Goal Setting

PROFESSOR EDWIN A. LOCKE, born in 1938, is an American psychologist and a pioneer in goal-setting theory. Locke bases his goal setting on Aristotle's theory of final causality. Locke's theory establishes a positive relationship between goals and performance. Your goals give you long-term vision for your future and short-term motivation to perform. The ability and competence you develop in accomplishing your goals will help you develop more self-confidence.



Objectives:

1. Explain the process of goal setting.
2. Describe the terms and types of goals.
3. Explain seven aspects of effective goals.

Key Terms:

goal
goal identification
intermediate goal
interpersonal goal
long-term goal
personal goal
professional goal
short-term goal
ways and means

How Are Goals Set?

A **goal** is something a person wants to achieve. When you describe what you want to accomplish in life, you are setting or developing goals. Developing goals involves two important steps: identifying your goals and determining ways and means of reaching them.

Goal identification is the development of a list of things you want to accomplish in your life. You need to look inward at your values and personal experience to decide what is right for you. You need to determine what is both important and realistic.

Ways and means are the strategies for achieving goals. A goal is of little value if you don't have a strategy for achieving it. During this step, you may realize your final goal is unrealistic and needs revision to make it attainable.

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BROADENING AWARENESS...

AMAZING ASPECTS: Simple Goal-Setting Guidelines

Limit your number of goals so you can focus your energies to effectively accomplish them. Begin by brainstorming. Make a list of things you want to accomplish. Pare down the list to goals that are most important to you.

Choose one goal that can change your life in the short term—that is, within the next few months or even the next year. For longer-term goals create sub-goals. Choose a goal you are passionate about to prevent your losing interest in achieving it.

Create a mantra that expresses your goal in two to five words. Post this mantra on your computer desktop, on an index card, or on the wall next to your bed. Repeat your mantra out loud daily so you don't forget it. Figure out an action or project to help you progress toward achieving your goal each day. Focus on your goal, and make it a habit. If you want to be a good basketball player, practice shooting baskets each day. If you want to be a musician, practice an instrument each day. If you want to be a doctor or nurse, volunteer to work at a clinic or hospital.

Once your first goal becomes a habit, concentrate on another goal. Limit the number of goals you try to accomplish at one time. Keep track of your progress so you don't get discouraged.

Terms and Types of Goals

Goals can cover varying periods of time. Some can be attained fairly soon, while others will take longer to achieve. Goals can also be divided according to different areas of your life in which they become important. They can be categorized by the amount of time or number of steps it takes to achieve them.

A **short-term goal** is a goal that can be achieved within a year and in just a few steps.

An **intermediate goal** is a goal that can be achieved in one to five years. Intermediate goals may accomplish short-term goals along the way.

A **long-term goal** is a goal that will take five or more years to achieve and typically involves many steps. Long-term goals usually achieve short-term and intermediate goals along the way.

Goals can apply to different areas of your life, both personal and professional. They are based on what you consider important to accomplish throughout your life.



FIGURE 1. Your short-term goals should be a pathway to the lifestyle of your long-term goals.

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A **personal goal** is one that represents self-improvement. Personal goals can relate to areas of learning or physical fitness.

A **professional goal** is one that represents success in a job or group activity. Examples of professional goals are becoming a company manager, being elected the chair of a committee, and perhaps holding public office.

An **interpersonal goal** is one that represents improved relations with other people. An example of an interpersonal goal might be getting along better with family, friends, or co-workers.

What Are Aspects of Good Goals?

For each goal you set, you need to consider seven aspects that relate to effectiveness.

- *Clarity*—The goal being set should be clear and easy to picture. If you can't imagine achieving the goal, it lacks clarity.
- *Optimistic*—Believe that your goal will have the desired outcome. The outcome should be one that is important and represents an improvement over the current situation.
- *Challenging*—A goal should require you to strive to achieve it. The challenge of a goal needs to be high but obtainable. When a challenging goal is achieved, you experience a sense of accomplishment.
- *Prioritized*—Place values on which goal is most important, second most important, and so on. Prioritizing allows you to consider the relevant importance of activities and mark your progress.
- *Flexible*—As people and conditions change, so must goals. Having flexible goals allows you to cope with the changes that are constantly occurring around you.
- *Measurable*—There should be no doubt whether your goal has been met. The goal should be specific in what you are going to achieve.
- *Ways and means*—Plan for achieving the goal. A deadline date may be included.

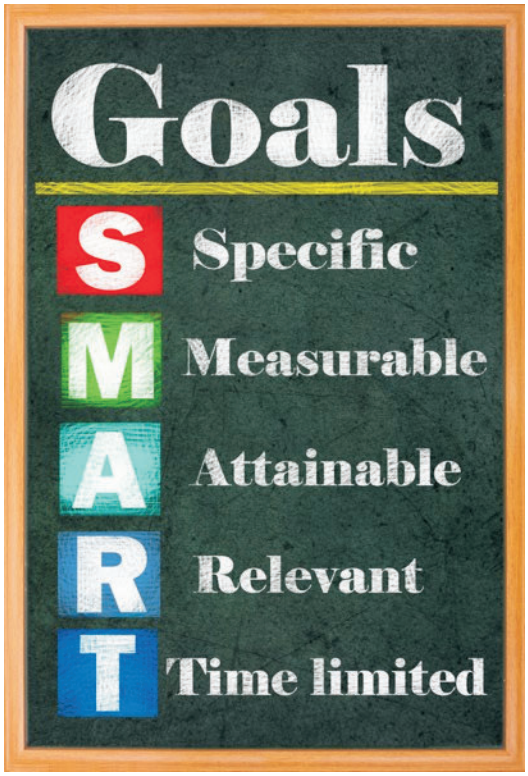


FIGURE 2. Setting good goals will help you achieve career success.

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Summary:



A goal is something a person wants to achieve. When you describe what you want to accomplish in life, you are setting or developing goals based on your values and personal experience. Goal identification is the development of a list of things you want to accomplish in your life, as you determine what is both important and realistic.

Ways and means are the strategies for achieving goals. You need to formulate a strategy to achieve your goals. Goals can be short-term, intermediate-term, or long-term, depending on the time it takes to achieve them. Goals can be personal, professional, or interpersonal.

Your goals should exhibit clarity, optimism, challenge, priorities, flexibility, measurability, and the ways and means for achievement.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. Why is setting goals important?
2. Define "goal identification" and "ways and means."
3. Explain the difference between short-term, intermediate-term, and long-term goals.
4. What areas of your life are affected by your personal, professional, and interpersonal goals?
5. What are seven aspects of setting effective goals?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Too many of us treat goal setting haphazardly. We dream about what we want to achieve, but if we don't set goals, we won't have the map to get there. For goal setting guidelines, explore the website http://topachievement.com/goalsetting.html.

Web Links:



Personal Goal Setting
http://www.mindtools.com/page6.html

Create Your Ideal Life with Goal Setting
http://www.lululemon.com/education/goalsetting

Goal Setting Sub-Categories
http://www.bodybuilding.com/fun/bbinfo.php?page=GoalSetting

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