



# 8 Strategies for Achieving SMART Goals

By Merlyn Sanchez

1. Setting goals is easy but achieving them isn't. That's why setting "SMART" goals - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely - is the first step in making your goal a reality.

Make your goal as Specific as possible and express it in positive terms. Do you want to stop losing money or do you want to start making money? How much money do you want to make?

How do you Measure success? You'll need a way to evaluate your progress and determine if you're moving towards your goal. For example, if you want to improve your finances, then you should have a way of keeping track of income and expenses.

Is your goal Achievable? Consider whether you have the resources necessary to achieve your goal. If not, you need to determine if you can assemble everything required to streamline your process. Remove any obstacles before you get started!

Realistic goals are achievable goals, unrealistic goals are just dreams. It's not necessary to be negative but take time to honestly evaluate whether you're being realistic. Losing 30 pounds in 2 weeks is not impossible but it's not very likely and certainly not healthy.

Make your goal Timely by stating a due date for your goal AND the action steps involved in achieving it.

2. Align your goals with your values. If your goal doesn't reflect your beliefs and character then you'll have difficulty achieving it. And even if you do manage to get what you want, you won't be very happy. Set a goal which is meaningful to you and be clear about the consequences of your outcome.

3. Share your goals with three to five key people. Not everyone needs this strategy with every goal but almost everyone can benefit from it at some point. Finding supportive, positive people is key because you certainly don't need anyone sabotaging your progress.

4. Assemble everything you need before you need it. This prep work is vital in eliminating the frustrating and time consuming "running around" which can derail your progress later on.

5. Minimise potential challenges. There are 3 key ways to prevent overconfidence and poor planning from creating obstacles down the line:

- Create a complete, measurable, action plan which includes all the steps necessary to achieve your goal. Don't forget due dates for each step.
- Incorporate all your actions into your schedule. Add them to your calendar with anywhere from 10-20% flextime to help you control any unexpected delays.




- Regularly evaluate your progress. You may need to make changes or adjustments as your project takes shape. Anticipate them so you won't get blind-sided.

6. Complete at least one action per day. Consistent actions will propel you towards your goal. Even choosing a small task will make a dent in your to-do list and may motivate you to do even more.

7. Establish a support system. Who or what can provide you with encouragement, advice, healthy feedback or a willing ear?

8. Reward Yourself. Don't wait until you achieve your goal, especially if it's a long-term one. Reward yourself as you reach certain milestones. Something as simple as scheduling time for yourself or perhaps a special treat that you've felt guilty about indulging in can keep you motivated to keep going.

*Merlyn Sanchez, Business Coach and Marketing Consultant teaches small business owners, consultants, and other solopreneurs how to attract more clients, make more sales and have more time to enjoy their lives. For a free report outlining the "8 SMART Strategies that Successful Business Owners Use to Attract More Clients", visit: <http://www.smartbusinessowners.com> *

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