



SMART goals for your business

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It's year's end and that's when many of us take stock of all that we've accomplished over the past 12 months. If you've managed to accumulate checkmarks on your "To Do" list, it's probably because your goals were SMART, that acronym stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely.



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"A goal is the agenda that you set for yourself," clarifies Nashawn Turner, the president and founder of Uniquely Designed Coaching LLC of Dumfries, Va. But having a goal in mind just isn't enough, insists the certified life/empowerment coach. "If you don't have specifics, all you're doing is wishing," she says firmly. "When your goals are SMART, you add legs to what you desire."

To determine if the goals that you're setting for your business are SMART, implement these steps:

Be specific: You should be able to concretely communicate your objectives to others so they can easily understand them. For the most part, this means describing things in terms of numbers, fractions, rankings, ratios, percentages or frequencies. "Saying that you want to be wealthy is not a specific goal unless you state how much money you want to have," illustrates Turner. "Instead say I want my company or business to grow by 20 percent."

Ensure your goals are measurable: You need to have a tracking mechanism in place to assess your progress. One means of doing this is to outline the steps you feel it will take for you to complete your goal. As you complete each milestone, you should be closer to your objective.

"For me, I want to have an income of at least 50,000 to 75,000 by the end of next year from my speaking, writing, and event participation," specifies Turner. "If I conduct at least 2 workshops a month during the year, I should achieve that goal."

Choose goals that are attainable: Your objective shouldn't be a pipe dream but something that you can actually do. Look at the capabilities of you and your team as well as your available resources to determine if you have what you need to actually reach your objective. You want to give yourself and your employees a fair chance. At that same time, you still want to set objectives that are challenging. For example, it may

not be realistic for you to become the top company in your industry by next December if you don't have the right resources. But this goal may become attainable if you increase the timeframe or slightly alter the target.

Seek goals that are relevant: "A goal is relevant when it references your values," points out Turner. When you choose your goal, make sure that you're focusing on something that is truly important to you. Otherwise, you won't stay committed to that objective.

Set a timeframe: If you want to reach a certain goal, you should attach a due date to it. If you don't give yourself a deadline, you'll always feel like you're chasing a moving target. Plus, having a drop-dead date, makes that goal a priority and any activity that boosts business should be at the top of your To Do list.

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