DO YOU HAVE A DESIRE to be rich and famous? Would you like to be a professional athlete? Do you want to cure cancer? Do you want to be an architect? Do you want to be a marketing executive? Your dreams and desires can be translated into goals. Following steps can help you achieve your goals so you can establish more goals.

Objectives:

1. Explain the purpose and importance of setting goals, and practice writing S.M.A.R.T. goals.
2. Demonstrate the ability to set short-, intermediate-, and long-term goals.
3. Develop a plan that outlines proposed steps used to reach goals.

Key Terms:

- goal
- intermediate goal
- long-term goal
- personal goal
- professional goal
- short-term goal
- interpersonal goal
- S.M.A.R.T.
- value

Understanding How to Develop and Achieve Goals

A goal is an end result or outcome that a person or a group of people hope to achieve. When you describe what you want to accomplish in life, you are setting or developing goals.

WHY GOALS ARE IMPORTANT

Common reasons why goals are important are:

- Goals provide clarity on what you ultimately want.
- Goals are the fuel that drive you forward and keep you going when the going gets tough.
Goals give you a single focal point on which to place your attention.

Goals give you clarity on whether you are living up to what you committed yourself to do when you first set your goal.

Goals help you achieve your highest potential.

Goals ensure you get the best out of life by becoming a better person and that you maximize your output and experiences during your lifetime.

**ESTABLISHING GOALS**

Setting meaningful goals can be done by reviewing personal values. It is important to create, review, and prioritize a list of personal values before establishing goals. A **value** is a belief or viewpoint that guides the behavior of individuals as well as groups of people and organizations. Values are reflected in behaviors.

**S.M.A.R.T.**

Goals should be established by following the accepted goal-setting guidelines known as **S.M.A.R.T.**, which is an acronym for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely goals to the person or people setting them. Goal statements should be stated using positive, strong, and meaningful language. They should begin with the phrase “I will” (rather than “I want to”) followed by the goal. For example, “I will get a B in geometry this semester” is a much more powerful statement than “I want to get a B in geometry this semester.”

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**FURTHER EXPLORATION…**

**ONLINE CONNECTION: Steps to Determining Your Personal Value**

What is the importance of a personal value? How do you determine a personal value? The given link provides the answer to these questions: [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_85.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_85.htm). A video is also available. There are six steps to discovering your personal value. After reading the article and watching the video, determine your own personal values.

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Specific

A goal should specify exactly what is to be achieved and by whom. For instance, a goal written as “Do a better job at work” does not specify exactly what is to be achieved and by whom. This goal is better written as “I will handle at least 20 case files each day.”

Measurable

If a goal is not measurable, it is nearly impossible to determine if the goal has been achieved. For example, if a goal is written to “get stronger,” has the goal been achieved if one push-up is completed? In this case, the goal should be written to indicate how many push-ups will be done, so it is apparent when the goal has actually been met.

Achievable

Be sure the tools needed to reach a set goal are within reach. For instance, if a goal requires a large sum of money, but the goal setter cannot possibly obtain the money, the goal is not attainable and should be revised.

Realistic

The goal setter should consider whether the goal is something that he or she really wants to obtain and if the goal is challenging, not impossible.

Time-Based

Every goal should have a deadline indicating when the goal is to be accomplished. For example, “I will do 30 push-ups a day by December 1” is a S.M.A.R.T. goal. “I will do 30 push-ups” is not a S.M.A.R.T. goal.

Evaluating Goals

Evaluate the goal to determine if it is supported by personal values. If a goal is in conflict with your personal values, it is unlikely that the goal will be accomplished. If the goal is achieved, you are not likely to feel fulfilled. For example, if you value time with family more than anything else, setting a goal to be the CEO of a fast-growing game development company would be in direct conflict with your attitude that family time is important. If the goal is met, unhappiness and discontent may follow. A goal must align with personal values for you to be motivated to engage in behaviors to achieve the goal.

SHORT-, INTERMEDIATE-, AND LONG-TERM GOALS

Goals can cover varying periods of time. Some can be attained fairly soon, while others will take longer to achieve. They can be divided into different areas of life in which they are important.

Goal term or length can be differentiated by the amount of time and number of steps it takes to achieve them. For instance, a **short-term goal** is an aim that can be achieved within
a year in just a few steps. Yet an **intermediate goal** is an aim that can be achieved in one to five years. Intermediate goals may involve achieving short-term goals along the way. In addition, a **long-term goal** is an aim that will take five or more years to achieve and usually involves many steps. Long-term goals usually include short-term and intermediate goals along the way.

Goals can apply to different areas of life. They are based on what you judge as important in these areas of your life. A **personal goal** is an aim that represents self-improvement. Personal goals can relate to things such as learning or physical fitness. A **professional goal** is an aim that represents success in a job or group activity. Examples of professional goals are becoming a manager or being elected the chair of a committee. An **interpersonal goal** is an aim that represents improved relations with other people. Such goals might include getting along better with family or friends.

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**FIGURE 2. Goals can cover varying periods of time.**

**FIGURE 3. Becoming a manager or being elected the chair of a committee is a professional goal.**

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**STEPS USED TO REACH GOALS**

A series of steps may be followed to achieve your goals:

- Be specific when identifying goals.
- Write a plan of action as to how you will go about achieving your goals.
- Make a list of steps to be taken to achieve your goal. For example, you may need to attend college or take an entry-level job with plans to move up the career ladder.
- Take action, and follow the steps on your list.
Educate yourself about your goal through reading and talking to others who can provide advice.

Be prepared to make alternative plans to advance toward your goal should your plan develop a problem.

Examine and reassess your goals periodically, and make adjustments if necessary.

Reaffirm feelings for your goals to maintain desire and motivation.

Visualize your goal to keep you motivated.

Take action required to reach your goals.

Summary:

A goal is an end result or outcome that a person or a group of people hope to achieve. A value is a belief or viewpoint that guides the behavior of individuals as well as groups of people and organizations.

Setting meaningful goals can be done by reviewing personal values, establishing goals, and evaluating the goals. Goals should be established by following the accepted goal-setting guidelines, known as S.M.A.R.T.—specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely. It is essential to evaluate the goal to determine if it is supported by personal values. If a goal is in conflict with personal values, it is unlikely that the goal will be accomplished.

Checking Your Knowledge:

1. How are the terms “goal” and “value” defined?
2. Why is goal-setting important?
3. How are goals set using S.M.A.R.T.?
4. How are goals classified by periods of time and areas of life?
5. What series of steps may be followed to achieve goals?
Expanding Your Knowledge:

Take some time to reflect on things you want to achieve in the short-, intermediate-, and long-term. Formulate goals for the things you want to achieve by following the aspects of goal setting.

Web Links:

Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals
http://topachievement.com/smart.html

Values Important in a Business
http://smallbusiness.chron.com/examples-values-important-business-19378.html

Identify and Live Your Personal Values
http://humanresources.about.com/od/success/qt/values_s7.htm

Steps to Setting Smart Business Goals
http://sbinformation.about.com/od/businessmanagemen1/a/businessgoals.htm

Agricultural Career Profiles
http://www.mycaert.com/career-profiles