

A MyPerformance Guide to Goal Setting



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Overview

“Goal setting is a powerful process. It’s based on the same principles of focus that allows us to concentrate rays of diffused sunlight into a force powerful enough to start a fire. It’s the practicality of translating vision into achievable, actionable doing. It’s a common denominator of successful individuals and organizations.” ~ STEPHEN COVEY, First Things First

We know from research and practical experience that effective goal setting can assist us in achieving greater results in both our personal and professional life, and yet the process for great goal setting is not often explored or discussed. This My Performance Guide to Goal Setting will provide employees and supervisors with several principles, ideas and steps to create effective and motivational goals that drive individual employee performance and support organizational results. By setting goals that motivate you, are truly worthwhile and are aligned to organizational goals, you will have a clearer map to your success. These important linkages are why MyPerformance places such importance on the role of collaborative goal setting during your performance conversations.

Goal setting truly is the key to unlocking our full potential. The MyPerformance approach creates the opportunity for trusted feedback where you and your supervisor can explore and confirm how your strengths and interests align with your work. Remember, MyPerformance is all about the conversation! It’s the conversation that infuses greater focus and meaning to the goal setting process; where we set goals that are bigger than just a task from a job description; where we link our goals to that of the team or organization, receive trusted feedback on progress and learn from challenges that arise.

Ultimately, the power of goal setting is that it serves to unlock full potential, which leads to higher performance and better business results if a few key principles are followed. Effective goal setting also creates a more engaged workplace; people will come to work every day feeling engaged and create goals that help them to achieve great things, for their organization and themselves. So let’s take a fresh look at goal setting, share some wisdom and key principles to remind ourselves about what really matters, and what motivates and helps us to enjoy the process of being our best as individuals and as an organization.

What is Goal Setting?

Goal setting, broadly speaking, is a process of working towards who you want to be or what you want to do. This can be something complex such as exploring and developing the type of leader you want to be, or something as simple as what you want to do with your vacation and when you will take it. Once your intention or goal is clear and compelling, it’s then a matter of planning towards it, tracking your progress and staying open to learning and change along the way. Whether it’s done formally or informally, goal setting is essential to focusing energy and resources, and to experience a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. Without it, there’s a feeling of being adrift without

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Are you looking for support in goal setting?

The BC Public Service Agency offers the following resources:

- **Planning for Quality Performance Engagement in this workshop, you will build key work goals and performance measures.**
- **Performance Management Snapshots - these are brief videos offering practical tips, including effective goal setting.**

Visit The Learning Centre to find out about these upcoming workshops.

direction or purpose, or of being disappointed as a result. Engaging in goal setting conversations is crucial for the supported direction of the individual and the organization.

Moving Beyond Procrastination

According to collective experience, our track record or feelings about goal setting are mixed, and many of us struggle or hesitate in setting goals. For those of us who live by goal setting and stick to our goals no matter what, we can sometimes experience negative impacts on our health and relationships. For those of us who see less value or staying power in goal setting, we may have experienced negative impacts on our sense of integrity and self-confidence when we don't achieve our goals. Whatever viewpoint you see yourself in, you likely experienced these challenges with goal setting as a pattern throughout life. So what key piece may you be missing? It's increased self-awareness that helps you to overcome your challenges and create meaningful goals that become "the right thing, for the right reason, in the right way." In other words, it's not just about what, it's also about why you have chosen a particular goal. It's asking yourself, "is this goal aligned with my values and those of the organization?" It's the why that makes a goal meaningful and gives you the energy to continue when the going gets tough. Equally important is knowing how you are going to achieve a particular goal, which requires you to know and understand your preferences (view of the world), strengths, challenges, capacity and skill level. With this kind of knowledge and self awareness during goal setting, it helps you to be more honest about what goals interest you, more accurate in knowing what your current learning edge is, and helps you identify barriers to success. In summary, when approaching goal setting with a high level of values alignment and self awareness, you are more likely to succeed, be engaged and produce better results, and less likely to fall into common traps, such as procrastination or avoidance.

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Looking for further research and reading on SMART and HARD Goals? Please click on these links for more information:

HARD Goals by Mark Murphy

LeadershipIQ Study: Are SMART Goals Dumb? by LeadershipIQ

Locke's Goal Setting Theory: Understanding SMART Goal Setting by Mind Tools

Current Research on Goal Setting

As organizations move towards supporting employees to unlock their full potential, more research is accumulating on what works best, particularly when it comes to goal setting for attaining higher performance results. For example, in the most recent study by LeadershipIQ, 4,182 employees from 397 organizations were surveyed about aspects of their organizations' goal setting process and whether they achieved great things. The survey found that only 15 per cent of employees strongly agree that their goals will help them achieve great things, while only 13 per cent strongly agree that their goals this year will help them maximize their full potential. Engagement levels were also found to be collated with goal setting. Overall, the analysis revealed the top eight predictors of whether employee goals would help them achieve great things and be engaging.

Here are the top eight factors, in order of statistical importance:

1. I can vividly picture how great it will feel when I achieve my goals.
2. I will have to learn new skills to achieve my assigned goals for this year.
3. My goals are absolutely necessary to help this company.
4. I actively participated in creating my goals for this year.
5. I have access to any formal training that I will need to accomplish my goals.
6. My goals for this year will push me out of my comfort zone.
7. My goals will enrich the lives of somebody besides me (customers, the community, etc.).
8. My goals are aligned with the organization's top priorities for this year.

Goal Setting Frameworks

The process of setting goals needs to be a transparent and collaborative process between you and your supervisor. Whether writing long or short-term goals, the most widely-used framework has been S-M-A-R-T goals.

- Specific**
 - Well-defined to inform employees exactly what is expected, when, and how much. With specific goals, managers can easily measure progress toward goal completion.
- Measurable**
 - Provide milestones to track progress and motivate employees toward achievement.
- Attainable**
 - Success needs to be achievable with effort by an average employee, not too high or too low.
- Relevant**
 - You should focus on the greatest impact to the overall company strategy.
- Time-bound**
 - Establish enough time to achieve the goal, but not too much time to undermine performance. Goals without deadlines tend to be overtaken by the day-to-day crises.

Further to the S-M-A-R-T goal concept, Mark Murphy created an alternative concept called H-A-R-D goals, which incorporates current research in neuroscience. This adds to our understanding of what engages the brain, leading to greater success and higher

performance in the goal setting process. In the MyPerformance approach to goal setting, S-M-A-R-T goals are infused with H-A-R-D goals to make your goals even 'SMARTer' and enhance the level of focus, motivation and success you achieve through goal setting.

- Heartfelt**
 - My goal will enrich the lives of others (I care about it and have an emotional attachment to it).
- Animated**
 - I can vividly picture/imagine how great it will look/feel to achieve my goal.
- Required**
 - My goal is absolutely necessary to help my organization.
- Difficult**
 - I will have to learn new skills and leave my comfort zone to achieve my goal.

Key Principles for Goal Setting: S-M-A-R-T infused with H-A-R-D

The MyPerformance approach to goal setting synthesizes key principles, insights and wisdom to increase engagement and success, as you create your goals and have performance conversations with your supervisor, employees or colleagues. Ultimately, My Performance goal setting will help you unlock your full potential and achieve higher performance.

"Learn from the past, set vivid, detailed goals for the future, and live in the only moment of time over which you have any control: now." ~ DENIS WAITLEY

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Sample Conversation Questions:

Team/Group Conversation:
What are the ministry, branch and team goals? How are they aligned? What is our team's common purpose? What are my managers and supervisors' goals? What goals are our team working on and how are our individual goals aligned with each other? How do we work together to complete those goals?

One on One Conversation:
What are my individual goals? Which goals and tactics am I most interested and responsible for implementing? How are my goals aligned to my supervisor's and colleague's goals?



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Guide for Performance Conversations

Sample Conversation Question:

How does it look and feel to reach your goal?

Principle 1: Align Goals to Business Strategy

Goal alignment is critical for an organization’s success and for employee engagement. Most organizations see a dramatic increase in employee and business performance, when they effectively set individual employee goals and closely align them to the organization’s overall strategy and goals. Employees who clearly understand how their goals relate to the larger goals of the organization naturally become more engaged with their work. Successful organizations realize their achievements are linked to their ability to manage, track and communicate goals. So to achieve goal alignment, individual goals need to stem from the business plan and tactics. This also helps to prioritize goals to those most urgent.

It’s important for leaders and employees to share and discuss their goals and understand how their ministry, division, branch and team goals align. These conversations need to happen at all levels for the business plan and tactics to succeed and have the best results throughout the organization. As a result, goals will be linked both vertically and horizontally so that all divisions, branches, teams and individuals are in alignment with each other. With everyone working together toward the same objectives, the organization can execute strategy faster, with more flexibility and adaptability. Essentially, goal alignment strengthens leadership and creates organizational agility.

Principle 2: Make Goals Specific and Animated

In order to make a goal specific, it helps to make it animated, that is, to visualize the goal and describe it vividly in concrete words. Since the human brain remembers pictures better than words, the biggest impediment to any goal can be lack of visual stimulation. It makes sense to make your goal visual by painting a picture of it right down to the minute details, using mental images and concrete words, which facilitate access to the right hemisphere of the brain (home of image and verbal systems). Also, by animating your goal in this way you will get the burst of motivation you need to take your goal from vision to reality.

When engaging in visualisation or the “mental rehearsal” of achieving your goals, keep it simple. Start by engaging that daydreaming mechanism we all have. Visualize yourself being or doing whatever your goal is, as if it has already happened. Then let this image play over and over again in your mind. This tricks your subconscious to act as if it were real. That’s it!

Even when writing your goals, it’s important to state them in the positive (i.e., what you are aiming towards and not away from). Also, using concrete words, rather than abstract words like “significant result”, makes them easier to visualize and remember.

*“Every goal worth doing is going to test your resolve and ask you to decide if you really want to keep going. And at that moment, if your commitment to that goal is sufficiently heartfelt, you’ll saddle up and plow right through.” ~ MARK MURPHY, *Hard Goals**

To be concrete, the significant result you are seeking must be something you can experience or demonstrate. For example, it could be creating a document that describes the elements of the workplace culture you are creating, or hosting an event with a particular theme, so employees could actually experience the organizations brand or corporate values.

There is no point in writing a goal that you will never remember, so keep it to one sentence! Anything extra is more your action plan, detailing how you will achieve your goal.

As a personal example, instead of saying, “I will meditate 10 minutes every day,” you would envision and describe how you will feel physically and mentally when you have achieved this routine. Then write an outcome statement to reflect that, such as, “By May, I will have improved my ability to focus and increased awareness of my emotions.” Use this approach with your work goals, as well.

Principle 3: Make Goals Measurable and Heartfelt

It’s important to develop what Mark Murphy terms a “heartfelt connection” with a goal before adding any measurement to it. Others call this “having passion” in terms of our corporate values. This involves identifying with the goal at both the thinking and feeling level, such as connecting it to your team’s business plan

and to the [BC Public Service Values](#). Why? If you don’t really care about your goal or find it meaningful, you’re not going to be as motivated to achieve it. Current research on motivation shows that tapping into our internal or intrinsic motivators leads to greater success in goal setting and higher performance. So the most powerful goals are those that are inherently satisfying or meaningful, involving a heartfelt connection to what is important to you or the organization.

Adding measurement to a meaningful goal, helps you to see and acknowledge your progress. Being able to see the change occur in this way adds further focus and motivation. If you can create a mental picture of what progress looks like before adding numbers to a goal, the motivational power of your goal increases still further.

For example, Apple created a goal around an innovative new product: “The iPod will be like having 1000 songs in your pocket.” This statement is brief, visual and has a measure to it. Another team-based example could be, “With trusted feedback every week, my team will increase customer relationships and our stakeholders will assist by joining our advisory group. We will have a full table by fiscal year-end.”

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Looking for further research or reading on motivation?

Coaching Redefined: How Internal Motivation Can Fuel Performance

Daniel Pink: The Puzzle of Motivation

Sample Conversation Questions:

Why do I care about this goal? Why is it important?

How will I know when I am making progress towards my goal? What will it look and feel like?

How could I make this goal clearer, more measurable?

What will I be doing differently when I achieve this goal?

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Sample Conversation Questions:

What are you afraid of that's getting in the way?

What do you get out of having this fear or difficulty?

What is holding you back?

What are you ready to change? What are you not ready to change yet?

What are you learning from this goal?

Is this goal a priority right now? For you? For the organization?

What could you do that would really make a difference (to your career/ organization)?

How much time do you need?

Principle 4: Make Goals Attainable and Difficult

Make your goals both challenging and realistic. This involves finding the sweet spot of the goal, something attainable that also has a stretch to it. A strong goal is something that intrigues you with the challenge, enough to hold your attention. We are talking about goals that call you to move out of your comfort zone, learn new skills or try something different. For example, you may want to work towards a team lead position or create a project that will make improvements to workflow or client service. You'll want to set a goal that stretches you as this will be more intrinsically motivating and engaging, so you are also more likely to see success.

Principle 5: Make Goals Relevant and Required

A goal needs to address something that is immediately needed, necessary and a priority. This helps to create the feeling of urgency that we need to get us moving to action. We don't set goals for the sake of setting goals. Set goals that are necessary for your performance, career and organizational success. A conversation with your supervisor is key here to ensure you are aligning your goals with your organization's current priorities.

Principle 6: Make Goals Time-bound

Establish how much time you need to achieve your goal; be realistic so you maintain your performance and sense of urgency to propel you to action. Goals without deadlines tend to be overtaken by the day-to-day crises. Check what the organization's

timelines are for larger goals or strategies and ensure that you work within those, or if additional time is needed, there may be a place for negotiating what is doable now and what may need to wait.

Principle 7: Track, Adjust and Acknowledge Progress toward Goals

It's important to track your progress on goals and be equipped with what you need to review them with your supervisor, who can then offer support as necessary. Having documentation and specific examples handy is also helpful when your supervisor is not aware of all of the steps involved in reaching your goal. Tracking your goals in [MyPerformance](#) helps you stay on track in several ways:

- organize, manage and reassess your goals frequently.
- tweak goals where needed to keep them relevant and meaningful.
- create action plans with milestones.
- track your time and make sure your daily efforts are focused on meaningful tasks.
- provide information that you and your supervisor need when reviewing progress.

It's also important that you and your supervisor acknowledge progress towards your goals, no matter how small. This helps to keep you positive, focused and motivated, especially when the goal has a stretch and takes you into uncharted territory, where self-doubt likes to live and side tracks us into fear, worry and procrastination.

"Feel the fear and do it anyway." ~ SUSAN JEFFERS

Performance vs. Learning Goals

In MyPerformance Profile, there are tabs and sections for both work goals, and learning and development goals. If your work goal requires learning something new, then there will be learning goals linked to that work goal that will be recorded in the learning and development section. By linking your learning and development goals to your work goals in MyPerformance Profile, you create both organizational alignment and individual motivation toward those goals. Remember, there are many different ways of [learning and developing](#); be sure to note anything you plan to achieve, from webinars to a Master's thesis.

Writing Goal Statements: What, Why and How

Are you ready to get writing? An effective way to start bringing all these principles together is to structure each goal into the *What*, *Why*, and *How* of the goal:

What	The concise, opening statement for your goal.
Why	Defines why this goal is important to you and the organization.
How	The plan or steps you will take to achieve your goal.

Goal Examples:

My goal is to shift to a coaching leadership style (*What*), so that I can bring out the best in my team (*Why*). I will do this by working towards certification in the BC Public Service Supervisory Development Program, and signing up for Performance Coaching (*How*).

My goal is understand stakeholder needs (*What*), so that I can influence decision making on key issues (*Why*). I will do this by design, delivering a consultation process and writing a report summarising my findings (*How*).

My goal is to facilitate a culture shift towards excellence in communication (*What*), so that all communication practices are based on the principle of two-way symmetrical communication, engaging equal input from the public and the organization (*Why*). I will do this by creating a Culture Change Strategy, detailing all tactics (e.g. designing guidelines, processes, procedures) by the end of the second quarter.

My goal is to create a lease agreement on crown land for a First Nations development project (*What*), which all parties are comfortable signing, preserves the relationship and advances the economic objectives of the province and the local community (*Why*). I will do this by building trusting relationships with all parties, acquiring knowledge in industrial land use, mapping out the remaining tasks, assessing progress and creating the negotiation document, all by April 2013.

Closing Summary

This MyPerformance Guide to Goal Setting was designed to support employees and supervisors with MyPerformance conversations and the process of collaborative goal setting. The information provided is a reminder of key principles and practices that make the goal setting process more effective. By following the principles of S-M-A-R-T infused with H-A-R-D, the outcome will be cascading goals, aligned from the top to bottom of the organization. They will be both motivating and meaningful, and the key to success and high performance for employees and the organization. Ultimately, the use of these principles will bring greater focus and meaning to MyPerformance conversations. Remember, MyPerformance: it's all about the conversations.

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Are you looking for support in recording your conversations into your and/or employee's MyPerformance Profile?

Click on the Profile Help button

Profile Help

in your MyPerformance Profile where you will find helpful tools like profile samples, user guide, and FAQ's.

To get started, visit MyHR for a direct link to your MyPerformance Profile.



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