



TIPS

Mentee Tip of the Month
Attempt to align your goals with those of the organization, if possible.

Mentor Tip of the Month
When suggesting activities, keep in mind the nature of the development task, its importance, time available, and the mentee's preferred learning style.

WRITING EFFECTIVE GOALS

The *SMART* technique.



In order to maximize the effectiveness of mentoring relationships, specific goals and action plans are needed. Writing these goals and creating these action plans can often give mentees and mentors difficulty, particularly due to the pervasive nature of the goals and action plans to the entire

mentoring relationship. But they are tasks that must be completed. This month, we look at how to identify and write effective goals. Next month we will finish this topic by looking at how to transform general needs and goals into more specific action plans.

General Criteria for Setting Goals

Many companies use the acronym SMART for the goal setting process. Below are some of our suggestions based on this acronym.

- S** – *Specific and/or Simple*: The best goals are concisely stated and focus on a single end result.
- M** – *Measurable*: How will you track improvement in terms of time, cost, quality, impact, etc.? Focus on results that are measurable, not just on activities.
- A** – *Attainable*: Is the goal “doable” and achievable?
- R** – *Realistic and/or Relevant*: Is the goal consistent with your current priorities, current resources, and company strategies?
- T** – *Time-bound*: When will you complete the goal? What intermediate steps need deadlines in order for you to accomplish this goal?



WRITING EFFECTIVE GOALS (continued)

Consider these questions when setting goals:

- What do you hope to achieve within the next 3-5 years?
- To what degree are your goals capable of being measured?
- What concrete activities will you be able to do as a result of achieving your goals?
- What resources -- people or otherwise -- do you have access to that could help you meet these goals (e.g., for frequent feedback or encouragement)?
- If you were to break this goal down into skills and knowledge, what would be some of the most important aspects of what you want to learn?
- What level of skill do you need to achieve this goal (e.g., familiarity, passing a certification, recognition as an exemplary performer, ability to train others)?
- Is the timeline in your mentoring agreement reasonable for meeting these goals?



WRITING EFFECTIVE GOALS (continued)

Writing Your Goals

Once you have considered the previous questions, it is time to sit down and actually write your goals. When writing goals, start by defining what the goal is. This is done by describing what the results will be when the goal is accomplished. Use action verbs to make these goals more dynamic and effective. For example, a goal statement could read: "Complete Level 2 certification by year's end."

Suggested Action Verbs

advise	evaluate	organize
analyze	execute	participate
approve	facilitate	plan
assign	follow up	present
audit	forecast	produce
budget	formulate	provide
calculate	gather	recommend
check	give	reduce
collect	implement	review
compile	improve	report
complete	inform	respond
conduct	initiate	revise
contribute	inspect	schedule
coordinate	interpret	secure
delegate	interview	select
design	investigate	standardize
determine	maintain	submit
develop	make	supply
discuss	manage	supervise
distribute	notify	train
establish	obtain	verify



WRITING EFFECTIVE GOALS (continued)

Overcoming Obstacles

Fear of failure often keeps people from setting goals, because the only sure-fire way to avoid failure is to never attempt anything. Yet it is difficult to live, work and succeed in this type of bubble.

Three suggestions for dealing with fear of failure:

- **Redefine failure and success.** Take a proactive view of life by defining failure as an attempt to play it safe by doing nothing that involves risk. Success is attempting anything that forces you to grow as a person.
- **Reorient your basis for worth and value as a person.** Your personal worth is not defined by what you achieve, but rather by who you become.
- **Set goals only based on what you can control.** Goals that others can block, such as getting a promotion, always produce frustration and disappointment. You cannot control the choices and actions of others. Make goals based on what *you* can choose and what *you* can do.

Don't let fear rob you of the value of setting goals! Stretch your self-imposed boundaries. Leverage your strengths; don't get bound up in your weaknesses. See where setting goals can take you if you are willing to travel one step at a time. You may just surprise yourself.

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