

*If an organization does not know what harbor they seek,
any wind is the right wind.*
-Seneca

S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Realistic
Time Bound

The acronym S.M.A.R.T., helps to keep us focused and allows us to be smart when we set our goals. We want to intelligently decide what our goals will be so that we can actually accomplish them. Although this is probably a straightforward and simple goal setting tool, it never hurts to reacquaint ourselves with it. Let's take a closer look at each of the components of S.M.A.R.T. goals:

Specific - A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six "W" questions:

- *Who: Who is involved?
- *What: What do I want to accomplish?
- *Where: Identify a location.
- *When: Establish a time frame.
- *Which: Identify requirements and constraints.
- *Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

EXAMPLE: A general goal would be, "Increase membership." But a specific goal would say, "Hold a membership drive at the local elementary school with PTA Moms by the end of March 2007."

Measurable - Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal.

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as...How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable - When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

You can attain most any goal you set when you plan your steps wisely and establish a

time frame that allows you to carry out those steps. Goals that may have seemed far away and out of reach eventually move closer and become attainable, not because your goals shrink, but because you grow and expand to match them. When you list your goals you build your self-image. You see yourself as worthy of these goals, and develop the traits and personality that allow you to possess them.

Realistic - To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which we are both *willing* and *able* to work. A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be. But be sure that every goal represents substantial progress. A high goal is frequently easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seem easy simply because they were a labor of love.

Your goal is probably realistic if you truly *believe* that it can be accomplished. Additional ways to know if your goal is realistic is to determine if you have accomplished anything similar in the past or ask yourself what conditions would have to exist to accomplish this goal.

Time Bound (Timely) - Set a timeframe for the goal: for next week, in three months, by the end of the year. Putting an end point on your goal gives you a **clear target** to work towards.

If you don't set a time, the commitment is too vague. It tends not to happen because you feel you can start at any time. Without a time limit, there's no urgency to start taking action now.

Time must be measurable, attainable and realistic.

Prioritize Goals by beginning with the end in mind!