

SMART/SMART-Q Goals

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Attainable

R = Relevant

T = Time-bound

Q = Quality

Specific

The goal should be precise rather than a general one. This means the goal is clear and unambiguous. To make goals specific, they must say exactly what is expected, why is it important, who's involved, where is it going to happen and which attributes are important.

Measurable

The goal should have concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of the goal. It must be possible to ascertain whether it happened, or how much. Making a goal measurable helps individuals stay on track and reach target dates.

Attainable

Goals should be realistic and attainable. While an attainable goal may "stretch" an individual in order to achieve it, the goal is not extreme. That is, the goals are neither out of reach nor below standard performance, as these may be considered meaningless.

Relevant

Goals should pertain directly to the performance challenge being managed. An agency manager's goal to "Make 50 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches by 2:00pm" may be specific, measurable, attainable, and time-bound, but lacks relevance to organizational goals.

Time-bound

It is important to ground goals within a time frame, giving them a target date. A commitment to a deadline helps individuals focus their efforts on completion of the goal on or before the due date. This part of the SMART goal criteria is intended to prevent goals from being overtaken by the day-to-day crises that invariably arise in an organization. A time-bound goal is intended to establish a sense of urgency.

Quality

The goal should describe the performance needed to achieve it using metrics such as accuracy, completeness, reliability.