

Smart Goal Setting

SMART is an acronym for the following characteristics that should be present in your goal:



1. Smart Goals are Specific

Specific goals are much more likely to be accomplished than vague ones! What is it exactly that you want to achieve? A specific goal can be determined by asking the following questions:

WHO is involved? Smart goals don't depend on the involvement of too many people - remember, the only person you can control is yourself, so the achievement of your goal depends on you.

WHAT do I want to accomplish? Define your aim, so you will have a clear idea of what you are aiming for. A vague 'I want to be a better person' is not specific enough!

WHERE will I work on my goal? Identify a location or locations where most of the work towards your goal will be carried out. Is it home, at college or at work.

WHEN do I hope to accomplish my goal? Set a time frame and specific deadline for completion. Having a specific end date will keep you from procrastinating.

WHICH factors will affect the success of my goal? What requirements do you need, what limitations will you have to deal with? Being prepared for obstacles or the unexpected will help you adapt as necessary.

WHY do I want to reach this goal? The reasons behind your choice of a goal are just as important as the goal itself. Looking at those reasons can tell you quite a bit about yourself!

2. Smart Goals are Measurable

Measuring the progress you are making helps to keep you motivated and on track for the completion of your goal. How will you know when you have achieved your goal? Ask yourself these questions:

How much (time can I afford to give to my project today)?

How many (laps do I want to swim today)?

How will I know (when the goal is reached)?

3. Smart Goals are Attainable

Not easy, but attainable. Is your goal something you have control over? Does it represent what you know you are capable of - if you put some effort into it. Each goal you reach makes the next one seem more attainable, so as you grow in confidence, so can your goals!

4. Smart Goals are Realistic

This takes into account what you are capable of, what you are willing to do and what your circumstances permit. Is it applicable to where you are in your life right now and can you realistically achieve it?

A goal can be high yet still be realistic. Setting a high goal brings a sense of greater motivation, because you can see what a great difference it will make for you. At the same time, it can be overwhelming - so break the larger goal down into a series of smaller ones. Your goal will be easier to accomplish if it seems realistic to you, and small goals are approached with greater confidence of success.

5. Smart Goals are Timely

What is your timeline? Setting a date for the completion of your goal puts you in motion mentally and sets the pace for a steady race to the finish. If you don't have a time frame for the reaching of your goal, you have no real incentive. 'Someday' is not an acceptable deadline.

Smart goal setting takes into account all the guidelines above. It helps develop a right state of mind and a game plan for getting things done.

Is your goal a SMART one?

