

Develop Goals

DESIRES for specific achievements can be considered goals. Goals become realities when people consider the steps needed to accomplish their goals and then begin to attain those steps. Sizable goals are a series of connected, smaller goals. Throughout life, goals continually change.



Objective:



Explain goal setting.

Key Terms:



goal

goal identification

intermediate goal

interpersonal goal

long-term goal

personal goal

professional goal

short-term goal

ways and means

Creating and Setting Goals

Consider something you want to achieve in your lifetime. Perhaps your desired achievement is earning a college degree, having a family, finding a good job, or buying a certain car. These desires for achievement are goals. Once a goal is set, consider the steps needed to accomplish your goal. Any significant goal is a series or process of achieving many smaller but connected goals. This series of miniature goals places value on a future cumulative achievement.

PROCESS OF GOAL SETTING

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.

Goal Identification

Goal identification is developing a list of the things you want to accomplish in life. Look inward at your values and your personal situation to determine what is important and realistic for you.

Ways and Means

Ways and means is the strategies for achieving a goal. A goal is of little value if it does not have a strategy for being achieved. During this step, you may determine that your final goals are unrealistic; so you revise the goals to make them more realistic.

TERMS AND TYPES OF GOALS

Goals can cover varying periods of time. Some can be attained fairly soon while others take longer to achieve. They can be divided into different areas of life in which they are important.

Terms and Length

A goal term or length will vary due to the amount of time and number of steps involved.

- ◆ A **short-term goal** is a goal that can be achieved within a year in just a few steps.
- ◆ An **intermediate goal** is a goal that can be achieved in one to five years. An intermediate goal can involve achieving short-term goals along the way.
- ◆ A **long-term goal** is a goal that will take five or more years to achieve and usually involves many steps. A long-term goal usually includes short-term and intermediate goals along the way.

Areas of Life

Goals can apply to different areas of life. They are based on what people judge as important in certain areas of their lives.

- ◆ **Personal goals** are those goals that represent self-improvement. Personal goals can relate to areas such as education or physical fitness.
- ◆ **Professional goals** are those goals that represent success in a job or in a group activity. Examples of professional goals are becoming a manager or being elected the chair of a committee.
- ◆ **Interpersonal goals** are those goals that represent improved relations with other people. Such goals might include improving relationships with family or friends.



FIGURE 1. An example of a professional goal would be to get hired by a new employer.

SEVEN ASPECTS OF EFFECTIVE GOALS

When setting goals, people need to consider seven aspects that relate to effective goals.

Clarity

Clarity should be present in the goals being set. The goals should be clear and easy to picture. If a person cannot imagine achieving the goal, it lacks clarity.

Optimistic

Being optimistic involves believing that the goal will have a desired outcome. The outcome should be one that is important and that represents an improvement over the current situation.

Challenging

Challenging means a goal should require the individual to strive to achieve it. The challenge of a goal needs to be high but obtainable. When challenging goals are achieved, a sense of accomplishment is realized.



FIGURE 2. Being optimistic helps to achieve a desired goal.



UNDER INVESTIGATION...

LAB CONNECTION: The “SMART” Way of Defining Goals

The best way to improve your track record with goal achievement is to set goals for yourself and practice attaining them. Identify a short-, intermediate-, or long-term financial goal. Write your goals below. Follow each goal with a list of the steps to accomplish it and with the ways and means for accomplishing each step. Indicate a deadline date by which the ways and means are to be completed. Estimate the cost of your goal. State the amount of money you need to save per week to meet your goals. The SMART way of defining your goals follows:

- “S”—Specific: “I want to spend a month of my summer in Europe” instead of “I want to do something fun this summer.”
- “M”—Measurable: “I need \$3000 for my airfare, hotel room, and food for the month” instead of “I need some money for my trip.”
- “A”—Attainable: “I’ll save \$100 a week from September through April” instead of “I’ll win a weekly radio call-in contest to get the money to pay for my trip.”
- “R”—Realistic: “My parents have agreed to drive me to the airport in Indianapolis because I found a cheaper rate leaving from there” instead of “I want to fly from our local airport.”
- “T”—Time-bound: “I’ll have the \$3000 for my trip expenses saved by May 1” instead of “I want to save enough money by early spring.”

Prioritizing

Prioritizing is placing values on which goal is most important, second most important, and so on. Prioritizing allows people to consider the relevant importance of activities.

Flexibility

Flexibility is important because goals must change as people and conditions change. Having flexible goals allows people to cope with the changes constantly occurring around them.

Measurable

The goal should be measurable. There should be no doubt as to whether or not the goal has been met. The goal should be specific in what it is going to achieve.

Ways and Means

Ways and means involves the plans for achieving goals. Deadline dates may be included to ensure that progress is being made.

Summary:



A goal is something a person wants to achieve. When a person describes what he or she wants to accomplish in life, he or she is setting or developing goals. Developing goals involves two important steps: goal identification and ways and means.

Goals can cover varying periods of time. Some can be attained fairly soon and others will take longer to achieve. They can be divided into different areas of life in which they are important. When setting goals, individuals need to consider several aspects that relate to effective goals. Goals should be clear, flexible, and measurable. Also, they should have optimism, present challenge, demonstrate priorities, and show ways and means.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. List and describe the three terms or lengths of time that goals can cover.
2. List and describe the three areas of life to which goals can apply.
3. List five of the seven aspects an effective goal possesses.
4. A goal that is easy to picture is said to have what?
5. Describing what an individual wants to achieve is known as what?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Now that you are more knowledgeable of how the goal-setting process works, what school and career goals can you set? Use the “SMART” technique introduced in the sidebar. Then crosscheck your personal goals with the text in this unit to determine if you can improve your personal goal-setting process.

Web Links:



Personal Goal Setting

<http://www.mindtools.com/page6.html>

Setting Goals

<http://www.how-to-study.com/study-skills/en/studying/37/setting-goals/>

Goal Setting Guide

<http://www.goal-setting-guide.com/goal-setting-tutorials/smart-goal-setting>

Five Elements of a Useful Goal

<http://frank.mtsu.edu/~studskl/goals.html>