

A target with a red arrow hitting the bullseye. The target is yellow and black, and the arrow is red and white. The background is yellow.

CREATING

POWER

GOALS

How to create a roadmap to
achieve the greatness you deserve.

CREATING POWERFUL GOALS

INTRODUCTION

We often daydream about what we want to accomplish in life, but how often do we *actually* put together a *plan* for making these daydreams a reality?

Why are celebrities the only ones who appear to be living extraordinary lives? ***Each one of us is capable of creating a roadmap with mini-goals, which can help us achieve the greatness we deserve.***

Those daydreams of ours are really *life goals*, and our dreams will differ from person to person. However, beware of simply setting goals without any real serious thought as to *how* you can achieve them!

Setting goals improperly can be disappointing. Why? Well, if you're not clear and realistic about your goals, there's little likelihood of you achieving them. Then your goals simply remain dreams.

How can you set goals that will lead to success?

There's a powerful formula that you should keep in mind when setting goals for career, business and personal aspirations.



The formula is called S.M.A.R.T. and it stands for:

- S: Specific
- M: Measurable
- A: Attainable
- R: Realistic
- T: Timely

The more *specific* you make your goal, the more likely you'll identify with it – and the more likely you'll achieve it!

The more *measurable* your goal is, the more likely you'll be able to measure your progress along the way. Measurements like the amount of weight lost, revenue earned, number of clients gained, or any *specific number* that you can tangibly count or assess with objective figures is a measurable goal.

Setting unattainable goals is an exercise in futility. When you set *attainable* goals you ensure that you have adequate resources and knowledge to achieve those goals.

Realistic goals are harder to articulate than you might think. Sometimes the process of goal setting supports unrealistic goals, which can lead to disappointment, failure, and the loss of your time and resources. **So be sure your goals are realistic for you, not someone else!**

Goals need to be set within specific *timeframes*. Without timeframes, there's no sense of urgency, which can lead to procrastination and failure.

In the next few pages we'll examine different kinds of goal setting that utilize the S.M.A.R.T. principles and support successful outcomes.

SHORT TERM GOALS

Goals can be either short term or long term.
A good life plan has both.

Short term goals serve as stepping stones that help to achieve long term goals.

These kinds of goals are “enabling” and here’s why:

- * Short term goals move your plan closer to your final, long term goals. They are like preliminary steps along the way to realizing an outcome.

For example, securing a down payment would be an important short term goal for someone with a long term plan of purchasing a home.

- * ***You’ll be inspired to make further progress.*** Once a short term goal is realized, that success can help to inspire further efforts along the journey to your overall goals.

For example, if you create a new product that is met with praise, you’ll be inspired to create another product, which will create additional revenue for your business.

- * Short term goals help to keep your efforts focused by serving as stepping stones across a stream of competing and distracting activities, occurrences and events.



For example, college course curricula are designed to keep students focused on working toward their major. Each course completion is a short term goal leading up to the ultimate goal of graduation.

A long term goal becomes more realistic when you break it down into smaller parts, or a series of short term goals.

For instance, if you're facing a large debt, you may be paralyzed by fear at the idea of paying off thousands of dollars in a single day. However, breaking it down into smaller monthly payments lets you see a light at the end of the tunnel with a final payoff date in the future.

Short term goals help ensure that you stick to the S.M.A.R.T. principle of having measurable goals.

If long term goals are truly measurable, the degree of success of short term goals can help to determine the success of long term goals. Short term goals can help you make adjustments and realign your objectives along the way if you need to.

Think of these short term goals as your life's to do list. The more small goals you can check off your list, the harder you'll want to work to check off the rest of your list. Some goals may be fun, others may be tedious, but they will all lead to your ultimate long term goal of improving your life.

LONG TERM GOALS

Long term goals tend to be the major goals of any plan and are, as the name suggests, set out into the future or for the long term, typically 5-10 years in advance.

It's important to have long term goals because these are the ambitions that reflect the ultimate outcome you desire. Long term goals should articulate your purpose and passion, as well as the motivation for your plan.

For that reason, long term aspirations should follow the S.M.A.R.T. principles and be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely.

Some people have a difficult time making long term goals realistic and timely. Given that a long term goal is set to be realized in the future, there can be tendency to make it lofty and unrealistic without any specific actionable steps to get you there.

That's why it's important to put a significant amount of time into setting long term goals. ***Oftentimes the process of setting short term goals can help clarify your long term objectives.***

For example, earlier we used the process of securing the funds for a down payment as a short term goal toward realizing the overall goal of purchasing a home.

If your short term goal is not achieved by your specified date, that would obviously change the timeline of your overall objective.

So let's say your short term goal is to save \$3,500 a month for 12 months in order to have enough for a down payment and buy a house in a year's time. If that short term goal ends up being too aggressive, your overall goal may shift from 12 months away to 18 months away. But without having short term, monthly goals to guide you, you'd never know if your long term objective is realistic and attainable.

This example illustrates how important it is to have measurable goals. If you don't have a *specific* date or number to work toward, then you can't possibly know what actions you need to take to reach your goal!

When measurable indicators are used, you can look upon them as early warning signs ***to help keep you on target and give you room to make changes as necessary without abandoning your desired goal.***

The same holds true for the example of earning a college degree. Sometimes there are setbacks in our short term goals – for example failing a course – but one setback should not derail your dreams.

Rather than drop out of school because of one failed class, simply revisit *why* you failed or ask if there's an alternative course you can take. If you don't want to adjust the date of your graduation, consider retaking the class during a summer break or an extra class during the regular semester.

Experiencing setbacks is inevitable because we're human. But we have the knowledge and capability to adjust our timelines and continue on our path.

There's no harm in changing the path you're on, but there is harm in quitting altogether!



SETTING DATES

One of the most important S.M.A.R.T. principles used with setting goals is the principle of making goals *“timely.”*

Without deadlines, it’s easy to let other priorities steer you away from your goal. A current crisis, potential opportunities, and other everyday occurrences can contribute to something called *“oversight.”*

Oversight is when you forget about your goals and necessary tasks associated with them because you’re focused on other issues.

Short term and long term goals, along with their accompanying deadlines, help to keep your overall plan in view so you can stay on task.

Children have a favorite response when asked to do a task: *“I’ll do it tomorrow.”* As parents, we need to teach children how to do things in a timely manner so these unfinished tasks don’t add up to a mountain of a mess.

As adults with long term goals, we should know better than to put things off until tomorrow because sometimes *“tomorrow”* never comes.

Life gets in the way with kids activities, work responsibilities, unexpected bills... the list of life’s distractions could go on and on. ***These distractions cause us to lose sight of our goals and desires.***

Setting dates and deadlines for reaching your goals will thwart this oversight and will help prevent future regrets.

So as not to be overwhelmed, follow these simple steps:

1. **Plan.** Prepare a chronological list of all short term goals you need to reach in order to accomplish your long term objective.
2. **Schedule.** Grab a calendar and set dates for each short term goal.
3. **Assess.** Pick a day once each month to review your progress and to assess whether your dates are accurate.
4. **Now get to work!**



Be realistic with your timelines to ensure that the short term or long term goals are attainable. On your assessment days, be honest with yourself about how much you've accomplished.

If you've fallen behind, allow yourself some extra time to accomplish each goal moving forward. If you've gotten ahead of the game, then pat yourself on the back and celebrate, just don't allow yourself to get too complacent. You must keep your momentum strong and the internal fire roaring!

The key to this exercise is to move ahead with your plan instead of moving in the other direction. ***If your goals were neither attainable nor realistic, readjust and move on.***

SCHEDULE TIME TO WORK ON GOALS

The process of setting goals takes time and self-reflection. Be sure you're as informed as you can be about an issue or opportunity included in your goals.

For example, if your goal is to increase your client base, find out things like:

- * The competition – Who are your competitors? What size client base do your closest competitors have? How healthy is your industry at this time?
- * How long did it take you to develop your current client base? How long do you estimate it would take you to increase your client base by 10%? 15%? 25%?
- * Is your level of revenue meeting expectations according to your existing business plan? Are you meeting or exceeding your goals?
- * How much would you like to increase your revenue by and how much would you need to increase your client base to achieve that revenue goal?

The questions listed above are the kinds of questions a business owner might ask as she sets goals for building up her client base.

Depending on your goals, your questions may differ, but the objective is the same – to provide you with the most comprehensive understanding of the issues and realities you want to address when setting new goals.

If necessary, ***schedule time in your calendar to ensure you have a chance to work on these goals.*** Whether it's a little everyday or just one day a week, make this appointment with yourself and keep the appointment firm!

So often we get carried away with caring for others – our families or our clients – that we forget to allow time to care for ourselves and our life goals.

If you need to delegate some tasks in order to make time in your schedule, then do so. Hire an intern to help with business tasks or outsource some of your household chores so you can find the time to make your goals a reality.

Hire the kid next door to cut your grass or hire a cleaning person to clean for you every week or two. Hire a babysitter once a week to keep the kids occupied or be creative and barter babysitting time with another mother.

Don't use lack of time as an excuse for not achieving your goals!



Not every goal has to be about work or career either. If you want to give your home a facelift, that's a valid goal towards improving your quality of life.

Follow the same steps for setting short term goals and dates. Make another list of any equipment or supplies you need for the home improvement project and schedule your work time on the calendar.

Reaching your goals takes time, and ***one of the greatest injustices you can do to your goal planning is to do it in a rush.*** Not only should your end dates be realistic, but allow yourself enough time to create your power goals and do whatever research is necessary so your to-do list is accurate and up to date.

Equip yourself with enough information and time to develop S.M.A.R.T. goals.

SHARE YOUR GOALS TO MAINTAIN ACCOUNTABILITY

One of the best ways to ensure you follow through with your objective is to share your goals with your family, friends, or life coach, who is committed to helping you stay accountable to your goals.

Determine what you need from a support group – constant reminding, daily emails, weekly check-ins – and share your ideas with those who you think would support you the best. Be clear with what you need and want for support and ask if they would be willing to keep you accountable.

Here are some great ideas for getting help to maintain accountability:

1. **Family and friends** can be a tremendous support group who share a genuine interest in your success.
2. **Joining an association** in your field or profession is a great way to meet others who may be willing to help you be accountable to your goals. They may even ask you to do the same for them.

3. **Hiring a professional life or business coach** is another popular way to get the support necessary to stay on track and on target with your goals. These personal coaches work one-on-one with clients. You may have conversations once a week, once a day, or at any other intervals you determine.

A coach may be an added investment, but for many it's an investment that can help you achieve tangible results that you never would have attained otherwise.

4. **Blogging.** Some people even start blogs to keep themselves accountable. For some, it's easier to announce your goals to the internet world than to your family and friends.

This is not recommended for business planning, because you don't want your competitors knowing what your plans are, but if journaling online helps keep you on track with personal goals, then do whatever will motivate you to reach those goals.

WATCH YOUR PROGRESS

The only way you'll be able to achieve your short term or long term goals is if you're keeping an eye on your progress.

It's not enough to just set your goals. It's also important to refer to your plan, do the work necessary, and assess your progress towards your goals every step of the way.

Keep your business or life plan close at hand on your desk or on a bulletin board and look at it regularly. Too many plans spend their lives hidden in files or piles, if they're even written down at all!

Remember that your plan isn't set in stone. Plans are meant to be fluid and change with time or as your interests change. These plans will help keep you on your chosen path to success.

When you reach a milestone, celebrate! Tell your family, friends, and accountability coach. Blog about it. Take special note of how good you feel knowing that your hard work is paying off and you're one step closer to reaching your long term goal.

Refer to your goals regularly to mark your progress. Create a chart for each month that highlights the progress you've made on your goals and keep that chart visible at all times.

Goals don't just happen by themselves; they need your attention and active participation as you follow your plan.



SUMMARY

Goals are the beacons that remind us of our dreams and aspirations. If your goals aren't specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely, your goals will have no meaning and you'll have a difficult time achieving what you're called to do!

CHECKLIST FOR CREATING AND REALIZING YOUR GOALS:

- * **Remember to give yourself the time necessary to create goals according to the S.M.A.R.T. principles.** Make sure you have all the information necessary before creating your goals so it'll be realistic and attainable.
- * **Incorporate short term goals into your long term goal-setting.** Short term goals are like stepping stones along the way to your success. Short term tasks also encourage you to assess your plan along the way and adjust as needed.
- * **Keeping yourself accountable to your goals is critical.** Share your goals with someone you trust, like a peer or coach.
- * **Actively monitor your progress towards your goals.** Don't keep your goals filed away. Keep them front and center so your actions and tasks will always be aligned with your goals.