

SMART Goals

What are SMART Goals? A goal setting strategy for annual performance reviews.

Goal Type	Definition	Example
Specific	A specific goal clearly identifies what is expected, why it is important, who's involved, where it is going to happen, and which resources are involved in its achievement. It answers the 'W' questions: What, Why, Who, Where, and Which.	A vague goal might be "Improve customer service." A specific goal, on the other hand, would be "Decrease customer complaint response times."
Measurable	Goals should be measurable so that there is tangible evidence that you have accomplished the goal. They should answer questions like: How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished? You can track the response times and quantitatively assess whether or not the goal has been achieved. Some goals are all-or-nothing ('Switch to the new operating system') while most will be more variable. For the latter case, you'll have a better sense of progress and proportion (e.g.: that reducing response times by 19% is a close miss, or by 40%, a massive over-performance.)	Continuing the example above, "Decreasing customer complaint response times by 20% " is a measurable goal.
Achievable	Goals should be achievable; they should stretch you slightly so you feel challenged, but defined well enough that you can achieve them. An achievable goal will usually answer the question: How can I accomplish this goal? If you are trying to achieve a new 'personal best' as an organization, what is the insight, process or practice that will make this new level of performance possible? It's crucial to ensure that the budget, time, and skills are available to implement this system.	"Decrease customer complaint response times by 20% by implementing a new customer relationship management system. "
Relevant	A relevant goal can answer yes to these questions: Does this seem worthwhile? Is this the right time? Does this match our other efforts and needs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting your goal to a larger 'purpose' makes it more motivating for everybody. • By explicitly defining the ultimate purpose of the goal, it creates more clarity in the future: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If emerging information indicates a goal is not making an impact on the ultimate objective, it can be abandoned. ○ If the ultimate objective changes in some way, sub-goals like this one can be re-evaluated to see if they're still necessary. 	"Decrease customer complaint response times by 20% by implementing a new customer relationship management system, in order to improve our ranking in customer satisfaction surveys. "
Time-bound	This means that they have a start and finish date. When you are working on a deadline, your sense of urgency increases, and achievement will come that much quicker.	"Decrease customer complaint response times by 20% over the next quarter by implementing a new customer relationship management system."

EXAMPLES

SMART goal: “Launch a new training module every quarter, and aim for each of these to receive a satisfaction rating of 90% or above from participating employees.”

Breakdown:

- Specific: Launch a new training module every quarter.
- Measurable: Measure the goal by a 90% or higher satisfaction rating.
- Achievable: The intended satisfaction rating is realistic for this company due to the focus on quality content that clearly meets perceived employee training needs.
- Relevant: Effective training boosts employee skills and morale.
- Time-bound: Achieve this goal every quarter.

SMART goal: “Reduce paperwork processing time by 25% over the next six months through the adoption of a new digital documentation system.”

Breakdown:

- Specific: Reduce paperwork processing time by 25%.
- Measurable: Measure the percentage reduction in processing time.
- Achievable: This is a realistic goal for this company if they purchase and implement a high-quality digital documentation system.
- Relevant: Efficiency is essential in admin tasks.
- Time-bound: Achieve this goal over the next six months.

Additional Resources

St. Paul Connect – <https://stpaulmn.sharepoint.com/SitePages/Performance-Management.aspx>

Bite Size Learning – <https://www.bitesizelearning.co.uk/resources/smart-goals-meaning-examples>

Office RND – <https://www.officernd.com/blog/examples-of-smart-goals-for-work/>

Meeting Notes – <https://meetingnotes.com/blog/smart-goals>

Open Sesame – 2 short classes on goal setting

Harvard – <https://hlc.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2412/2020/09/SMART-Goal-Handout.pdf>

Kreiger – <https://krieger.jhu.edu/academic-support/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2021/01/Worksheet-for-SMART-Goal-Setting-21.pdf>

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