Planning Smarter with SMART Goals

Introduction

This is a guide that talks about a specific way to make goals, called "SMART goals." The guide has the following information:

- What are SMART Goals? What do the letters in SMART stand for?

- Why use SMART goals?

- An example of a group coming up with the SMART goals for an advocacy campaign

- Example of using SMART goals for an action plan/advocacy campaign

- Worksheet for using SMART goals

What Are SMART Goals?

SMART goals help people plan projects.

SMART stands for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-bound.

Specific

Your goals should be specific and concrete. It is easier to create strategies if your goal is specific and easy to see.

Measurable

After setting a specific goal, you will need to make a way to measure your progress towards the goal. How will you know how close you are to your goal? You will need to be able to answer that question.

Achievable

An achievable goal is a goal that can be reached. Some goals are just not possible. Your group cannot get rid of every problem everywhere. But your group can win a smaller issue.

Realistic

Realistic goals are goals that **your** group has the ability to reach. Can your group get your goal done? Is your group the right size for your goal? Does everyone in your group care about the issue?

Time-bound

Time-bound goals are goals that have a clear deadline. Having deadlines makes it easier to plan, and will move goals along more efficiently because you can plan in advance.

Examples

Specific

For a goal to be specific, it has to be clear. What exactly do you want to do?

Non-specific: I want to learn to play music.

- What kind of music?
- What instrument?

New goal: I want to learn to play I Think I Need A New Heart by The Magnetic Fields on the ukulele.

Measurable

For a goal to be measurable, you have to be able to tell how you're making progress. You also have to know when you'll have met the goal.

The example goal from above is specific, but it's not measurable: it doesn't show how you'll know you're making progress.

To make the goal more measurable, you could add:

- I will get a ukulele.

- I will sign up for ukulele lessons twice a week.

- I will learn all the songs in the beginner's song book.

New goal: I will buy a ukulele, sign up for ukulele lessons twice a week, and learn all the songs in the beginner's song book. Then I will learn to play "I Think I Need A New Heart" by The Magnetic Fields.

Achievable

Achievable goals are goals that are possible. For example, let's say you added "I will practice the ukulele every day for 10 hours a day." This wouldn't be achievable because:

- There will be days when you have other responsibilities.

- You would burn out fast if you tried to practice for that long every day.

- You could get tired or bored.

When you set unachievable goals, it's easy to get discouraged.

To make this goal achievable, you could instead say that you will practice for a half hour every day. Or, that you will practice for at least 5 hours each week. This gives you more flexibility. That makes it more likely that you'll be able to meet your goal.

New goal: I will buy a ukulele and sign up for ukulele lessons twice a week. I will practice the ukulele for at least 5 hours each week and learn all the songs in the beginner's song book. Then, I will learn to play "I Think I Need A New Heart" by The Magnetic Fields.

Realistic

Realistic goals are goals that **you** will be able to do. The first part of the goal is "I will buy a ukulele and sign up for ukulele lessons twice a week." It's **achievable** because it is possible to do those things - but is it **realistic?**

- Do you have the money to buy a ukulele right now, or will you need to save up for one?

- Is there somewhere for you to take ukulele lessons?

- Can you easily get to that place?

Let's say that you can afford to buy a ukulele, but there isn't anywhere nearby where you can take ukulele lessons. But, you have access to a computer and the internet. You could follow along with the online lessons on UkeSchool.com twice a week instead.

New goal: I will buy a ukulele and start following along with online ukulele lessons on UkeSchool.com twice a week. I will practice the ukulele for at least 5 hours each week and learn all the songs in the beginner's song book. Then, I will learn to play "I Think I Need A New Heart" by The Magnetic Fields.

Time-bound

Finally, your goals need to be time-bound. Our example goal still doesn't say when we want or need to do it by. When will you buy a ukulele? Will you buy it by August 15th? Will you buy it before the school year starts?

Without adding a time-frame, your goals will be open-ended. When your goals are open-ended, it's hard to make a plan for really accomplishing them.

New goal: I will buy a ukulele by August 15th and start following along with online ukulele lessons on UkeSchool.com twice a week. I will practice the ukulele for at least 5 hours each week and learn all the songs in the beginner's song book. Then, I will learn to play "I Think I Need A New Heart" by The Magnetic Fields.

Why Use SMART Goals?

- They help make sure that you will achieve a goal, and in a sensible timeframe.

- They help make sure that you can measure your successes, which will make it easier to tell people what you've done.

- They help groups address specific details around goals. The specific details lead to an well-organized set of goals. The set of goals then leads to good action plans for advocacy campaigns.

Example: A Group Developing SMART Goals for an Advocacy Campaign

It is November 1st, 2016. A group of self-advocates with intellectual and developmental disabilities is having their monthly meeting.

The self-advocacy group has just found out that the local public transit authority plans to scrap disability fare cards. The authority wants to start doing this in February 2017.

The public transit authority will be holding board meetings and public interest hearings before the decision. The decision is final on January 13, 2017. This decision will hurt many people with disabilities who rely on public transit. Some people with disabilities might not be able to take public transit much anymore if it costs more.

The self-advocacy group's president asks the rest of the group their opinion on creating an advocacy campaign to prevent this from happening. The group decides they want to take this on. They decide to use SMART goals to create an action plan for their campaign.

One member suggests a goal of organizing a boycott of public transit. But someone else says that this might not be achievable. Lots of people use the transit. Many people would not be able to boycott due to monetary or disability-related reasons.

Another member suggests organizing a phone call and letter writing campaign. The group likes this idea, so they turn go through aspects of the goal to make sure it is a SMART goal. When they are done, their SMART goal says:

Our group will organize a phone call and letter writing campaign to the 10 transit authority members and director by people with disabilities, our families, and other allies. At least 25 people will make calls and write letters. The campaign will be completed by January 13, 2017.

Why is this goal a SMART goal?

Specific

The goal is specific because it says in detail what the group is going to do, who they will work with, and who is the target of their action (the 10 transit authority members who will receive the letters and phone calls).

Measurable

It is measurable because the goal includes a specific number of people who will participate in order to meet the goal. By keeping track of how many people have made calls or written letters, the group will be able to tell how close they are to meeting their goal.

Achievable

It is achievable to prevent the transit authority from following through with their decision, because the focus is local and has a concrete objective.

Realistic

It is realistic because the group has a big enough network to get lots of people to call and write letters.

Time-bound

It can be made time-bound by giving the mini-goals deadlines, and they must finish the overall goal of the phone call and letter writing campaign by January 13, 2017.

They create mini-goals for the phone call and letter writing campaign:

- By November 15, they will have on their website a page with a press release about the decision that encourages people to take action by participating in their phone call and letter campaign. The statement will include contact information for the transit authority members and director, and specific scripts for calling and writing, and the dates for two coordinated days of action.

- Two coordinated days of action for people to participate in the campaign, on December 1 and January 2.

- By November 22, the group will have used the campaign to request private meetings with the transit authority director.

- By November 28, group members will have contacted as many people as they can about the campaign to spread the word.

Example: Using Planning Charts to Break Down SMART Goals

A self-advocacy group wants to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to public transportation. Since this is a big goal, they make a plan with smaller goals along the way. They use SMART Goals to create an action plan for a campaign:

OVERALL GOAL:

We will conduct a campaign focused on ensuring that people with disabilities in our city have equal access to public transportation.

We will ask the public transportation board to change the paper signs at bus stops to be more accessible, hold a town hall meeting, and hold a rally outside of the office of the Mayor. The entire campaign will conclude by January 2018.

Goal 1
Ask the members of the public transportation board at the April board meeting to change the paper signs posted at bus stops to be more accessible, starting with 20 in the center of the city. We will follow up with the board members before the June meeting.

Who will do the task?	Task List	Timeline
Samantha	• Find calendar of board meetings to attend. • Add board meeting dates to group Google Calendar	By December 15
James, Denise	• Attend a board meeting to learn how the process for being able to speak at meetings works. • Take notes on how to present at a public transportation authority board meeting.	By March 1
Tabitha, Carlos, James, Denise	• Share notes with group at March meeting • Prepare presentation on cognitive accessibility. • Prepare example of proposed new sign layout.	By March 20th
Tabitha, Carlos, James attend Samantha, Denise follow-up	• Attend board meeting and make presentation/request. • Follow up with ADA Advisory Committee. • Follow up with members of the public transportation authority board about implementation.	April 4th By April 10th By April 20th

Goal 2
Hold a town hall meeting downtown by the end of July to discuss current barriers to public transportation access for people with disabilities in our city with at least 30 community members attending.

Who will do the task?	Task List	Timeline
Ashley, James, Denise	• Make list of local groups that might want to work with us • Contact other local groups about forming a coalition	By February 5
Carlos, James	• Secure site for town hall meeting • Secure panelists and send out invitations • Follow up to confirm with panelists	By April 10 By April 15 By June 15
Trevor, Samantha	• Write agenda for town hall meeting • Write press release about town hall meeting	By May 1 By July 1
Samantha Tabitha	• Send out press release • Videotape the town hall meeting	Day of town hall - July 20

Goal 3
Hold a rally of at least 50 people by the beginning of October outside the office of the Mayor to protest proposed budget cuts to the city's public transportation administration funding.

Who will do the task?	Task List	Timeline
Ashley, James, Denise	• Contact town hall coalition members about working together again	Sept. 1 - Sept. 15
Carlos, James	• Design rally event posters/fliers • Send posters/fliers to printers	Design by the 15th, send to printers by Thursday (18)
Trevor, Samantha	• Write media advisory about rally • Write press release about rally • Contact news media	Media advisory written and sent - Sept. 23 Press release draft written - Sept. 27
Samantha Carlos James	• Send out press release • Hand out fliers • Introduce speakers	Day of action - Sept. 30

Blank Planning Template

OVERALL GOAL:

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| |

Goal 1

Who will do the task?	Task List	Timeline

Goal 2

Who will do the task?	Task List	Timeline

Goal 3

Who will do the task?	Task List	Timeline

More Resources

- Some wording for this Guide came from the 2016 Pacific Leadership Academy: **http://pacific-alliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Smart-Goals_Action-Plans_Project-Management.pdf**

- SMART Goals - Quick Overview (note - uses "Actionable" instead of "attainable"): **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-SvuFIQjK8**

- SMART Goals: **http://www.unh.edu/hr/sites/unh.edu.hr/files/pdfs/SMART-Goals.pdf**