

Writing SMART Goals

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

Goals for a project must be clear and concise. This tutorial will focus on:

1. Smart Goals

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Each project objective should be stated as one sentence that describes the focus and outcome of a project.

One method project managers use to write these goals is to rely on the acronym SMART. So what does SMART stand for?

- **Specific:** Any goals should be clear and distinct from other goals
- **Measurable:** It should be obvious when a goal is completed and simple to track production percentage to monitor progress.
- **Action-oriented:** That means the goal should be written so that they describe the actions taken with the deliverables of the project.
- **Realistic:** It must be reasonable to complete the goal in the schedule and budget allotted, using the resources the project has available.
- **Time-phased:** A goal must have a deadline that fits within the schedule.

S = SPECIFIC



M = MEASURABLE



A = ACTION-ORIENTED



R = REALISTIC



T = TIME-PHASED





TRY IT

Read the example and determine whether or not it is SMART.

"Within six months, the salesmen in the field should be able to enter their orders on tablet computers without the assistance of technical support."

- *Is it specific?* Yes, we know who the goal impacts and we know what those people need to do.
- *Is it measurable?* Yes, it's obvious when it's complete and we can track progress toward the goal.
- *Is it action-oriented?* Yes, it focuses on the tasks performed by the users (enter an order on a tablet without tech support).
- *Is it realistic?* Yes, you may have already realized that we need to know the budget, schedule, and resources to know for sure. But this task does appear achievable, so we'll consider it realistic.
- *Is it time-phased?* Yes, we know it needs to be complete within six months.

Yes, this example is a SMART goal.



TRY IT

Read this goal and try to determine if it fits the SMART criteria:

"The design for our new line of headphones should allow users the ability to adjust the volume on their microphone with one simple control."

Does it meet all the criteria? Well, it is specific, measurable, action-oriented, and realistic. But you don't know when this product is needed.

The goal assumes that everyone knows when the new line will be released, but what if they don't know? Maybe the engineers will plan on using electronics that aren't available until the new line should be shipped, which can cause a big problem.

What would it look like if it needed to be revised to a SMART goal?

Like this:

*"The design for our new line of headphones, **to be completed no later than three months from now** should allow users the ability to adjust the volume on their microphone with one simple control."*



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned what the acronym SMART means and how to identify **SMART goals**. And

you learned the role SMART goals play in a project.

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Jeff Carroll.