

Specifying Goals

Practice the elements of effective communication by setting and specifying goals that are important to you. Specifying goals means that you ensure that your goal meets certain criteria. The questions on the following form will help you to specify your goal and get information to use in creating SMART goals (as presented in the class):

- Identify your goals for working with your staff. What relationship would you like to promote with staff? You can take this a step further and identify goals for specific staff people. This is a good first step to clarifying your expectations with staff.
- Identify your goals for working with your supervisor. What relationship would you like to promote with your supervisor?
- Identify project goals. Pick out a project or activity for which you are responsible. Run this project through the SMART goal format.

Steps in Specifying Your Goals

Write your general goal here and refine it using the criteria below:

Stated positively:

You must know where you want to go to get there. The mind works best when it has clear direction. Start by asking yourself, "What, specifically, do I want?" The primary criteria is to identify what you want, not what you don't want. Knowing what you don't want may be useful but it serves as a poor guide. If you start out with something that you don't want, ask yourself, "What do I want instead?" If necessary, rewrite your goal as a positive statement in the space below:

Stated specifically:

There are two parts to specifying your goal.

Part one: A goal is vague unless you have clear evidence about when you have achieved it. Defining your evidence for achieving the goal not only help determine what you need to do to get it, but it also help you know when you have arrived. Ask yourself, “How will I know when I have it?” or “What will indicate that I have achieved the goal?” Write the indicators and evidence for your goal in the space below:

Part two: The second part of specifying the goal is clarifying where and when you want it. It is easier to commit to a goal when you know the contexts in which it applies. You may shrink from a goal that you think must be maintained in all situations and at all times. Ask yourself, “Where, when, and with whom do I want it?” and “Where, when, and with whom do I not want it?” Answer these questions for your goal in this space.

Self Managed:

Most people create goals that are about other people or about situations that are really outside of their control. But you often cannot control other people or situations. Ask yourself, “Is it something that I can initiate and maintain myself?” If not, step back and identify your part in bringing it about. This becomes your real outcome. Address these questions in the space below. Take this an extra step and identify specific activities that you can do to achieve your goal. These steps become your real outcome.

Fit:

Many people set goals without considering how the goal fits with their values or fits into their lives as a whole. Once you have set your goal, ask, “Is it really OK with me if I get it?” “Does it fit into my life as a whole?” What conflicts might it create in my life or with significant others in my life?” This is also a time to address how your goal fits into the organization. Use the space below to answer address these issues.

Bonus Question: Meta-Outcome

Imagine that you have achieved the goal that you identified above and ask yourself:

What would having this goal do for me?

This question forces you to consider what you really want (your meta-outcome). In many cases, you discover that you can get what you really want in many ways. Your current outcome is just one way to get there. Identifying your meta-outcome encourages you to become more resourceful rather than limiting yourself to one way to get it. Write your response to this question below:
