

▶ How to Set and Achieve Goals

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HUMAN RESOURCES ▶ GLOSSARY

How to Set and Achieve Goals

More tips to fuel goal setting success and progress



BY SUSAN M. HEATHFIELD • Updated March 12, 2018

Goals are objectives, targets, purposes, intentions, and plans that you intend to achieve. You set your goals to inspire yourself to further success and achievement and to measure your progress on worthwhile contributions and accomplishments.

Goals are personal and goals are established to support the goals and objectives of your work organization. Your personal goals provide a context for how you choose to spend your energy

and your time.

Your goals are the most powerful when they are written, measurable, and regularly reviewed.

SMART Goals

Traditionally, appropriate goals were defined as SMART goals: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based. I have expanded the definition of [SMART goals](#) to capture the additional nuances necessary for effective goals. In this day and age, SMART goals are no longer definitive.

To accomplish the goals you set, you need to follow the six steps available to *Achieve Your Dreams: Six Steps to Accomplish Your Goals and Resolutions*. Wonder why people and organizations struggle to achieve their goals? Sometimes goals go by the [wayside](#).

Are you interested in taking achieving your goals to the next level? The following ten tips will help you achieve your goals and live your resolutions to successfully accomplish the life you choose to live.

The Awesome Power of Goal Setting: 10 Tips for Triumph

Heed the advice offered by Lewis Carroll's Cheshire Cat, Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, and Stephen Covey.

When you begin with solid direction and desired outcomes in mind, you set yourself up for awesome success. These tips will help you achieve your goals and live your resolutions.

What is it that causes us to reflect upon our lives and our accomplishments? I believe each of us has a natural inclination to grow our self-esteem and capability through new accomplishments.

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Most of us want to make a difference in the world. Most of us want to live life as fully as we can. Thus, we draw a line in the sand and claim a starting point for our next chapter when we set goals.

Goal Setting Success

Yet, for all the initial enthusiasm, keeping yourself motivated, committed and moving toward the accomplishment of your goals, is often tough. Tired of setting goals [making resolutions](#) which fade fast from your daily thoughts and actions? Consider adopting some or all of these tips to experience awesome success in accomplishing your goals and living your resolutions.

From our [Favorite Quotation Series](#):

Lewis Carroll from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*:

"'Cheshire Puss,' she began, rather timidly, as she did not at all know whether it would like the name: however, it only grinned a little wider.

`Come, it's pleased so far,' thought Alice, and she went on. `Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'

'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

`I don't much care where--' said Alice.

`Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

`--so long as I get SOMEWHERE,' Alice added as an explanation.

`Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, `if you only walk long enough.'"

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--Project Gutenberg, 1991

The Goal Is Yours – You Own the Goal

Whether the goal is a [promotion at work](#), a streamlined work process, a new customer, a published article, an exercise program or weight loss, the goal must be your goal. You are unlikely to achieve your manager's goal, your spouse's goal or the goal you think **you ought to work on** this year.

Your goals must generate excitement when you ponder their accomplishment. You must believe there is something in it for you to accomplish them.

Sometimes, especially at work, if you perceive the end reward is worth the work, you will take on challenges in support of the organization's goals. These goals might not be as close to your heart as your personal goals, but you work to achieve them for the good of the organization and your success there.

Base Your Goals Firmly in Your Values

Hyrum Smith, the founder of Franklin Quest, later Franklin-Covey, Inc., developed a model for goal setting. Smith's "Success Triangle" [puts governing values](#) at the base of the goal-setting process.

Smith recommends that every goal is linked specifically to a [governing value](#). For example, if [diversity in the workforce](#) is a value espoused by your organization, then at least one goal must further diversity. Every goal should be linked to a governing value.

Short-term, mid-term and long-term goals are then established based on the solid foundation of your values. If the goal you set is congruent with and allows you to live your most important values, you are more likely to accomplish the goal.

According to Gene Donohue, of TopAchievement.com, set goals in all aspects of your life, to maintain your [life balance](#). The balance also helps you accomplish goals as each aspect of your life is represented in your goals. You are less likely to experience warring priorities if every aspect of your life has a value-based goal. He suggests these aspects of your life in which to set your goals

- Family and Home
- Financial and Career
- Spiritual and Ethical

- Physical and Health
- Social and Cultural
- Mental and Educational

From our Favorite Quotation Series:

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred.

A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. I have learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets: 'Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it! Boldness has genius, magic, and power in it.'"(Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe)

--W.H. Murray, of the Scottish Himalayan Expedition

Believe You Can Accomplish the Goal

Each of us has a little voice in our head. It is the voice of your subconscious, judging self. On a daily basis, you engage in self-talk; you comment on each situation you encounter. You discuss events and plans in your mind.

Your commentary is both positive and negative. Positive thoughts and planning support the accomplishment of your goals. Negative thoughts and comments undermine your self-esteem and self-confidence and negatively impact your ability to accomplish your goals.

Listen to your voice. You can change its tone by believing in yourself and in your ability to accomplish your goals and resolutions. Use this unconscious critic to positively support your goal setting success.

If you are a manager, one of your more [important tasks](#) is to support the development of positive self-esteem by your staff members. Your positive outlook and belief in their success at accomplishing great goals foster their increased self-esteem and self-confidence. This, in turn, magnifies their ability to accomplish more and contribute more to your business.

Paint a Vivid Outcome

Traditionally, goals were established around [measurable outcomes](#). This works well when the outcomes are measurable. Don't tie yourself to setting only measurable goals, however; you may find yourself concentrating on the trivial, because it is measurable, rather than on your most important outcomes. Sometimes the most important goals, the non-urgent, critical goals, are hard to measure.

"Explore alternatives for a business in the worldwide web," is tough to measure, whereas the steps, once you make a decision, are easy to measure. "Learn about new options and thinking about [performance management](#)," is tough to measure in any significant way. The next step, "design a new [appraisal system](#)," is easier to define and measure.

As you move up the management ranks, you may find more of your goals are harder to measure. The key measurable aspects of your job will likely be the results produced by your reporting staff.

With goals that are hard to measure, start with a picture in your mind, that you commit to paper, that describes the outcome you are seeking. Make the picture as vivid as you can. I have a published book in my mind, while I am still thinking about and exploring potential topics.

Write Your Goals

Writing out your goal is your commitment to achieving the goal. Writing a goal is a powerful statement in comparison with half-formulated thoughts in the back of your mind. It is the conscious promise to yourself to pay attention to the accomplishment of the goal. Writing out potential action plans and due dates make the goal even more powerful.

Share Your Goals With People Who Are Important to You

If you are certain your significant others will support the accomplishment of your goals, share them. Your manager is likely to support your goal accomplishment as your success is her success.

You'll want to honestly assess the ability of your family members, peers and friends to provide support. In close relationships, many different feelings, experiences and historical events are at play. If you don't believe you will have wholehearted support, keep the goals to yourself.

Check Goal Setting and Achievement Progress Regularly

One of the weaknesses of any annual [appraisal system](#) is the lack of frequency with which progress and success are measured and tracked. You are most likely to accomplish the goals you set if you review them daily as part of your normal planning process. (You do have a normal planning process, don't you?)

Whether you use a paper planner, a smartphone or a computer, you can enter your goals, and schedule daily and weekly actions that support their accomplishment. The discipline of the daily review is a powerful [goal accomplishment tool](#).

Take Action to Identify and Eliminate Obstacles to Goal Setting Success

Simply tracking your goals daily is not enough. If you're unhappy with your progress, you need to assess what is keeping you from accomplishing the goals. Ask yourself questions such as, "Is this goal really important?" (If not, why did you pledge to accomplish it; maybe it's not important, or less important than other goals.)

"Are there specific obstacles you are experiencing which are interfering with your ability to accomplish the goal?" (In this case, make [action plans](#) to remove the obstacles or seek help from a coworker, friend or family member.)

If you are not making progress on a particular goal, attempt to do a root-cause analysis to determine why. Only by honestly analyzing your lack of progress can you determine steps to take to change this picture. Computers and cell phones allow you to picture your goals automatically forwarding for 365 days. Talk about a daily reminder of failure!

From our Favorite Quotation Series:

Seven Habits Revisited

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"Begin With the End In Mind is the endowment of imagination and conscience. If you are the progre you're going to do with the time, talent, and tools you ha of influence, I'm going to decide."

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assessment; change what needs to change

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success? Whatever your goals and resolutions,

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Also Known As objectives, targets



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a Meeting Leader

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