

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

Making sure that your goals fit the SMART criteria, will ensure your success.

The acronym S.M.A.R.T. outlines a set of criteria that enables goals to be well focused and achievable:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Relevant

Time-Bound

Create Specific Goals

Vague goals produce vague results. Think about exactly what you want the employee to accomplish. What will the end-result look like? Spell out the details in such a way that anyone could understand what you intend to be achieved. The goal should contain a detailed description of what is to be done; when it is to be done by; and the action(s) taken to achieve it.

Bad example: "Will do presentations on data entry procedures."

Good example: "Will conduct two training sessions for non-Financial Services staff at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters on the NECHO system."

Create Measurable Goals

Always set goals that are measurable in some way because if they cannot be measured, they cannot be managed. Select a standard unit of measurement (quantity, quality, cost, schedule, etc.) that will enable you to see exactly how much progress has been made. How far the employee is from the start of their goal and how far away are they from completion.

Bad example: "Speed up job postings."

Good example: "Review the job posting procedure and decrease the time required to post new jobs from an average of 12 days to 10 days."

Create Achievable Goals

Having high goals that stretch an employee is important, but you also need to create goals that are realistic for their situation and abilities. Is the

goal within their control or reach? Will they have a fair chance to attain the desired result, with the time, tools, or skills available? Limit the scope appropriately, because creating goals that are not attainable can be very discouraging and will only serve to demotivate your employees.

On the same note, goals that are too easily accomplished do not stretch or allow one to grow as a person because they are not challenging enough. You will want to find that right mix of goal that is challenging, but not extreme.

Bad example: "Get to work on time."

Good example: "Ensure you arrive at your work station at 8:30 am ready to begin the day's work. If there is an unavoidable delay call and let me know when you will be arriving."

Create Relevant Goals

Relevant goals ensure that employees are dedicating effort appropriately towards valid business needs and priorities. Are the goals in line with the employee's job description, growth or development needs, department objectives, priorities, and mission statement? Use the goals as a means of tying results to needs.

Bad example: "Dress for the job."

Good example: "Ensure you wear the proper clothing and personal protective equipment required for the task as specified in the hazard assessment."

Create Time-Bound Goals

Every goal should have a time dimension. Not being bound by time induces procrastination. Deadlines, with starting / ending points and milestones are one way but periods (every 3 months), or durations (45 minutes per section) often are more appropriate.

Bad example: "Look into decreasing the overtime required for snow removal."

Good example: "Review snow removal procedures currently in place, identify areas where new processes or automation would reduce the time requirements and prepare a report by October 2008."