

Ten Steps to SMART objectives

- 1 Sort out the difference between objectives and aims, goals and/or targets before you start. Aims and goals etc relate to your aspirations objectives are your battle-plan. Set as many objectives as you need for success.
- 2 SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely.
- 3 Don't try to use that order M-A/R-S-T is often the best way to write objectives.
- 4 Measurable is the most important consideration. You will know that you've achieved your objective, because here is the evidence. I will know too! Make sure you state how you will record your success.
- 5 Achievable is linked to measurable. Usually, there's no point in starting a job you know you can't finish, or one where you can't tell if/when you've finished it.
How can I decide if it's achievable?
 - you know it's measurable
 - others have done it successfully (before you, or somewhere else)
 - it's theoretically possible (ie clearly not 'not achievable')
 - you have the necessary resources, or at least a realistic chance of getting them
 - you've assessed the limitations.
- 6 If it's achievable, it may not be realistic. If it isn't realistic, it's not achievable.
You need to know:
 - who's going to do it?
 - do they have (or can they get) the skills to do a good job?
 - where's the money coming from?
 - who carries the can?Realistic is about human resources/time/money/opportunity.
- 7 The main reason it's achievable but not realistic is that it's not a high priority. Often something else needs to be done first, before you'll succeed.
If so, set up two (or more) objectives in priority order.
- 8 The devil is in the specific detail. You will know your objective is specific enough if:
 - everyone who's involved knows that it includes them specifically
 - everyone involved can understand it
 - your objective is free from jargon
 - you've defined all your terms
 - you've used only appropriate language.
- 9 Timely means setting deadlines. You must include one, otherwise your objective isn't measurable. But your deadlines must be realistic, or the task isn't achievable. T must be M, and R, and S without these your objective can't be top-priority.
- 10 It is worth this effort! You'll know you've done your job well, and so will others.