Goal Setting Defined:

The process of establishing objectives to be achieved over a period of time.

SOURCE: American National Standards Institute & Society for Human Resource Management

Setting goals improves results and is a critical step in the performance management process. When we have clear goals and direction, we know what we must do, when, and to what level of quality. Goals provide clarity. They create a connection to the company, and provide purpose and meaning in our work.

Research conducted by the Corporate Leadership Council showed that more than half of the most important drivers of employee engagement and performance are the same as those that define effective performance management: setting clear expectations, helping employees accomplish work, providing regular feedback and finding new opportunities for employees to succeed and develop.

Goal Setting Guidelines:

SMART Goals
No matter what formula you use, all goals should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound.

Clear Purpose
Goals should be written clearly so everyone knows exactly what will be achieved, when they will be completed, and to what standards.

Alignment
All work goals should be aligned to the company goals and strategy—it's essential for everyone's success.

Performance goals can take on many forms. Some goals focus on what needs to be done, others focus on how things need to be done, yet others focus on objective, measurable results. Commonly used types of goals include the following:

Job description goals are based on the achievement of predetermined duties. These goals are expected to be met continuously unless the job description is modified.

Task or project goals are based on achievement of a specific objective. These goals may be changed as tasks or projects are completed. These goals work best for jobs that are constantly changing over time but have defined, shorter-term tasks or milestones. A goal such as "complete a report on XYZ by the end of the year" is a task or project goal.

"Expecting employees to do well without specific, clearly communicated goals is like expecting them to play golf at night; no one can do it because the player can't see the holes. If an employee doesn't know the performance goals toward which he or she should be working, it is predictable that the employee's performance will miss the desired target. "

SOURCE: Ken Blanchard, The One Minute Manager

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Behavioral goals focus on how an employee should do the job. This type of goal can be developed for most jobs but may be particularly relevant for knowledge workers. Goals such as "treat others with professionalism and respect" and "communicate clearly" are behavioral goals.

Stretch goals are challenging, yet achievable, goals that are typically used to increase the capabilities of high-potential employees.

SOURCE: SHRM Foundation. (2012). Building a High-Performance Culture

Overall Goal	What's Required	Desired Due Date	Additional Resources/Support Need

Key Strategies to Keep Yourself Focused and Moving Forward

From the BizLibrary Course, Bud to Boss: Three Levels of Goal Setting

Share Your Goals

While we may be reluctant at times to talk about our goals (in case we don't achieve them), research shows that when people share their goals with others, they may be more likely to achieve them. Why? Sharing a goal with others raises your commitment and creates accountability with the other person. We become accountable to others because we want to be able to talk about our progress and achievements when others follow up, so we are more likely to take action towards our goals. While sharing our goals can be very helpful, make sure to share them with people who believe in you and will be supportive.

Post Your Goals

Visual reminders help us succeed. Post your goals or inspiring pictures where you can see them. Put reminders in your calendar. Constant visual reminders of our desired goals keep us moving forward. Remember the saying out of sight, out of mind. This certainly holds true for our goals.

Create a Plan

Remember, a goal is just a goal—a plan will help you get there. If you are serious about achieving a goal, a plan is needed! Identify the steps you need to take to achieve the desired state. If it seems overwhelming, then identify the first few things that need to happen, and create a plan around those first few steps. You don't need an elaborate and complicated project plan, but do need to know what you're going to do first, and then second. You can adapt and adjust as you go—but without a plan to get you going, your chances for success are drastically reduced.

SUPPORTING BEHAVIOR STATEMENTS

To identify competency skill gaps consider outlining key supporting behaviors that are important in your organization.

You can assign a basic Likert scale to each behavior statement (examples outlined below) and have the employee and the employee's manager rate proficiency.

ACHIEVING RESULTS:

Sets clear, well-defined desired outcomes for work activity and tracks progress.

Sets challenging goals and demonstrates a strong sense of urgency and persistence about accomplishing them.

Establishes plans that break complex projects into their component parts, each with its own timeline.

Pays attention to the quality and quantity of performance.

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Recommended Resources from The BizLibrary Collection

Setting Goals to Stretch and Grow

What to Say When: Setting Objectives

Performance Management: Setting SMART Goals

Cutting Edge Communication: Using Goals to GROW

To watch these course and more within The BizLibrary Collection, request a demo today!

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SUPPORTING BEHAVIOR STATEMENTS

EMPOWERING OTHERS:

Allows others to make mistakes and take risks to learn and grow.

Gives others the freedom to have control of their tasks and duties.

Provides guidance and support for others as they take on new challenges.

MANAGING PERFORMANCE:

Adjusts work activity and desired outcomes based on changes in business strategy.

Establishes means of measuring performance and objectives.

RESULTS ORIENTED:

Seeks and gives performance feedback to others.

Pays attention to quality and quantity of performance.