

One of the key areas of performance is the ability to set and achieve goals. Goal setting is therefore a fundamental component of this. However many people don't set good goals and therefore don't achieve their full potential.

This guide gives the basic of setting SMARTER goals. The SMART goal model is very widely used in business so you may have come across it before - hopefully this guide can put a little meat on the acronym bones.

## SMART

### S - Specific

State the outcome of the goal in positive, specific terms. *"I want to loose weight"* doesn't hack it I am afraid. Even *"I want to loose 1 stone in 2 months"* isn't good enough because after 2 months you will forget what your original weight was!

To improve these statements state the goal in positive terms with more definitive statements. For example *"I commit to my diet and exercise program so that on July 1<sup>st</sup> I will weigh x pounds"*

### M - Measurable

It's no good having a goal if you cannot tell if you have reached it. The above example would be worthless if you did not own any scales. In which case maybe you have restate your goal or buy some scales.

### A - Achievable

You want to stretch yourself but the goals must be achievable. Getting that balance right can be tricky. This is where you have to be very honest with yourself.

Look at actually how you are going to achieve your goal. What advantages or experience have you got going for you. For example *"I tried dieting before so I know I can loose this much weight in this timeframe"*

Also look at the obstacles that may get in your way. *"Christmas is coming up I have trouble sticking to a diet over Christmas"*. You should not use these as excuses but as risk areas that you may want to plan around. Good project managers always assess risk **and** develop an action plan to mitigate those risks.

If you are finding it difficult to set large goals then try breaking down the goal into a smaller sub goal and assess your progress over a shorter time period.

### R - Relevant

It's no good tackling the wrong thing! This may seem obvious but it's amazing how many people find goals that really don't tackle the fundamental issue. In this

section ask yourself **Why** am I doing this? A clear answer to this question is going to really sustain your motivation during the project.

### T - Time bound

Always state your goals with a deadline. Make sure it is specific rather than relative (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> of July rather than in 3 weeks time). In this section it is also worth thinking about specific milestones to check your progress along the way. for example how much is your target weight on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1<sup>st</sup> June etc.

## Get SMARTER!

So now you are equipped to commit to some great SMART goals. But what about going one stage further and making them SMARTER!

The ER stands for Emotional Resonance. How do you feel about the goal? Goals should have a Wow factor. Many people, especially in business, don't feel any emotional commitment to their goals. The task ahead looks like a chore rather than something that really resonates with them. A lot of goals are set by a manager rather than by the person who carries them out. In this situation it's important that the manager checks in with how the person feels about the goals and engages with the values and emotional side of the goal. This needs to be from the perspective of the employee not the business rational.

If you are setting your goals yourself think through why you are setting the goal. For example in our weight loss example it could be to lose weight for a specific event such as a wedding. How are you going to feel when you succeed? What will that give you?

## Succeeding

So now you have set some powerful goals how can you make sure you succeed?

Write out your goal and keep it somewhere where you can refer to it every day.

Cultivate a support network. Publicly state your goal to someone you trust who can support you and help you. We all have rough times and having someone around who can help can make all the difference.

Regularly visualise what it is going to feel like when you succeed.

Keep track of progress.

All projects go wrong sometimes. Don't beat yourself up. Go back to reasons why you are committed to the goal and move forward. Re-plan how you are going to achieve your goal and go for it!