

IMPORTANCE OF SETTING GOALS. SMART GOALS

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Annotation: *Goals & Goal setting involves the development of an action plan designed to motivate and guide a person or group toward a goal. Goal setting can be guided by goal-setting criteria such as SMART criteria. Goal setting is a major component of personal-development and management literature. The theory states that the simplest most direct motivational explanation of why some people perform better than others is because they have different performance goals.*

Key words: *goal, SMART goal, measurable, specific, timely, effective goals, brainstorming.*

A goal is an idea of the future or desired result that a student or a group of students envisions, plans and commits to achieve. Students endeavor to reach goals within a finite time by setting deadlines. A goal is roughly similar to a purpose or aim, the anticipated result, which guides reaction, or an end, which is an object, either a physical object or an abstract object that has intrinsic value.

Goal Characters:

☐ Importance is determined by a goal's attractiveness, intensity, relevance, priority, and sign. Importance can range from high to low.

☐ Difficulty is determined by general estimates of probability of achieving the goal. Specificity is determined if the goal is qualitative and ranges from being vaguely to precisely stated. Typically, a higher-level goal is more vague than a lower level subgoal; for example, wanting to have a successful career is more vague than wanting to obtain a master's degree. Temporal range is determined by the range from proximal (immediate) to distal (delayed) and the duration of the goal.

☐ Level of consciousness refers to a person's cognitive awareness of a goal. Awareness is typically greater for proximal goals than distal goals.

☐ Complexity of a goal is determined by how many sub goals are necessary to achieve the goal and how one goal connects to another. For example, graduating college could be considered a complex goal because it has many sub goals, such as making good grades, and is connected to other goals, such as gaining meaningful employment.

Goals help describe success. People tend to maintain expectations, not surpass them. Thus, expectations or goals should be challenging, yet within a person or group's grasp. Goals create common tasks and processes for a group or individuals. By having them, a group knows what it has to do and can work together on the goals. Goal setting takes time. Initially the members must be introduced to the process, develop necessary skills, implement procedures and record evaluations. Organizational goal setting can be difficult when trying to set goals that all members agree with and will actively pursue.

Goal setting can:

- serve as clear and specific delegations of responsibilities.
- offer more diversity of services and programs by updating and improving old programs and developing new ones.
- identify both individual and organizational strengths and weaknesses.
- allow clarification and/or development of an organization's mission or philosophy.
- focus your efforts in a consistent direction.
- increase success because success can be defined as the achievement of a goal.
- serve as self-motivators and energizers.

SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

- Specific – Objective clearly states, so anyone reading it can understand, what will be done and who will do it.
- Measurable – Objective includes how the action will be measured. Measuring your objectives helps you determine if you are making progress. It keeps you on track and on schedule.
- Achievable – Objective is realistic given the realities faced in the community. Setting reasonable objectives helps set the project up for success
- Relevant – A relevant objective makes sense, that is, it fits the purpose of the grant, it fits the culture and structure of the community, and it addresses the vision of the project.
- Time-bound – Every objective has a specific timeline for completion.

The essence of Goal Setting:

First, difficult specific goals lead to significantly higher performance than easy goals, no goals, or even the setting of an abstract goal such as urging people to do their best.

Second, holding ability constant, as this is a theory of motivation, and given that, there is goal commitment, the higher the goal the higher the performance.

Third, variables such as praise, feedback, or the involvement of people in decision-making only influences behavior to the extent that it leads to the setting of and commitment to a specific difficult goal.

Fourth, goal setting, in addition to affecting the three mechanisms of motivation, namely, choice, effort, and persistence, can also have a cognitive benefit. It can influence choice, effort, and persistence to discover ways to attain the goal.

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