

Facilitator's Body of Knowledge Research Project

S.M.A.R.T. Plans

Background: This paper presents the process used by the Dynamic Leadership Consulting Group, Inc. in developing plans using S.M.A.R.T. goals. SMART Plans are the result of specifically formatted goals. S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym which refers to goals that are Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Time constrained. Detail descriptions of each are found below.

Specific: Detailed, particular or focused. It spells out the particulars of the goal. Identifies what you are acting on or trying to accomplish, the end-results.

Measurable: Provides a quantifiable standard for comparison to determine when the goal has been reached. A specific number, percentage, count, etc...

Actionable: Tells what is to be done to reach the goal. The use of an Action Verb describes the type of activity.


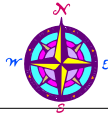
Realistic: The goal must be practical, achievable, possible and worthwhile. It should consider the knowledge, skills and abilities of the people, system and resources that will be required to complete it. You must consider resource constraints to ensure a practical cost/benefit relationship exists to goal achievement.

Time Constrained: This describes a finite duration for the action to be completed. Increase specificity as warranted. Time constraint should be driven by resource availability, priorities, and overall program requirements.

DLCG has developed a SMART goal Worksheet to help examine and develop real SMART goals. The following describes the sections of the worksheet:

Goal Object: This is the focal point of the goal. You will be doing something to what? This is the thing that normally follows the action verb.

Action verb: This is the action that is going to be taken. If there is no action, there is no goal. Something has to be done. What is done is described using an action verb.

 S.M.A.R.T. Goals 	
Specific	Detailed, particular or focused. It spells out the particulars of the goal. Identifies the end-results.
Measurable	Provides a quantifiable standard for comparison to determine when the goal has been reached. A specific number, percentage, etc...
Actionable	Tells what is to be done to reach the goal. Indicates the use of an Action Verb describing the type of activity.
Realistic	The goal must be practical, achievable, possible and worthwhile. It should consider the knowledge, skills and abilities of the people, system and resources that will be required to complete it. You must consider resource constraints to ensure a practical cost/benefit relationship exists to goal achievement.
Time Constrained	Describes a finite duration for the action to be completed within. Increase specificity as warranted. Time constraint should be driven by resource availability and overall program requirements.

Measurable outcome: To many people this is one of the hardest sections to identify. Yet, it is very simple. This part of the goal describes the criteria by which you will determine success. When the action is completed what will be different? How will it be different? How will you know, when the action is done if you are successful?

Specific date: In the early stages of action planning there is a reluctance to establish a specific date for a goal to be completed by. This is understandable, we expect the date to change until the action plans have been approved two to three steps further into the process. If this goal is a stand alone goal then the date should be specific. If the goal is part of a greater plan and must be reconciled with other goals and resourced by priorities then the specific date field should be the expected period of time from start to finish in weeks, months, or years.

Facilitator's Body of Knowledge Research Project

Resource constraints: What are the constraints to your resources? Resources consist of funding, material, people or their time. If you are currently constrained by resources what makes you think there will be more available for this goal? If there isn't more, or there will be less, what is the nature of the constraint? How will the constraint limit the work on this goal?

Goal Classification: Clearly all actions must be prioritized according to available resources. Goal classification is a high level prioritization with three possible choices – **Essential** for strategy success, **Problem Solving**, and **Nice-to-do**.

Standards of Performance: These may expand on the measurable outcome. There may be one, two, or three standards of performance. They establish sort-of-a specification for success. They are **Minimal** - to be considered minimally successful, **Acceptable** - what we would really like, and expect, to see, **Outstanding** - a real stretch.

Identify Obstacles: We want to identify the known or possible obstacles. Obstacles take on three forms.

Physical: A physical obstacle is something that physically will interfere with the accomplishment of the goal. This is an obstacle like a brick wall or resources located at a remote location.

Conditional: A conditional obstacle is a rule, regulation, policy or law that has the potential to interfere with the accomplishment of the goal. This includes obstacles that may only cause a delay in the process.

Psychological: This obstacle deals with people. It is often referred to as resistance to change. With that in mind what kind of obstacles are possible for this goal?

Why is it Worthwhile? This is one of the last items on the worksheet. It's the reality check. By this time we should be able to state, in specific terms, specifically, why this is a worthwhile project. Why is it worth expending the resources to accomplish it. This is an acid test.

Goal Statement: Ok. After all that work it is time to write a statement of your goal. A good goal, that is a SMART goal must consider the five elements at the top of the worksheet along with why it is worthwhile. With these elements you can create a single statement that meets the requirements of a SMART goal.

Action Plan: As you think about each goal there must be some path of actions required and helpful to accomplish it. What are a few of the major objectives or actions required to accomplish this goal? Look at the standards of performance for outstanding and design goals to accomplish this level. Look also at the obstacles and determine what needs to be done to overcome them.

Maybe the goal is a series of unrelated issues in the same general area. These can be dealt with sequentially or in parallel as resources allow. Sequential elements of goals are dependent on others to be accomplished before they can be started. Parallel activities have no dependencies and can therefore be accomplished as resources allow.

Finally, all goals are reviewed and assessed by the team to determine which SMART goals will be resourced and in what order.

Resources:

CareerIntelligence.com: SMART Goals written toward career building. <http://www.career-intelligence.com/management/GettingAhead/SmartGoals.html>

Goal Setting Guide: A Well written description. <http://www.goal-setting-guide.com/smart-goals.html>

Innovation Tools: This is a different way to approach SMART goals. <http://www.innovationtools.com/Articles/ArticleDetails.asp?a=124>

Top Achievement.com: view of SMART <http://www.topachievement.com/smart.html>