

Writing S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Creating goals is important in order to manage your own and your employees' performance. As part of setting your employees' path for success, each year you will set goals for the upcoming year/evaluation period. It is important to always convey the expectations of the position/department to all your employees. S.M.A.R.T. goal will help you develop reasonable objectives. A S.M.A.R.T goal is defined as one that is specific, measurable, attainable/aligned, realistic/relevant, and time-bound. Make sure there are between 3 and 7 goals and the goals should be strategic in nature not daily tasks. Below is a definition of each of the S.M.A.R.T. goal criteria.

Specific: Goals should be simplistically written and clearly define what the employee is going to do.

Specific is the What, Why, and How of the S.M.A.R.T. model.

✚ **Example:** By August 1, 2019, implement a new performance management system for Classified and A&P staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and establish career development paths.

✚ **Explanation of Example:**

- “Implement a new performance management system for Classified and A&P staff
- “Classified and A&P staff” = what
- “using clearly defined processes and guidelines” = how
- “so employees and managers can competently evaluate performance and establish career development paths” = why

Measurable: Goals should be measurable so that there is tangible evidence that the employee has accomplished the goal. Usually, the entire goal statement is a measure for the project, but there are usually several short-term or smaller measurements built into the goal.

✚ **Example:** By August 1, 2019, implement a new performance management system for Classified and A&P staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and establish career development paths.

✚ **Explanation of Example:**

- The essential metric is whether or not the system is operational by August 1st.

Attainable/Aligned: Goals should be achievable; they should stretch the employee slightly to feel challenged, but defined well enough so that the employee can achieve them. The employee must possess the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to achieve the goal.

Employees can meet almost any goal when a solid plan has been set and established timeframes have been given to allow the employee to carry out the necessary steps. As the employee carries out the steps, the employee will be able to achieve goals that may have seemed impossible at the beginning. On the other hand, if a goal is impossible to achieve, the employee may not even try to accomplish it. Achievable goals motivate employees. Impossible goals demotivate them.

- ✦ **Example:** By August 1, 2019, implement a new performance management system for Classified and A&P staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and establish career development paths.

- ✦ **Explanation of Example:**

- In order for an employee to reach this goal, the employee must have a skill set, in this case in the area of performance management, that allows the employee to understand the nature of the goal, and the goal must present a large enough challenge for the employee to remain interested in and committed to accomplishing it.

Realistic/Relevant: Goals should measure outcomes, not activities.

- ✦ **Example:** By August 1, 2019, implement a new performance management system for Classified and A&P staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and establish career development paths.

- ✦ **Explanation of Example:**

- The result of this goal is a process that allows employees and managers to more competently evaluate performance and develop their careers, not the individual activities and actions that occur in order to make the goal a reality.

Time-bound: Goals should be linked to a timeframe that creates a practical sense of urgency, or results in tension between the current reality and the vision of the goal. Without such tension, the goal is unlikely to produce a relevant outcome.

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- ✦ **Explanation of Example:**

- August 1, 2019 provides the employee with a time-bound deadline.

The concept of writing S.M.A.R.T. goals is very important for accomplishing individual goals, which in turn are linked to department, division, and University goals. It is also critical for ensuring good communication between employees and supervisors so there are no surprises during annual performance evaluations.

The following questionnaire will assist you in creating S.M.A.R.T. goals. Begin by writing your goal as clearly and concisely as possible. Then answer the related questions. Conclude by revising your goal, in the space allotted.

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Questionnaire

Goal:

Specific:

- What do you expect your employee's goal to accomplish? How and why will it be accomplished?

Measurable:

- How will you measure whether or not the goal was been reached (list at least two indicators)?

Attainal:

- Is it possible? Have others done it successfully? Does the employee have the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources to accomplish the goal? Will meeting the goal challenge the employee without defeating him/her?

Result-focused:

- What is the reason, purpose, or benefit of accomplishing the goal? What is the result (not activities leading up to the result) of the goal?

Time-bound:

- What is the established completion date and does that completion date create a physical sense of urgency?

Revised Goal:
