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For Staff Members

1. The Importance of Goals: Why Set Goals? How Do They Help?

Goals:

- Are a communication tool; clarifies what you are expected to accomplish and how.
- Increase the likelihood you will achieve your desired results.
- Are a way to challenge and stretch yourself; to help you perform *even better* and surpass expectations.
- Help to engage everyone; when you see how your goals fit with broader departmental goals or strategic priorities, it makes your work more meaningful.
- Help everyone succeed. Alignment within your group regarding your goals and those of your co-workers is important.
- Focus effort, use resources efficiently, and help you to accomplish more.

2. Goal Setting Key Principles

- Mutual understanding and buy-in between you and your manager is key to effective goal setting.
- Working with others to identify the resources and collaboration that may be needed is essential.
- It is important to track progress and revise goals as needed.



Begin with the end in mind.



3. Developing SMART Goals

Using the SMART acronym can help ensure that you and your manager share the same understanding of goals.

S	Specific	Clearly state the expected outcome (what is to be accomplished).
M	Measurable	Provide the metrics to measure completion.
A	Attainable	Identify goals (and deliverables) that are capable of being met.
R	Results-oriented	Describe the desired changes, improvements, or output.
T	Time-defined	Identify interim milestone dates and a final completion date.

A. Clearly Describe What SMART Goal Completion Looks Like

- What is the current state and what is the desired state (following goal completion)?
- How will performance against the goal be assessed?
- What are the metrics used to measure completion?
- What are the interim milestone dates and final completion date?
- What specific results and behaviors will indicate successful completion?



B. Examples of “SMART” Goals

Below are examples of job and performance goals that have been reworked to become “SMART” goals.

Original Goal:	Revised Goal:
“Organize our department processes”	“Document key department processes and procedures and distribute them internally to key stakeholders by year’s end.”
“Continue with professional development”	“Attend a CWD class on effective delegation and share what I learned with my manager and colleagues. Apply at least one delegation skill that I learned.”
“Create a system to track grants”	“Create a system to track international grants so we can sort and report them by at least source, date, and amount. System to be completed by the end of March.”
“Maintain lab”	“On a weekly basis, complete lab inventory and order any needed supplies. Ensure safety procedures are up-to-date and posted. Provide preliminary safety training and onboarding for new staff.”
“Fix database”	“Identify issues with current database and prioritize based on need and time spent to resolve. Rework database to resolve issues, test changes, and launch new database. Review enhancements after two months.”

C. Types of Effective Goals

- To **increase** something (funding, output, effectiveness).
- To **provide** something (research, service, training).
- To **improve** something (efficiency, transparency, communication, customer service).
- To **decrease** something (expenses, inefficiency, redundancy).
- To **save** something (time, resources, energy).

D. Tips for Increasing Goal Success

1. Once your SMART goals are mapped out, identify the deliverables (with time frames) that will contribute to successful goal completion.
2. Determine what resources are needed to carry out each goal and make sure that they are available; ask for help when you need it.
3. Discuss your goals with others who can help you or be supportive.



4. Consider potential obstacles and then map out possible solutions for each.
5. Take time to recognize your success after reaching critical milestones.

4. Job and Performance Goals

- **Job and performance goals answer the question, “What do I need to accomplish this year and what do I need to deliver?”**
- Create a draft of your job and performance goals. Remember to follow the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, Time-defined) model. For each goal, identify what it will take to accomplish it:
 - What steps are necessary to complete the goal?
 - What resources, tools, skills, and support will you need?
 - What challenges/obstacles might you face?
- Meet with your manager on a regular basis to ensure that you are aligned regarding your goals, including needed behaviors. Discuss the tools needed, as well as potential obstacles. Discuss any changes to your goals and update them based on the department’s changing needs and/or shifting priorities.

Performance Management Cycle



5. Goal Development: “What” and “How”

Effective SMART goals include “what” you are going to deliver (rear wheel skills) and “how” you will accomplish it (front wheel skills). *“How” a goal is accomplished – behaviors that will be demonstrated to accomplish the “what” – is critical.*

Rear Wheel Skills

Technical knowledge and experience (the “What”)

- Technical skills
- Experience in industry, function, or field
- Functional expertise
- Education/training/certification



Front Wheel Skills

Steer, navigate (the “How”)

- Taking initiative
- Communication
- Leadership
- Collaboration
- Problem-solving
- Multi-tasking
- Assertiveness
- Resourcefulness
- Thinking strategically

Examples of “How” Behaviors (Front Wheel Skills):

- Build positive relationships with peers; collaborate with others and partner to solve problems.
- Actively help others to build skills and improve performance.
- Gather and communicate facts necessary to form a perspective; offer your point of view in a constructive way.
- Serve as a role model to others by demonstrating commitment to achieving challenging goals.
- Assume good intentions, learn to understand other perspectives, do not jump to conclusions without facts.
- Establish good interpersonal relationships by helping people feel valued, appreciated, and included in decisions.
- Gain agreement from colleagues to support ideas.
- Secure appropriate resources required to support effort.
- Facilitate agreement regarding coworkers’ responsibilities and needed support.
- Ask questions to determine needs, listen carefully, and provide appropriate information.
- Help clarify roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in an initiative.



6. Professional Growth and Development Goals: Overview

- **Professional growth and development goals answer the question: “What skills and experience do I need to continue to develop to grow my career?” Professional growth and development goals:**
 - Leverage strengths and focus on areas for development.
 - Help you to deliver expected results and more effectively meet present and future challenges.
 - Enhance your mobility within the FAS and Harvard generally. Help you achieve your career goals.
 - Are owned by you, in agreement with your manager.

7. Professional Growth and Development Goals: Key Questions

- **You take the lead in answering:**
 - Where would I like to take my career within the FAS or Harvard? Is there is a gap between the skills and experience I need for that role? What steps I can take to fill that gap?
 - What are the key skills and knowledge I need to develop to be *even more effective* in my current role?
 - What important skills and knowledge can I develop to help address future needs or challenges for our group?
 - How can I leverage my talents/interests to a greater degree in my current role?
 - What important skills and experience can I develop to help me accomplish my career goals?
 - What would make work even more satisfying for me?
- **Professional growth and development activities do not always pertain to training. Additional examples include:**
 - Working on a department or university team project.
 - Creating an affinity group by bringing people together within the FAS or Harvard with similar interests to share stories and network.
 - Giving a presentation about a work project to colleagues.
 - Providing training to colleagues on a topic or skill that you have mastered.
 - Leading a team/department discussion about a current work project.
 - Connecting with groups across Harvard that focus on skill development – for example, the Crimson Toastmaster’s Club.



8. Goal Setting FAQs for Staff Members

Q: What is the value in having goals?

A: Goals put in writing what you are expected to accomplish and how. They provide focus, which increases the likelihood you will achieve your desired results. Goals are also a way to challenge and stretch yourself, and help you measure progress and reward success. Finally, goals make work more meaningful, are motivational, and help you perform *even better* and surpass expectations.

Q: What is the difference between a job and performance goal and a professional growth and development goal?

A: Job and performance goals answer the question, “What do I need to accomplish this year, and what behaviors should I embody as I deliver my goals?” They are the goals that provide the framework for what you work on every day. Professional growth and development goals answer the question, “What skills and experience do I need to continue to develop and grow my career?” These goals can enhance your capabilities, improve your skills, and help you maximize your potential.

Q: What is a stretch goal?

A: A stretch goal is a goal that will require you to “stretch” your capabilities in order to achieve it. In other words, a stretch goal is a sufficiently challenging goal, but one that is ultimately attainable if you are using the right blend of effort and skill. The word “stretch” implies you will need to go beyond your comfort zone to achieve the goal in question.

Q: How do I know what the right amount of stretch is?

A: Often this is more of an art than a science. You want to strike a balance between a result that would be “too easy” to attain and a result that would be “too difficult” to achieve. This is an important time to seek input from your manager. A discussion with your manager about strategies to achieve a stretch goal can go a long way toward building your manager’s support.

Q: What if my manager and I already have already discussed my goals for the year?

A: If you have already reached agreement with your manager on your goals for the 2014 Performance Year, please be sure to record them in the Performance Planning Document.



For Managers

9. Goal Setting FAQs for Managers

Q: How involved should I be in setting job and performance goals for my employees?

A: Ideally, setting goals should involve both you and your employee. Your employee should develop draft goals and review them with you. When you meet to discuss them, find the overlap and discuss the differences between the goals your employee drafted and what you had in mind. The end result should be goals that serve the needs of the department/center and the employee's development. If you find that you cannot reach agreement with your employees on their goals, reach out to your [HR consultant](#) for guidance.

Q: If a previous goal was not achieved by my employee, should I set this as a new goal for the year?

A: Have the conversation with your employee to determine the challenges that stood in the way of achieving the goal(s), such as insufficient time or unavailable resources. Determine ways to first address these obstacles, and then reset the previous goal if still applicable.

Q: How do I introduce goal setting to my employee who has never created goals before?

A: Goals are critical to an organization's success and therefore it is vital that you, as the manager, communicate this to your employee. There is value not only for the organization, but also for your employee's own development and advancement. Goals are motivational, make work more meaningful, and are a way for your employee to challenge and stretch himself/herself. Goals also clarify what your employee is expected to accomplish and how, and increase the likelihood that he or she will accomplish his or her desired results.

Q: What should I do if my employee is not interested in setting goals?

A: Make it clear that this is what you expect from all of your employees. Actually setting goals, doing his or her job even better, and addressing behaviors are three areas that can be included in the overall goals that are developed.

Q: Is there a need to set goals for my employee, who has been in the same job for several years?

A: Even though your employee has been in the same position for a while, it is inevitable that business needs change and new work opportunities will present themselves. As a result, new goals will need to be developed. In addition, goals can always be created that will broaden or deepen your employee's skills and knowledge.

Q: My employee set goals that do not match his level of skills and/or experience. How do I communicate to him that he is not ready?



A: Give this individual discreet assignments to work on independently with clear expectations and frequent check-ins. This will give him some independence and will also give you the opportunity to provide feedback in relatively low risk situations. Your feedback can then be, “this is going well and therefore, let’s talk about other items you can work on independently,” or “I need these task items done in this way. Let’s continue to work closely.”

Q: How can I generate commitment from my employees around their goals? How do I get my employees to care?

A: Your employees will be more committed to goals they help to create. A critical component for commitment is an understanding for why the goals are important to accomplish. In other words, help your employees see what benefit will result (to the work group, department, or school) due to their efforts, and if possible, how his/her goals are aligned with broader department or FAS goals. Goals that are aligned with individual interests and strengths also generate more commitment. Finally, be clear that development and advancement are connected to achieving goals.

Q: How do I motivate my employee when there are limited opportunities for advancement within the group/department?

A: Try giving your employee assignments within his or her role that allow for development in-place. Contact your [HR consultant](#) for some ideas to help you in this situation.



10. Goal Setting Challenges for Managers

As managers, you may be faced with challenges similar to those identified below. Responses will vary in each case depending on the particular circumstance. If you are faced with one or more of these challenges, please reach out to your [HR consultant](#), who can provide guidance as needed.

A. One of your most technically talented staff members has a way of behaving that alienates people. You want her to improve her way of behaving as a goal for this year. However, you doubt she will include this in her goals because:

- Each time you discuss this she becomes defensive and says she doesn't see it as a problem.
- She has been rewarded in the past for her technical talents, with no focus on her behavioral issues.

B. Your staff member's goals do not seem very challenging. You suspect that his goals are relatively easy because he:

- Wants to be sure he will be successful with little effort.
- Generally seems unmotivated.
- Resists change.

C. You and your staff member do not see eye-to-eye on:

- Whether or not a certain goal makes sense.
- Whether or not a goal-related deadline is reasonable.

D. Your staff member is very senior, a top performer in her role, and at the high end of the career ladder. You wonder how you should approach goal setting with her.

- How does this change if you have about equal experience, and she is like a peer to you?
- How does this change if she doesn't want to advance?

E. An employee needs to improve on a qualitative goal, such as improving her comfort level with public speaking.

- How do I set a qualitative goal to address this?
- How would I measure it?

F. One of your staff members is the primary liaison between your group and another department.

- The relationship between the groups is tense and uncooperative.
- You have asked him to include a goal toward improving your group's working relationship with this other department.
- He believes this is unfair since this goal is not within his control.



11. Available Resources

If you need additional support or if you have any questions, please reach out to your [HR consultant](#).

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FAS HR Website: www.hr.fas.harvard.edu/goalsetting

- Includes goal setting form, tools, and an interactive learning module.

Harvard ManageMentor:

http://harvie.harvard.edu/system/files/Forms/Career_Professional_Development/ManageMentor.pdf

- Provides helpful sessions on goal setting.

