

## Goal Setting 101: Manage a Successful 2012

Goal setting is a task typically performed around performance review time. The dreaded performance reviews are viewed as difficult enough, and at times future goal setting can be rushed or over-looked. Perhaps your company sets lofty goals in January, only to forget by March. Whatever the case, realizing the importance of goals and knowing how to set and manage them will make you a better manager.

### **Importance of goals.**

If all you do as a manager is react to problems within your department, you will fail. As a critical part of a larger picture, you should recognize the whole organization's mission and the role your department can play in the success of the organization's goals. Lead a proactive team to meet and exceed whatever portion of those goals your team can support. Once you determine your part in the bigger picture, you can create goals for your team that will align with the organization's goals. This will aid in you and your team managing their work time for the best return on investment.

To determine organizational goals, ask *what is the mission of my company*, and *what is the strategy for accomplishing that mission?* As you create your goals, repeatedly ask yourself *are the goals I'm setting consistent with this strategy and mission? Will the goals of my team and its members contribute to this mission's success?*

### **Set the right goals.**

Once you've painted a picture of your team's role within the organization's mission, you can begin to determine what your team and individual goals will look like. Determine what you'd like to accomplish as a team and begin to break down goals for each individual in relation to their role.

In order to achieve successful team goals, involve your team in the creation process. The more you involve your employees in setting goals for themselves and the group, the more invested they are likely to be.

Remember, goals need to be SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely.

**Specific:** Goals must be clear and unambiguous. When goals are specific, they tell employees exactly what is expected, when, and how much. Because the goals are specific, you can easily measure employees' progress toward their completion.

**Measurable:** What good is a goal that you can't measure? If your goals are not measurable, you never know whether employees are progressing toward successful completion. Not only that, but it's tough for employees to stay motivated to complete their goals when they have no milestones to benchmark progress.

**Attainable:** Goals must be realistic and attainable. The best goals require employees to stretch a bit to achieve them, but they aren't extreme. That is, the goals are neither out of reach nor below standard performance. Goals that are set too high or too low become meaningless, and employees naturally come to disregard them.

**Relevant:** Goals must be an important tool in the grand scheme of reaching your company's vision and mission. You may have heard that 80 percent of worker productivity comes from only 20 percent of their activities. You can guess where the other 80 percent of work activity ends up! Relevant goals address the 20 percent of worker activities that has such a great impact on performance and brings your organization closer to its vision.

**Timely:** Goals must have starting points, ending points, and fixed durations. Commitment to deadlines helps employees to focus their efforts on completing the goal on or before the due date. Goals without deadlines or schedules tend to be overtaken by day-to-day crises that inevitably arise.

### **Communicate and champion the goals.**

You now understand goals are important, they need to align with the goals of the whole organization and they need to be SMART goals. Make sure they are documented and available to the whole team to reference as needed. Confirm everyone understands the goals and the bigger picture to which they are contributing. Make your team feel like an important part of the organization. Determine how often the team will report progress and, as a manager, ensure it happens. Celebrate those who meet their goals in a timely manner.

### **Consider software aids.**

Tandem HR, Benefits Solutions Group and Alliance Workplace Solutions use Success Factors software for ease of performance reviews, goal setting and management. With a central location for the company's goals and mission and each department's contribution to the larger picture, it is easy for an employee to see the impact of individual goals.

Programs like Success Factors also provide managers and employees a central location to keep notes on individual goals, track progress and directly reference them in performance reviews.

“The software has saved me valuable time from finding my emails or notes on a specific employee to assisting with the review process.” Says Debra Cleaveland, Director of Finance of all Tandem companies, who manages approximately ten employees. “I estimate I save about 60% of the time I used to spend doing these tasks manually.”

If you'd like more information on goal setting, management or Success Factors, email us at [Simplify@TandemHR.com](mailto:Simplify@TandemHR.com) or call 630.928.0510 today.

*The staff at [Tandem HR](#), [Benefits Solutions Group](#) and [Alliance Workplace Solutions](#) contributed to this article. It is intended as information and is not a substitute for legal advice.*

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