

Developing SMART Goals

A well-defined professional goal delivers on each of the letters in the SMART acronym:

SPECIFIC

MEASURABLE

ATTAINABLE

RELEVANT

TIMEFRAMED

Specific

A goal should be specific, rather than general. To make goals specific, they must tell exactly what is expected and why it is important.

Key questions to consider:

- What: What do I want to accomplish?
- Why: What are the reasons driving this goal and/or the benefits of accomplishing it?

Measurable

Establish concrete criteria that can be used to measure attainment of the goal. If a goal is not measurable, it is not possible to know whether there is progress in attaining it.

Key questions to consider:

- How can you measure progress?
- How will you know when it is accomplished?

Attainable

A well-set goal is realistic and attainable. Keep in mind that most any goal can be achieved if planned wisely and for an appropriate timeline.

Key questions to consider:

- How can the goal be accomplished?
- If a goal will take longer than a year to accomplish, how can you set up interim steps within the performance evaluation period to measure success?

Relevant/Realistic

It is critical to make a goal relevant and realistic. It should require some stretch but be achievable with a well-planned process, sufficient support from others and individual ownership of the goal.

Key questions to consider:

- Is the goal in alignment with the Alliance's strategic priorities?
- Does the goal represent substantial progress?
- Does the goal represent an objective to which you are willing and able to work?

Timeframed

A goal should have a timeframe and target date attached to it. A timeframe helps prevent goals being overtaken by the day-to-day crises that invariably arise.

Example of SMART goal that can be customized:

I will accomplish _____ by <Month> 201x. I will measure its successful achievement by _____. Its accomplishment will benefit the organization by _____.