Guide to Goal Setting

Begin with the end in mind!

"You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there." ~ Yogi Berra

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

Goals:

- Clarify what the desired outcome is, how to accomplish it, and by when providing a road map to focus daily efforts most effectively.

- Increase the likelihood employees will achieve the desired results, therefore minimizing the possibility of performance issues down the road.

- Make it easier to evaluate an employee's performance when it's been made clear what is expected from them.

- Help to engage employees! When an employee sees how their goals fit with broader departmental goals or priorities, it makes their work more meaningful.

- Are a way to challenge and stretch employees; to help them perform *even better* and surpass expectations.

- Are forward-facing and provide the individual with the direction in which they need to move both for their success and for that of the Department. Ask the question: Where is the employee now and where do you want/need them to be?

2. Goal Setting Tips for Success

- **Clarity:** A clear goal and specific goal can be measured. It should leave no room for misunderstanding. Goals should be explicit regarding what behavior is desired and should paint a picture of what successful completion looks like. Visualize the desired outcome!

- **Commitment**: For goals to be effective, ideally, they are mutually agreeable between the supervisor and employee. Of course the goal should be in line with expectations you have for the employee. This approach gives the employee the opportunity to share their hopes and ideas for future performance and growth.

- **Resources**: Working with others to identify the resources and collaboration that may be needed to achieve ones goals is essential to success.

- **Feedback**: ongoing, regular, check-ins is a chance to correct/coach or clarify before the goal has been reached. The employee may have questions, operational needs may shift, and/or the employee is in process of going about things the wrong way. Open, two-way, communication is essential!

- **Challenge**: most employees are motivated by a challenge! When possible, a goal should offer the opportunity for growth, or a "stretch" in responsibility, and may even be inspirational, arising out of the values and interests of the department and/or organization. Whatever the level of challenge the goal should be achievable.

3. The Three Major Types of Goals

Performance Goals: Support the department and/or College and are related to the essential functions of the job.

Answer the questions:
What needs to be accomplished or addressed this year (e.g. project, problem, process, task, innovation, efficiency, improvement in a related behavior)?

What are the most critical tasks and activities that the employee is responsible for in his/her day-to-day role?

Does the work at hand need to…?

- **increase** something (output, effectiveness, funding)

- **provide** something (service, training, research)

- **improve** something (efficiency, level of effort, communication, customer service)

- **decrease** something (inefficiency, redundancy; expenses)

- **save** something (time or resources)

What…

- skills and behaviors are needed to lead to success?

- steps are necessary to complete the goal?

- resources, tools, skills, and support are needed?

- challenges/obstacles might be faced?

Goals that can be set for positions with routine duties (regular, ongoing activities)	
Continuous Improvement	Goals that focus on improving quality, efficiency, effectiveness, or reducing costs or utilize resources differently.
Non-traditional Responsibilities	Goals that go beyond traditional responsibilities and may develop new skills or experience, such as making a presentation, training others, or mentoring.
Department Initiatives	Goals that allow individuals to contribute to departmental initiatives or projects.
Under-utilized Abilities	Goals that take advantage of skills or knowledge that aren't normally utilized in the standard duties of a position. Is there a way to utilize untapped skills or expertise an individual may have beyond their defined position (e.g. writing, editing, photography)?
Deadlines & Standards	Goals that add time-bound constraints or tighter standards of performance for specific job duties.

Professional Growth and Development Goals: Enhance performance in current role (i.e., increase depth of knowledge or skills) and may help prepare for a new or future role.

Answer the questions:
What skills or behaviors does the employee need to gain or build on to stay current or grow in their current role?

What sort of knowledge or experience is needed to advance or move into another role?

Discuss with the employee…

- Is there is a gap between the skills and experience needed for the employee to be even more effective in their current role? What steps can the employee take to fill that gap?

- What skills and knowledge can I develop to help address future needs or challenges of the department?

- How can I use my talents/interests to a greater degree in my current role?

- What would make work even more satisfying for me?

Professional growth and development activities do not always pertain to training. Additional examples include:

- Working as a part of a team on a department project or initiative.

- Participating on a College committee.

- Giving a presentation about a project to co-workers, another department on campus, or at a professional conference.

- Providing training to co-workers on a topic or skill that you have mastered.

- Leading a team/department discussion about a current work project or relevant topic.

- Connecting with groups in the community that focus on skill development – for example, Toastmasters is a non-profit organization that focuses on the improvement of communication, public speaking and leadership skills.

Organizational Goals: These are goals set by a department, division, or by the College for the upcoming year that are a statement about a desired future direction and describe what the organization is trying to accomplish. This allows those responsible for setting that direction to develop a common understanding. Goals may be strategic (making broad statement of where the organization wishes to be at some future point)or tactical (defining specific short-term results for departments within the organization). Goals serve as an internal source of motivation and commitment and provide a guide to action.

4. Developing S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Using the S.M.A.R.T. acronym can help develop meaningful individual goals which are linked to department, division, or College wide goals.

S	Specific	Clearly and simply state the expected outcome by addressing the "5 W's": • **W**ho is involved? • **W**hat is to be accomplished (current state/behaviors vs. desired outcome)? • **W**here? • By **W**hen? • **W**hy is it important to do this (the purpose/benefit of accomplishing the goal)? Is linked to Departmental/priorities and/or individual key areas of responsibility (essential functions). Use action verbs to help describe expectations (see list).
M	Measurable	How will you know the goal has been successfully met? How will performance be measured? Include numeric or descriptive measures that define: • Quantity • Quality • Cost • Efficiencies • Due date (cycles or a set project deadline) • Observable actions
A	Achievable	Identify goals which can actually be accomplished and at the same time stretch the individual so they feel slightly challenged. Does the employee possess the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities needed to achieve the goal?
R	Realistic	Goals that you have the resources to accomplish (e.g. skills, funding, equipment, time, staff).
T	Time-defined	Identify the necessary completion date or frequency to be maintained to ensure the required outcome. What is the earliest, achievable/realistic, date for the goal to be started and completed?

Examples of "S.M.A.R.T." Goals

Original Goal	Revised S.M.A.R.T. Goal
Organize department processes.	Document key department processes and procedures. Review with supervisor and then distribute for internal use by end of the current review period.
Continue with professional Development.	Attend a class on time management in the next six months and share the information learned at a team meeting. Apply, on an ongoing basis, at least one skill that was learned.
Create a system to track grants.	Create a system to track international grants so the information can be sorted and reported on initially by source, date, and amount. System to be completed by the end of March.
Ensure lab safety.	Put in place, documented, safety training for new staff, to be offered within a few days of their hire. Ensure that annual safety training is provided for all lab staff as required throughout the year.
Fix database.	Identify issues with current database and prioritize based on operational need and time spent to resolve. Rework database to resolve issues, test changes, and launch new database within the next six months. Review enhancements two months after implementation.
Improve budget and expense statement processing.	Reconcile budget and expense statements within a week of receipt from Finance Office.
Order supplies for the office.	Check supply inventory bi-weekly and re-order as needed to avoid shortages.
Timely snow removal.	Remove snow from and salt/sand walkways and building entrances at the start of each shift.
Improve attendance.	Arrive promptly by start of shift each work day to eliminate tardiness. Arrive to work each day on time and ready to begin work.
Expand menu choices.	Research, test and evaluate three new vegetarian entrees each semester for the coming academic year.
Track department audiovisual resources.	Design and implement use of a spreadsheet to track loan of departmental audiovisual resources for use by the beginning of the calendar year.
Effectively supervise staff.	Hold weekly team meetings to review work, address concerns, share ideas, and pass along relevant information from attendance at managers meetings. Guide staff to successfully achieve their goals through monthly 1:1 meetings in which goals are reviewed, progress is noted, and feedback is provided.