

 my **HRK** resource

Employee SMART Goals Tips

The cornerstone of the entire performance management process occurs when employees plan their individual goals for the upcoming performance year. Clearly defining accurate, challenging, and measurable goals will make the year-end review more meaningful and easier to complete. Ambiguous or undefined goals are not going to provide you with the direction you need to succeed. You want to give yourself a concrete goal, so you know exactly what you are working toward.

What is a SMART Goal?

If goals are written **SMART**, this means they are **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely**. Using the following SMART criteria will ensure that you establish clear and measurable goals:

- **Specific:** **What exactly are you going to do?** A specific goal answers the “W” questions: **Who** is involved? **What** are you going to do? Use action words such as direct, organize, coordinate, lead, develop, plan, build, etc. **Why** is this important to do at this time? What do you want to ultimately accomplish? **When** will this happen again?
- **Measurable:** **How will you know that the change has occurred?** Progress toward a goal must be measurable. **If you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it.** In the broadest sense, the whole goal statement is a measure for the project; if the goal is accomplished, the project is a success. However, there are usually several short-term or small measurements that can be built into the goal. **Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress** toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track. Think about the following when building measurements into your goal. **Quantity:** The number, rate, amount, margin, percentage of the product, responsibility, or task that is expected to be accomplished. **Quality:** the characteristics of the task performed. **Time:** the period, duration, or term the task or responsibility will take to perform.

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- **Achievable:** *Can you get this done in the proposed time frame?* Goals you set that are too far out of your reach probably will not be accomplished. Although you may start with the best of intentions, the knowledge that it's too much for you to handle means your subconscious will keep reminding you of this fact and will stop you from giving it your best. **A goal needs to stretch you slightly so you feel you can do it, and it will need a real commitment from you.** This is not to say a goal should be easy to reach; it should challenge you to stretch your boundaries.

- **Relevant:** *Is this relevant to your career development and your role within the company?* **Work-related goals do not exist in a vacuum.** Each employee's goals need to simultaneously match that employee's particular job requirement, as well as the overall team and company goals. In this way, everyone is working toward a common purpose to move the company forward.

- **Timely:** *Is there a clear time frame, deadline, or other time-based expectation of when the goal will be accomplished?* Goals should be scheduled for a finite period. You should set specific dates for next steps to check your progress. Set a time frame for the goal: for next week, in three months, by July 30. Putting an end point on your goal gives you a **clear target** to work toward. If you don't set a time, the commitment is too vague. It tends not to happen because you feel you can start at any time. **Without a time limit, there is no urgency to start acting now.**

Are Your Goals SMART?

S.M.A.R.T	QUESTIONS	ANSWER?
Specific	Does your goal clearly and specifically state what you are trying to achieve? If your goal is particularly large or lofty, try breaking it down into smaller, specific objectives.	
Measurable	How will you (and others) know if progress is being made on achieving your goal? Can you quantify or apply numbers to your outcome?	
Achievable	Is achieving your goal dependent on anyone else? Is it possible to reframe your goal so it only depends on you and not others? What factors may prevent you from accomplishing your goal?	
Relevant	Why is achieving this goal important to you?	

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	What effect will achieving your goal have on your career development or on your team members?	
Timely	When will you reach your goal? If your goal is particularly large, try breaking it down into smaller objectives with appropriate incremental deadlines.	

Example:

Non-SMART Goal 1: Consultants will be trained on additional software.

This goal isn't SMART because it's not specific, measurable, or time phased. It can be made SMART by indicating **how many** consultants will be trained, **who** they are, and **by when** the trainings will be conducted.

New SMART Goal 1: By May 1, 2021, 75% of the consultant staff on my team will be trained on the Microsoft Visual Studio 2020 by enrolling five of my team members each month for the next six months in a VS training course beginning in January 2021.