in a world full of dreams come true, the thoughts, ideas, goals and concepts that people dream up and perceive in their minds end up being brought into reality by the process of working on them as clearly defined goals and outcomes. Use effective time management to schedule periods within your week to allow for discovery and creative visualisation.

Where does goal setting fit in?

Understanding where goal setting fits in to your life, both in your private life and whilst at work will develop a personal sense of time within you. This will enable you to identify short-term, middle-term and long-term plans to achieve your overall goals in life.

Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Using **SMART** gets us to establish goals and objectives that are meaningful and effective. A positive goal underpins effective planning and time management. We take the criteria we established and ensure that the goal meets the following criteria:

S – specific, to be specific a goal should have a clearly defined outcome. You should be able to describe how you will know when you have achieved a goal and it needs to be stated positively.

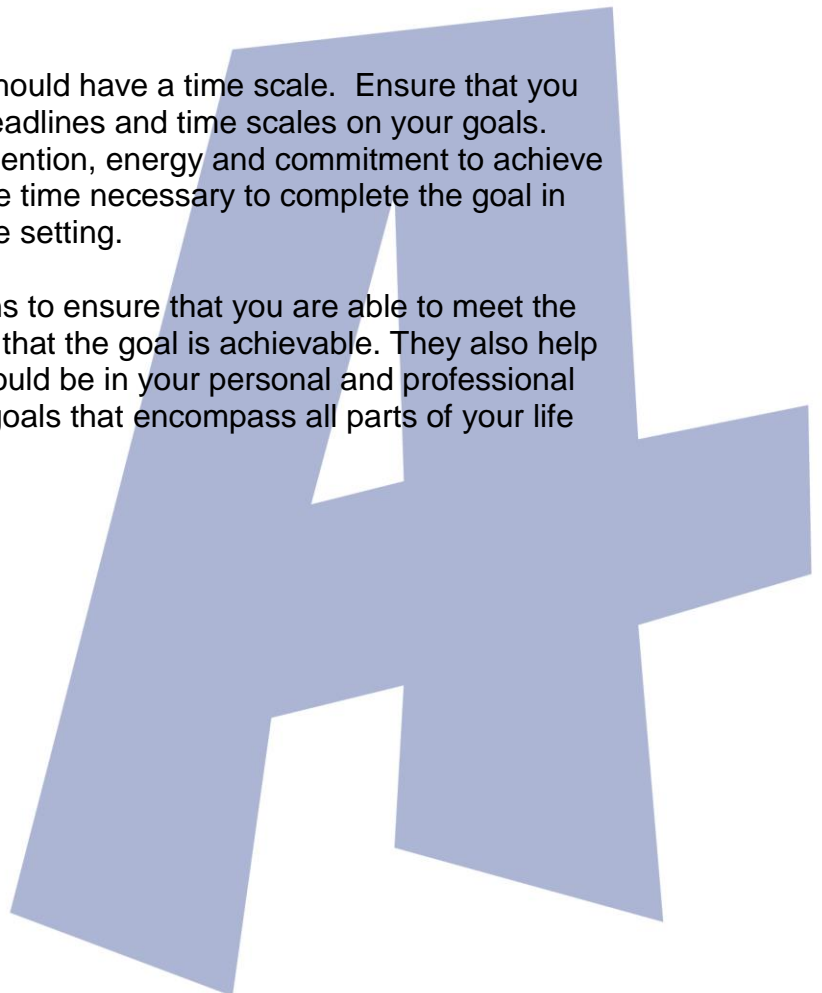
M – measurable, your goal should be measurable, it should be clearly defined to let you know how you are doing and, of course, when you get there.

A – achievable, achievable is a more subjective statement. How achievable do you feel the goal is? This question can make you realise how much work and effort is needed to achieve the goal. It is most important that you focus on the different activities needed to achieve the goal. If you can create an activity plan for the goal, then the goal is probably achievable, assuming that you are prepared to do the necessary work.

R – realistic, is the goal truly realistic, or is it just a pipe dream – only you can judge.

T – time bound, finally, the goal should have a time scale. Ensure that you place some realistic milestones, deadlines and time scales on your goals. Using a deadline will focus your attention, energy and commitment to achieve the goal and will assist you plan the time necessary to complete the goal in line with other goals that you will be setting.

You can use the following questions to ensure that you are able to meet the criteria established in the goal and that the goal is achievable. They also help you establish where your goals should be in your personal and professional life. It also ensures that you have goals that encompass all parts of your life



Ask yourself the following questions

Yes/No

Does my personal use of time reflect the priorities in my life?

Am I satisfied that my time is spent on items that match my performance requirement and current aims and objectives?

Am I working on my short-term plans?

Have I identified strategies that will enable me to meet my career development and aspirations?

Have I set my mid-term goals for the next 6-12 months and will I review their relevance regularly?

Are my values clear?

Do I know what the most important things are, in my life, both at work and my private life?

Do I have a set of well-established personal policies that guide me?

Am I confident that I know my long-term goals?

Do I always allow time to contemplate my future, what matters to me and acknowledge a change in circumstances or the presentation of opportunities?

Do the activities within my day consume an amount of time in proportion to their priority for me?

Do I know when I am likely to be at my most creative and do I take advantage of that?

Am I comfortable with the direction my life is leading?

If you answer 'no' to any of these questions, it means that it is an area where you need to improve your time management or create a goal. It should ensure that your goals are correct and fit within your life. It is important to remember that goals should not be fixed, if your life and priorities change, then so should your goals. You have to ensure that your life is always reflected in your goals.