

SMART Goals

Purpose

SMART goal setting is a simple and effective way to ensure that both manager and team member have a clear and shared understanding of the goals towards which the team member is working. SMART goals can be used for appraisals, performance management, career development, succession planning and incentive goal setting.

How to do it

SMART goals should be agreed in a 1:1 meeting where the manager and team member are able to concentrate on this key activity without distraction. The goal setting meeting will take as long as is necessary to agree each step and to plan the review sessions and support needed.

Specific Either the manager or the team member identifies the specific goal that needs to be achieved. Generalised statements should be avoided.

Measured Identify the measure against which progress and ultimate success will be assessed. This measure needs to be as objective as possible.

Agreed The manager and team member must discuss, negotiate and agree the value, purpose and necessity of the goal. Management support, training and resources needed are agreed at this point. This aspect of the meeting is critical, as shared commitment and agreement are essential to ultimate success.

Realistic The manager and team member must agree a realistic level of attainment against the measure used for the goal. Stretching, but achievable is best. If the goal is too easy it will not be taken seriously and if too hard, will be seen as impossible.

Timed The start of activities towards the goal and the deadline for attainment must be agreed. Interim milestones, or review meetings must be diarised.

When to use it

As needed to support the achievement of key tasks, performance management outcomes or career development plans.

SMART Goals are an integral part of performance management and should be aligned with, or supportive of, the performance and development outcomes agreed in the formal appraisal.