

# Goal Setting

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For decades, empirical research in behavioral and organizational psychology has demonstrated the key role that clear, challenging goals play in increased levels of motivation and performance.

Setting goals is most effective when done in a shared, participative process – this encourages buy-in and ownership, and supports individual accountability for performance and results.

## SMART goals

**S – Specific.** Goals should be simply written, and clearly define what is going to be done – including what, why, and how.

**M – Measurable.** Progress toward goal attainment should be measurable, as should completion. What quantifiable measures can be identified? How and when will progress be reported?

**A – Achievable.** While providing some stretch and challenge, goals should also still be achievable, particularly given the available knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources.

**R – Results-focused.** Goals should be focused on results and ultimately aiming for and measuring outcomes, not activities.

**T – Time-bound.** All goals should have a timeframe that supports a sense of urgency and prioritization, and provides a shared commitment and expectation for both progress and completion.

## Feedback and Progress

As goals are set, talk about expectations for progress updates and feedback. In your role as a leader,

- seek updates on a regular basis.
- ask about plans to address unanticipated challenges.
- aid in securing resources or breaking down barriers.
- provide feedback on progress and performance from your perspective.
- recognize accomplishments.

## Also remember...

- **The importance of mistakes**
- **Leverage behavioral feedback**
- **Make it a dialogue**
- **Clarify expectations as necessary**