

Setting SMAART metrication goals

Pat Naughtin 2008

Do you set metrication goals?

Do you set metrication goals for yourself?

Do you set metrication goals for your work group?

Do you set metrication goals for your company?

Do you set metrication goals for your industry?

Do you set metrication goals for your nation?

The person who makes a success of living is the one who sees their goal steadily and aims for it unswervingly.

Cecil B. De Mille

Do you sit down and give careful thought to what you want to achieve in metrication over the coming weeks, months and years? Do you review your past year and plan for your next? When you do this, do you write down your goals!

Typically, only about 3% of adults ever write goals.

Those that have set goals rave about the positive impact that the simple action of setting goals — and writing them down — has on their lives. People

An aim in life is the only fortune worth finding.

Robert Louis Stevenson

with clear and detailed goals for the various areas of their life — written down — are generally examples of high achievers, all of whom, if asked, tell us that their successes are in large part due to having clear, well-thought-out, and specific goals. Most people — the other 97 % — don't know how to go about setting goals.

One way is to set what I call **SMAART** goals.

SMAART is an acronym that stands for: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ctionable, **A**tributable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imed. SMAART goals give you a starting point for your goal setting.

You can't rest unless you set goals that make you stretch.

Tom Hopkins

I will use metrication activities as examples of SMAART goal setting. SMAART metrication goal setting makes sure that you have a positive direction in your metric activities. Setting SMAART goals is so easy that you'd be crazy not to set aside the small amount of time needed to sort out your plan of metrication action. You need SMAART Goals if you really want metrication success.

The SMAART goal formula goes like this:

Specific
Measurable
Actionable
Atributable
Realistic and
Timed

Our plans miscarry because they have no aim. When a man does not know what harbour he is making for, no wind is the right wind.

Lucius Seneca

SMAART goals are:

Specific

Your goals must be as specific as you can make them. Examples are:

- ◇ I will write letters to government departments supporting metrication.
- ◇ I will contact companies to congratulate them on their correct use of SI units.
- ◇ I will write letters to the editors of national and local media supporting use of the metric system.

Avoid goals with vague wording such as:

- ◇ My metrication activities will be more successful.

This is too vague because it doesn't define what 'successful' means.

Measurable

As well as being specific your goals should be measurable. Using the examples give above they will now read:

- ◇ I will write 10 letters to government departments supporting metrication.
- ◇ I will contact 5 companies to congratulate them on their correct use of SI units.
- ◇ I will write 5 letters to the editor of national and local media supporting use of the metric system.

Actionable and Attributable

There's no point in setting goals where you have no direct control over the outcome. Your SMAART goals must be **Actionable** — you must be able to act on them — or **Attributable** — someone must have responsibility for them. Often it is the same person who is able to achieve the goal making it **Actionable** and has the responsibility for the goal so that it is **Attributable** to them.

When you set your own goals so that you have responsibility for any actions, your goals are Actionable, and when you take responsibility for any outcomes then your goals are Attributable to you. Taking our metrication goals as examples:

- ◇ I will write 10 letters to government departments supporting metrication.
- ◇ I will contact 5 companies to congratulate them on their correct use of SI units.
- ◇ I will write 5 letters to the editor of national and local media supporting use of the metric system.
 - In each of these examples, you do the action that is attributable to you.

On the other hand, it is silly to set a goal such as:

My goal is to win the lottery.

This is not a goal that you can directly influence because although you could buy many lottery tickets, you cannot influence the numbers that will be drawn out and so it is not Actionable or Attributable.

Another silly goal might be:

My goal is that my favorite team will win the league finals

This is silly because you cannot influence that outcome unless you are the coach or a key player. If you are just a normal fan there is nothing you can do that will have any impact on the result and so it is not actionable or attributable.

You may have heard the story about four people named Someone, Anyone, Everyone, and No one.

When the important job of a metrication upgrade had to be done — Someone should have done it, Anyone could have done it, and Everyone thought that Someone would do it. In the end, No one did it.

Anonymous

In this example **Actionable** or **Attributable** responsibility for action was not assigned.

Realistic

When setting goals you need to be realistic. Setting a goal such as:

To be the world's best-selling actor

is not a realistic goal unless you are already travelling the world constantly playing parts on stage, on television, or in films.

In the three metrication examples given above, all of them are realistic in that you can do them and you can do them all by yourself.

Timed

A well thought out goal must include a time by which it will be accomplished. Don't be tempted to leave your goals open-ended.

For example:

To write and deliver a pro-metrication article

The secret of success is constancy of purpose.

Benjamin Disraeli

is too vague. It would be far better to have a goal that said, "To write a pro-metrication article by the end of January to be ready for the March edition of our in-house newsletter.

Examples of SMAART goals

SMAART goals meet all 6 of the above criteria when they are Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Attributable, Realistic and Timed. If any of these 6 criteria are missing then it's not a SMAART goal.

Here are some examples of SMAART metrication goals:

- ◇ I will write 10 letters to 5 different government departments supporting metrication. Starting in February, I will write and send one letter each month.
- ◇ I will contact 5 companies to congratulate them on their correct use of SI units before August 1 this year.
- ◇ I will write 5 letters to the editor of national and local media supporting use of the metric system. As this will be in response to articles and reports in the media, I will immediately find out how to access Google media news so that I can have these letters written and sent before July 1 this year.
- ◇ I will prepare and deliver a pro-metric presentation to a group of more than 20 before the end of April 1.

Suppose you are overweight

Instead of setting a goal like this:

I will lose weight.

A SMAART goal for your body mass would include all 6 of the SMAART goal principles. Using the SMAART ideas you would now write down something like this:

My goal is to lose 5 kilograms before the 1st July this year.

Your goal is now **SMAART**.

It is **Specific** (to reduce your body mass), **Measurable** (5 kilograms), **Actionable** and **Attributable** (it's up to you), **Realistic** (if you are at least 5 kilograms overweight) and **Timed** (by the 1st July this year).

Another SMAART metrication goal might be:

- ◇ To be promoted to the position of Metrication Manager for my organisation by 1st July next year.

This is a **SMAART** goal because it is:

Specific

This goal is **specific** criteria because you want to be promoted to be Metrication Manager — not just promoted, but promoted **specifically** to the Metrication Manager position. This gives you a sharp focus as to exactly what you want to achieve.

Measurable

This goal is **measurable** because you have clearly stated what success will mean — you will be successful when you are promoted to Metrication Manager. Being promoted to any other manager's position is not good enough; it must be a promotion to the Metrication Manager's position if you are to reach the goal you have set for yourself.

Actionable

This goal is **actionable** because you are in control of whether you get promoted or not. If you work hard and bring yourself to the attention of the people who hand out promotions then you can reach your goal.

Attributable

This goal is **attributable** because you have full control of the actions you take to achieve your goal. Although the decision about your appointment lies with others, if you go about things correctly then you should be able to influence their decision.

Realistic

If you are currently working as the cleaner in your organisation it may be unrealistic to set your goal to be a Metrication Manager within a year but if you are already on this career path then the goal would be a sensible one and so would pass the **realistic** test.

Timed

This goal is **timed** because you have put an exact date for achieving the goal. Putting an exact date keeps you focused on when the goal must be achieved. Having a specific deadline adds urgency to your goals and allows you to create smaller sub-goals that will help you reach toward your major goals.

The SMAART goals approach to goal setting means that you can easily remember and apply the SMAART principles to all of your goal setting including your metrication goal setting.

My SMAART goals for 2008

Start and complete writing these metrication articles by the end of October 2007.

- ◇ Metrication action plan,
- ◇ Metrication leader's manual, and
- ◇ Increase the readership of <http://www.metricationmatters.com> to over 100 000.

Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow where they lead.

Louisa May Alcott

Are SMAART goals enough?

In addition to your SMAART goals you might like to also consider setting yourself a Big Hairy Audacious Goal for yourself or for your organisation.

The idea for a Big Hairy Audacious Goal was developed by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras in their book *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*.

A Big Hairy Audacious Goal has been abbreviated to BHAG (pronounced Bee-Hag) and according to Collins and Porras it is something that was at the heart of almost all companies that lasted over the long term.

As long as you're going to be thinking anyway, think BIG.

Donald Trump

In contrast, Collins and Porras found that most companies that don't have a BHAG tend to flounder along the way and that they don't last over the long run. As Leo Burnett, an advertising executive, put it: *If you reach for the stars, you might not quite get one, but you won't end up with a handful of mud, either.*

Your Big Hairy Audacious Goal can be absolutely crazy and almost totally unattainable.

At <http://www.metricationmatters.com> our Big Hairy Audacious Goal is to have the international metric system used as the only measuring method in the world. In short, like the Marquis de Condorcet (1743/1794), we believe that the metric system is:

'For all people – for all time'

Your Big Hairy Audacious Goal is like reaching for the stars. You might never reach your BHAG, but by always trying for it you will create momentum that will help you to get a lot further than you could possibly have done without having your BHAG.

Follow the example of leading corporations and set yourself a BHAG to make sure that you are aiming at the stars.

Creating a BHAG

Imagine it is the future. You have retired, you look back and ask:

'What is the major mark that I've made on the world?'

Obstacles cannot crush me. Every obstacle yields to stern resolve. He who is fixed to a star does not change his mind.

Leonardo Da Vinci

Would you be proud of your accomplishments or would you feel a bit dissatisfied and somehow disappointed with yourself?

What do you intend to create this year? Think big. Take your first thought and make it 100 or even 1000 times bigger.

What oceans are you going to cross, what buildings will you erect, and, more importantly, whose lives will you change?

With **SMAART** goals to keep you focused on your short to medium term objectives and your Big Hairy Audacious Goal to give your ultimate direction, you can achieve enough for a full and active life.

And finally, don't forget to:

Give yourself the freedom to explore the possibility of life without limits. Goals are dreams with deadlines. Glynis Nunn, Australian Olympic athlete

Goal setting summary

- 1 Goal setting isn't a luxury — it is a necessity for your success.
- 2 You are sure to move forward much faster than you ever could without setting goals.
- 3 Goal setting is something that successful people and organisations do all the time.
- 4 Make sure you have a well-balanced set of goals.
- 5 Make sure that your goals cover all aspects of both your business and private life.
- 6 Give priority to what is important in your life at this moment — but don't neglect any other areas of your life.
- 7 Use the SMAART formula for setting and regularly reviewing your goals.
- 8 Written goals make sure that you keep your goals in mind each day.
- 9 If you plan on setting some resolutions for the New Year make sure that they are SMAART resolutions.
- 10 Make it a goal to review and reconsider all of your goals at least annually.

More SMAART thoughts

It's a funny thing about life: if you refuse to accept anything but the very best, you will often get it.

W. Somerset Maugham

High expectations are the key to everything.

Sam Walton

We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.

Oscar Wilde

Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.

Henry Ford