

Developing SMART Goals

Use the following details and questions if you need additional assistance on converting a task-based work plan into one that will allow you to measure your employee in succinct, focused performance goals related to their demonstration of Functional and Behavioral Competencies.

Specific – What exactly should be done, with or for whom?

Specific means that the objective is concrete, detailed, focused and well defined. The expectation states a specific outcome, or a precise objective to be accomplished. The outcome is stated in numbers, percentages, frequency, reach, scientific findings, etc.

To help set specific objectives it helps to ask:

- WHAT do I need the employee to do? These are best written using strong, action verbs such as conduct, develop, build, plan, execute, etc. This helps your objective to be action-orientated and focuses on what's most important.
- WHY is this important for the employee to do?
- WHO else needs to be involved?
- WHEN do I want this to be completed?
- HOW is this assigned task to be done?

Diagnostic Questions

- What exactly in the employee going to do, with or for whom?
- What strategies will be used?
- Is the objective well understood?
- Is the objective described with action verbs?
- Is it clear who is involved?
- Is it clear where this will happen?
- Is it clear what needs to happen?
- Is the outcome clear?
- Will this objective lead to the desired results?

Measurable – Is it measurable & can I measure it?

If the objective is measurable, it means that the measurement source is identified and you are able to track the actions as the employee progress towards the objective. Measurement is the standard used for comparison. As it's so often said if you can't measure it, you can't manage it! It's important to have measures that will encourage and motivate your employees. As you see the change occurring, you may need to develop interim measures. Measurements go a long way to help your employees know when they are performing up to your standards.

Diagnostic Questions

- How will I know that the change has occurred?
- Can these measurements be obtained?

Achievable – Can the employee get the goal accomplished in the proposed timeframe/in this political climate/at his or her current level of competency? SMART goals need to be achievable. They may stretch your employee, but not so far that he or she becomes frustrated and loses motivation.

Diagnostic Questions

- Are the goals you set achievable and attainable?
- Can the employee successfully complete this goal with the skills, resources and time available to them?
- Are there factors beyond their control that need to be considered?
- Can the employee get it done in the proposed timeframe?
- Does the employee understand the limitations and constraints?
- Has anyone else done this successfully?
- Is this possible?

Realistic/Relevant – Will this goal lead to the desired results?

Objectives that are achievable, may not be realistic..... However, realistic does not mean easy. *Realistic* means that you have the resources to get it done. The achievement of an objective requires resources, such as, skills, money, equipment, etc. to the task required to achieve the objective. *Relevant* means the outcome or results of the work directly support the business needs of the agency or priority area.

Diagnostic Questions

- Does the employee have the resources available to achieve this goal?
- Do I need to clarify unit priorities to the employee to ensure that this goal is achieved?
- How can I help the employee see the relationship between this SMART goal and our mission?

Timely/Time-Bound – When or how often do I need for the employee to meet a particular goal?

Time-bound means setting deadlines for the achievement of the objective. Deadlines need to be both achievable and realistic. If you don't set a time you will reduce the motivation and urgency required to execute the tasks. Timeframes create the necessary urgency and prompts action. Timeframes also add measurability and provide a clear yardstick as to whether work is being done to expected standards.

Diagnostic Questions

- When or how often do I need (response/reports/summaries/agendas/schedules/status updates)?
- Is there a stated deadline?