**Psychology study**



Achieving goals



**What is Goal Setting? A Psychological Definition**

Goal setting in psychology refers to a successful plan of action that we set for ourselves. It guides us to choose the right moves, at the right time, and in the right way. In a study conducted on working professionals, Edwin A. Locke, a pioneer in the field of goal-setting, found that individuals who had highly ambitious goals had a better performance and output rate than those who didn’t.

### ABC of Goals

Smoll said that effective goals are ones that are:

* A – Achievable
* B – Believable
* C – Committed

Goal-setting as a psychological tool for increasing productivity involves five rules or criterion, known as the S-M-A-R-T rule. George T. Doran coined this rule in 1981 in a management research paper of the Washington Power Company and it is by far one of the most popular propositions of the psychology of goals.

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### SMART Goals

S-M-A-R-T goals stand for:

* S (Specific) – They target a particular area of functioning and focus on building it.
* M (Measurable) -The results can be gauged quantitatively or at least indicated by some qualitative attributes. This helps in monitoring the progress after executing the plans.
* A (Attainable/Achievable) – The goals are targeted to suitable people and are individualized. They take into account the fact that no single rule suits all, and are flexible in that regard.
* R (Realistic) – They are practical and planned in a way that would be easy to implement in real life. The purpose of a smart goal is not just providing the plan, but also helping the person execute it.
* T (Time-bound) – An element of time makes the goal more focused. It also provides a time frame about task achievement.

 

### SmartER Goals

While this was the golden rule of goal-setting, researchers have also added two more constituents to it, and call it the S-M-A-R-T-E-R rule.

The adjacents include:

* E (Evaluative/ethical) – The interventions and execution follow professional and personal ethics.
* R (Rewarding) – The end-results of the goal-setting comes with a positive reward and brings a feeling of accomplishment to the user.

## 4 Steps To Successful Goal-Setting

## Examining the Psychology of Goal Setting

### 1. Make a plan

The first step to successful goal-setting is a brilliant plan. Chalking out our goals by our strengths, aspirations, and affinities is an excellent way to build a working program. The plan makes habit formation easier – we know where to focus and how to implement the actions.

### 2. Explore resources

The more we educate ourselves about goal-setting and its benefits, the easier it becomes for us to stick to it. We can start building our knowledge base by taking expert advice, talking to supervisors at the workplace, or participating in self-assessments.

Assessments and interactions help us realize the knowledge gaps and educate ourselves in the areas concerned.

**3. Be accountable**

A crucial requisite of goal-setting is accountability. We tend to perform better when someone is watching over us, for example, it is easier to cheat on a diet or skip the gym when we are doing it alone.

But the moment we pair up with others or have a trainer to guide us through the process, there are increased chances of us sticking to the goals and succeeding in them.

### 4. Use rewards and feedbacks

Rewarding ourselves for our efforts and achievements makes sticking to the plan more comfortable for us. Managers who regularly provide feedback to their employees and teammates have better performance in their teams than ones who don’t interact with employees about their progress.

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