

Setting yourself goals

To be the best you can be you need to know where you are now, where you want to get to and how you are going to get there. To ensure that you 'get there' and achieve your goals, you need someone who will guide, encourage or support you on your journey. This could be yourself, your manager, a coach, colleague or your friends. In this session the focus is on setting goals so they have the best chance of success. Other sessions explore the skills that will help you achieve your goals. You may use other words such as objectives, targets, outcomes, aims and results, even dreams, hopes and wishes.

Setting yourself goals is not as easy or as straightforward as you may think. This is because they require qualities such as desire, commitment and determination which require you to tap the deep reserves of personal energy. However, with the right approach and frame of mind, you can access this powerful energy to get what you want at work and in life generally.

If your goals are expressed as dreams, hopes and wishes they need to be broken down into something more tangible. This is because goals need to be measurable and detailed if you are to know what's required to achieve them and you will know when you have achieved them

When you express your goals, choose positive language such as can, could, should and will.

Positive words are vitally important when setting personal life changing goals. Negative words introduce an attitude of 'failure' before you even get started on the action. At work, when setting yourself objectives and targets they must be SMART. That is to say

Specific
Measurable
Agreed
Relevant
Timebound

Creating SMART Goals

It's important to make a distinction between end goals and performance goals. The end goal is often referred to as the **AIM** or **OUTCOME** which is not always under your direct control. Performance goals are often referred to as **OBJECTIVES** or **TARGETS**. They are the milestones that if achieved will provide you with a good chance of achieving the end goal. Targets are usually within your control, but need to be expressed as **SMART** to have any chance of being realized.

For example:

AIM or OUTCOME	To improve customer satisfaction
SMART OBJECTIVE or TARGET	To increase the level of customer satisfaction by 5% between April 2005 and March 2006 as measured by MORI Poll survey questions 5, 6 and 7 relating to users of Reception Services.
S pecific	The above objective or target makes it clear what "improvement" means and how it will be measured
M easurable	The measure being used is clearly identifiable and verifiable from an objective source of data.
A greed	Choosing 5% as the target against which achievement will be measured must be potentially achievable, based on past performance, resourcing/skill levels and ownership agreed by the people who will deliver it.
R ealistic	Even when the target is "challenging" it must be realistic or it will demotivating. It is a matter of judgement in assessing the amount of work, preparation, training and acclimatisation of the people involved.
T imebound	The period over which the improvement will be measured is clearly defined.

To achieve a high degree of self-motivation to achieve the goal or target there must be clarity over ownership, contribution and accountability for achieving it. It is important that the targets are understood and agreed with all those who will be contributing to ensure that it is expressed in SMART terms and that how it will be achieved is not imposed by the manager. Without agreement, ownership and responsibility will be lost, and performance will suffer, simply because people's perceptions were distorted or their role was misunderstood. Personal control in setting new goals brings greater levels of confidence and conviction.

Responsibility cannot be given; it can only be taken

- ? What are the benefits of target setting as a team ?
- ? What resources need to be found/released to accomplish the target ?
- ? What level of commitment is needed for tasks with the team's control ?
- ? Are their objectives for those tasks that require action by others beyond the team's control ?

Techniques to assist personal goal setting

There are some simple but proven techniques that can assist goal setting. By following these it is possible to enhance the probability of their achievement. Achievement and progress are central to **being the best you can be**.

Goals must:

- ? Be written down
- ? Have target dates by which you will achieve them
- ? Be expressed in the present tense, as if they were already real. So the goal is that 'I have a tidy desk' not 'I want a tidy desk' or 'one day my desk will be tidy'.
- ? Be reviewed daily – this keeps the goal at the forefront of your mind so you are constantly aware of it.
- ? Have a clearly defined destination – the tidy desk example.
- ? Have a means of measuring progress towards their achievement – first the filing then the 'in tray'.
- ? Contain a tangible reward for achievement – celebrate the fact that you have achieved your tidy desk.
- ? Be set without limits – don't say 'I will have a tidy desk when . . .'
- ? Have a defined support infrastructure – who is going to help you get to your goal ? Perhaps you will ask your family not to disturb you for an evening while you tidy your desk?

Approaching goal setting in this way greatly enhances your chance of success. Physically writing them down reinforces your commitment to making them real. A goal that is not written down is only a dream. When you plan a journey you should have a beginning and an estimated time of arrival or target dates. Remember that your subconscious is many times more powerful than your conscious mind. It is non-judgemental and will strive to achieve whatever objective you feed into it – as long as it receives the message in the present tense and you are in a positive frame of mind. Reading your goals aloud every day keeps them in your conscious mind as something you need to take action on. Write your goals on a single sheet of paper or card. You should seek to record and map your progress to check that you are on course and not wasting your time or energy. If you can measure your progress and reward yourself - even better. Try and build a support structure around you of real friends to help you on your way.

Remember:

- ? Big goals need to be broken down into smaller goals
- ? Use timelines to explore the steps or milestones on the journey
- ? Review the steps using SMART questions
- ? Include questions about significant people, choices, skills and experience
- ? Use the observer position to examine potential unintended consequences

Finding the motivation

To get the results we want we need to be able to motivate ourselves and support others to motivate themselves. Success comes from people who want to achieve something that is important to them, and their organisation. It requires the support, guidance, co-operation, willingness and commitment of others.

If you understand what motivates yourself and the people you work with you have the most powerful tool for securing improvements in performance. Things happen when people know what they want – not just what the boss wants.

The foundation for all motivation is the belief that things can be better and you know how to do it. If every employee feels that way things will change. If not, people will just feel they are being manipulated and just do what's required.

It is helpful to think in terms of attitude motivation and incentive motivation. There are few incentives for a public servant. They are often driven by a strong moral engagement that enables us to stay positive, influencing how we think and feel.

- ? Motivation requires goals – little improvements that you can practice.
- ? Motivation dies unless it is constantly refreshed – look for the positives
- ? Motivation requires recognition – most people like to be thanked occasionally
- ? Motivation grows when you feel involved and appreciated – be a team player

Remember that whatever you put into your brain you will get back – thoughts, feelings, attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, etc. Put positive information in and you will see the positives in others and in situations. When confronted with a new opportunity or challenge you are more likely to respond with a positive answer.

To build a databank of confidence you need to

1. Get rid of excuses – adopt a 'can do' attitude.
2. Do things that create a positive self image so you can feel good about yourself
3. Don't fear failure – learn from it and move on
4. Look confident in the way you present yourself to others
5. Compile a record of past successes to help define who you are

REMEMBER

Success by the inch is a cinch and by the yard is hard

It's amazing what can be achieved with a highly motivated team.

A team represents a 'combined effort' or 'organised co-operation'. To turn a group into a team five principles must be followed.

1. THEY SHOULD BE CAPABLE

This means all team members have the skills, knowledge and behaviour traits needed to perform well in all the tasks they have to perform. For example, a team leader needs to be good with people as well as managing systems. Be clear about the core competencies that all team members are expected to display in their work and in their relationships with each other.

2. THEY MUST BE FIT FOR IT

As well as being accountable for their personal performance, members must be clear about their team performance. This means being prepared to link-up with the work of colleagues, share information, offer support, clarify expectations, be prepared to learn new skills and put in the effort needed to get good results.

3. THEY MUST NOT OVERDO IT

For people to be happy in their work they must not overdo it. They must be encouraged to think about where the right balance is for them. Too much work and people get stale or stressed. You need to create a working climate that values people's differences and allows them to get variety into their work so the burdens are shared.

4. THEY MUST EXPERIENCE SUCCESS

To achieve success, team members must feel happy at work and enjoy the feeling of success. Seeing ourselves progressing motivates us. Some creative thinking can help reinvent the way we see things, allowing us to move in different directions to make a difference.

5. THEY MUST HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

When people enjoy what they do, they will do it for the benefits and feelings it brings – not just completing work tasks for which they are paid. Positive attitudes and wanting to be at work can make all the difference to performance.

Taking action

Try this exercise to see how your personal or manager goals fit the targets of your team members or 'significant others' contributing the **OUTCOME**.

Let's say you want to convince your line manager that your participation in SKILL GYM sessions would be useful in developing your team's ability to improve its services.

Top 5 Team Goals	Contribution of SKILL GYMS to team goals (SCORE out of 10)	Contribution of your participation to team performance	Team goals matching your skills (x10)	Maximum possible (Team score x10)
95% of PDR's receiving a 'high' satisfaction rating from staff	8	10	80	80
120 calls per day completed	10	0	0	100
200 transactions successfully concluded in one week	2	6	12	20
Complaints = 0	4	7	28	40
Sickness Levels below 4% pa	6	0	0	60
Totals			120	300
% of max			40%	

NB: Your potential percentage contribution can be worked out by multiplying the first total by 100 and dividing it by the second (120 / 300 = 40%)

Produce a table for your own area. Identify a team rating score where 10 is high for how important you think the team holds the team goal. Rate your own contribution (0-10) to reflect degree of match. The score will then give you a measure of alignment.

Top 5 Team Goals	Team Rating (SCORE out of 10)	Your Rating (SCORE out of 10)	Team Rating X Your Rating	Maximum possible (Team score x10)
Totals				
% of max				

This logical and measurable procedure may not take full account of feelings (which are powerful motivators and demotivators). Take time to sense whether the result is right for you.