

The Art of Making Goals

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Creating goals can be a sticky situation for many individuals and chapters. We need goals in order to continue to grow and achieve great accomplishments. There are many kinds of goals and many strategies to creating them. When you start the goal making process, you have to keep in mind it comes with a time commitment. A good time to use for goal making could be at a retreat or meeting that is scheduled to last longer than usual. Once goals are made you also need to make time to evaluate the progress of your goals. The frequency at which you evaluate will depend on the length of time you have set to reach the goal. A short term goal may only need to be evaluated one time before it is reached, whereas a long term goal will need to be monitored over a long period of time.

Additionally, with goal making, it is important to differentiate between short and long term goals. We need to have both types of goals so we have something to aim for in the near future as well as something to work toward over a long period of time. Short term goals should be achievable in the near future. The timeline should be no longer than a day, week, or possibly a few months. For example: By next Monday, I plan to update the attendance sheet and inform all members of their status on semester requirements. Long term goals are achievable over a long period of time. The time line should be a semester to a year or longer. When setting long term goals, you want to aim for longevity. For example: During the fall semester, I plan to recruit and initiate at least 15 new members to our chapter.

A good guideline to use when making goals is to use the acronym “SMART”. Smart stands for: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely. Let’s look at this using an example of a goal:

For the 2013-2014 academic school year, I want to fund-raise at least \$2000 for my chapter. I will do this by organizing a Yankee Candle fundraising sale, numerous bake sales throughout the year, a week for all school members to wear jeans in patient care lab for a fee and a coffee sale event.

Is this goal “SMART”?

S – Specific. Do you know exactly what you want to accomplish? Are there details provided on how you will accomplish this goal?

Yes. You want to raise at least \$2000 and there are many events listed to achieve this.

M – Measurable. Can you quantify and track the progress of the goal?

Yes. You can keep track of how much money you have raised and how much is remaining to reach \$2000.

A – Attainable. Is the goal a challenge but not too far of a stretch?

This would depend on the size of your chapter and the amount of fundraising you do. The amount can be adjusted for what is normal in your chapter. Consider using your chapter history when creating goals. See what happened in the last year and increase that by 15-25%. Do not try to be overzealous and double your fundraising total from last year.

R – Realistic. Is this goal realistic and in your reach? Are you committed to your goal is ensure it will be achieved?

Again this depends on your chapter size. You want to make sure you set a goal that is not out of your reach. If you are a small chapter that is just starting up, your goal for fundraising may be much smaller than a larger chapter that is well established.

T – Timely. Did you give yourself enough time to reach your goal? Did you set a deadline within the goal? Yes. We gave a year to raise the sum of money and we set the deadline as the end of the 2014 academic school year.

Regardless of the kind of goal you are setting, you should always follow the “SMART” pathway. This pathway allows for you the think about your goal before you set it. The process of making goals and following through on them is a lifelong skill for a professional. Either within an organization or for personal reasons, we should always be aiming to better ourselves and to keep growing in the future. Use this as a guide when you set goals. After you write it out, first say it out loud. Does the goal sound right? Then take it and make sure you can answer each question in relation to the acronym “SMART”. If you cannot, revise the goal and make it “SMART”.