

# BACK-HOME APPLICATION

## Writing SMART Business Goals and Ensuring Alignment

**Purpose:** To provide you with a thought process to help you align your business goals with the business needs of your team and organization.

### The Six Steps to Aligned Goals

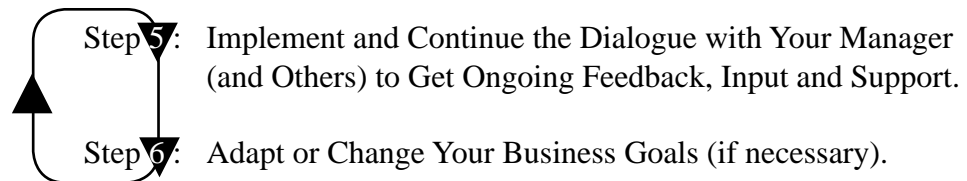
Listed below is the basic process you should follow when setting your business goals:

Step 1: Identify Preliminary Goals that are Aligned.

Step 2: Write SMART Goals (draft version).

Step 3: Meet with Your Manager (and Others) To Get Input and Support.

Step 4: Refine and Submit Your Goals for Approval.



The last two steps in the process are iterative. You will continue to discuss, refine, and possibly adapt your goals even as you implement them.

“One of the most dangerous forms of human error is forgetting what one is trying to achieve.”

Paul Nitze

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### Using Conversations to Partner with Your Manager

“Well begun is half done.”

Aristotle

The key to achieving exceptional results lies in adopting a collaborative approach to setting and achieving business goals—an approach where creating and achieving your goals is a collaborative, ongoing, dynamic process rather than an independent, lifeless, one-time effort or event. In addition to providing support and encouragement along the way, partnering with your manager can help you identify and overcome barriers that might derail your efforts.

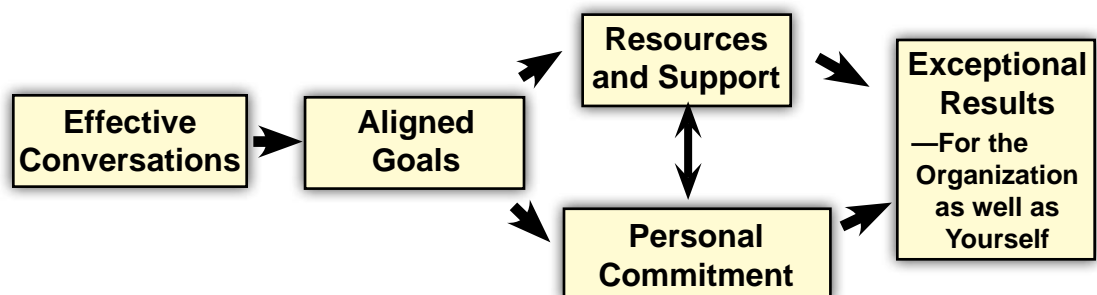
Partnering with your manager requires that you take the initiative to seek out organizational direction, create alignment and secure support.

Taking personal responsibility requires you to recognize that the boss-direct report relationship is one of interdependence rather than dependence. While the direct report can seldom succeed without the support of the manager, it is also true that the manager can rarely succeed without the cooperation of his or her direct reports. And since both manager and direct report are imperfect human beings, both need to make adjustments in order to help the other.

Some people also mistakenly assume that since the manager has greater authority, only the manager can realistically determine the quality of the relationship. In reality, informal influence is almost always stronger than formal power when it comes to shaping effective relationships. And since everyone possesses informal influence, everyone has the power to shape the relationships to which they belong.

Conversations are the primary vehicle whereby we partner with our managers to:

- Create and maintain alignment in a changing environment.
- Secure the support and resources we need to achieve exceptional results.



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### Writing SMART Business Goals and Ensuring Alignment

#### **Establishing the strategic context for your goals:**

In this exercise you will begin to align your goals with your organization's strategies and goals. Ensure that you understand these strategies and goals before answering the questions below.

1. How does your work support the mission, strategies, values and key goals of the organization? (If you are not sure what these are, you need to initiate the appropriate conversations.)

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2. What are the relevant goals/priorities of your business unit, department and/or team? (If these higher-level goals have not yet been communicated to you, it is in your best interest to seek clarity and guidance from your formal leaders.)

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3. Given your job responsibilities, as well as your strengths, interests and career goals, which of the above goals can you best impact?

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“Out of sight, out of mind.”

Old proverb

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## Step 1: Identify Preliminary Goals

**The 6 Steps to Alignment:** Achieving alignment entails six steps. Be sure to complete Steps 1 and 2 before engaging your manager in a formal business goals conversation.

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**Step 6 :** Adapt or Change Your Business Goals (if necessary).

### Individual Application: Identifying Goals

*Instructions:* Using the guidelines below, identify 3 to 5 possible goals for the coming year. Remember that goals should be aligned with:

- The company's values and goals
- Your business unit, department or team goals
- Your personal job responsibilities
- Your personal talents, interests and career goals

Rather than restating your group/team goals, your goals should focus on what you personally plan to accomplish over the next year. Do not worry too much about the wording at this point. Focus on capturing the general nature and direction of the goal.

Goal 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Goal 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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Goal 3: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Goal 4: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Goal 5: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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## Step 2: Write SMART Goals

**The 6 Steps to Alignment:** Achieving alignment entails six steps. Be sure to complete Steps 1 and 2 before engaging your manager in a formal business goals conversation.

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Although there is no one best way for everyone to write goals, experience shows that goals which are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ggressive, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-bound are more likely to lead to exceptional results. The exercises and application work in Step 1 focused on identifying preliminary goals. This step will help you write **SMARTer** goals.

### Time: The #1 Concern of Managers

Most managers are stretched thin. Although some employees try to help their managers with this time crunch, others don't. Here is what two managers had to say:

*“Some employees come in with everything spelled out, which is good, because it gives us a solid base to build on, and we get done in 45 minutes or less. It’s disappointing when they come in with nothing; one-third of my employees do that. An initial goal-setting meeting may take three to four sessions, all because they didn’t bother to prepare.”*

*“I see all different levels of preparation for our goal-setting meetings. A few come in with completed forms and well-articulated goals. Some come in with partly completed forms, and still others come in empty-handed. The quality of preparation definitely sends a message.”*

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### Being Specific

Avoid general statements of intent. Goals should be specific enough that someone else would be able to tell exactly what it is you plan to accomplish, and how that accomplishment ties to important business outcomes.

Outcomes are what drive business success and consequently, goals should be outcome-oriented rather than process-oriented. “Attending training on quality” would be process-oriented while “reducing defects” would be outcome oriented.

### Making it Measurable

Goals should be measurable. This usually means they must be quantifiable. Some goals may legitimately be of a qualitative nature where quantifiable measurement is too difficult or costly. Even in these cases the results should be verifiable by a third party.

In addition, because “what gets measured gets done,” we need to be careful to choose metrics that matter. Since outcomes usually matter more than processes, we should, whenever possible, measure outcomes. For example, if you were involved in recruiting, it would be more important to measure the quantity, quality and percentage of offers accepted, than it would be to measure the number of university campuses visited.

Poor Examples	Better Examples
1. Encourage Knowledge Sharing and attend a workshop on developing protégés in February.	1. By year-end, reduce the time it takes to get newly hired programmers fully functional from 15 months to 9 months. Mentors assigned to all new hires by February 28. Training of mentors by end of March. New-hire learning goals set by April.
2. Decrease the error rate by the 4th quarter.	2. Decrease the error rate by 15% by October 31 (5 % by May 31, 10% by July 31).
3. Improve cash flow analysis for new projects.	3. Improve the planning and cash flow analysis for new projects by July 1st by putting together dynamic plans with cash flow projections in 3 days or less (currently takes 4-5 days and has no cash flow). My supervisor will verify that the plans have the pre-determined functionality. Criteria agreed upon by March 1.

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### Step 2: Write SMART Goals

#### Looking Ahead to the Year-End Review

It is critical that your goals are specific and measurable. At the end of the year your manager and you will determine the extent to which you have achieved your goals. If your goals are not measurable, this evaluation becomes difficult and subjective. At the beginning of the year, you and your manager will need to come to a clear understanding of how your goals will be measured. You owe it to yourself to be specific about the metrics.

#### Being Aggressive

By definition, goals require us to reach for something beyond our current grasp. They require us to “stretch.” But why is this stretch necessary? Stretch goals are not meant to get us to work harder, but to force us to work smarter. We can only achieve aggressive goals when we look beyond our current processes, and discover new, more effective processes. Aggressive goals, even when we don’t fully achieve them, often lead to breakthroughs that take us well beyond the incremental improvements we would have achieved had we set “achievable” goals. The reality of a competitive marketplace is that if we don’t collectively set stretch goals, we won’t succeed. You and your manager have a shared responsibility to ensure that goals are challenging enough to help the company remain competitive.

Aggressive can also be evaluated in terms of the individual’s existing skills set. If achieving the business goal will require you to learn a significant new skill-set, then the goal could be considered aggressive. Aggressive goals also lay the foundation for long-term career success by driving greater individual learning and impact.

#### Being Realistic

Do not think of “realistic” as the opposite of aggressive. To be realistic your goals have to be:

- a. Consistent with your responsibilities and at least partly within your control.
- b. Consistent with your talents and interests (i.e., you need to have both the innate ability and the self-motivation).
- c. Supported by your manager and others who have to give you the resources and latitude you need to implement your plans (i.e., others need to have an interest in supporting you).

In the absence of control, personal commitment and support, achieving great things is unlikely, and mediocrity almost certain.

#### Making it Time Bound

Goals should state the deadline for the deliverables as well as for milestones. Milestones verify that you are on course and help to ensure that you will achieve the goal within the designated time frame. When you are still a long way from achieving your goals and you cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel, milestones give you a sense of your progress and give you the encouragement you need to see the task through to its conclusion. For managers, milestones represent opportunities to celebrate rather than monitor.

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## Step 2: Write SMART Goals

Here are some of the SMARTer goals from previous participants:

- By end Q3 I will have Efficiency Reporting into one database. This database/area will hold reservoir engineers availability data, actuals data, LRP data from finance and must have the functionality that it can run the efficiency reports. This will also provide us with a single point of reference for all these numbers. The proposal must apply for SNS, Britannia and J-Block and they must be developed with the appropriate persons in these groups.
- Deliver J-Block Compliance Project on time and within agreed budgets. Prepare for and implement new, secure and supportable environment by end of Q4 and within Â£500K budget.
- Conduct preliminary mapping on Colony and identify other potential growth opportunities. Identify potential plays by Q3 this year, and be prepared to pursue in Q1 next year.
- Map the Ostracod Fm in TWP 37-40 RNG 03W5M and create a set of structure and net pay maps within Petrosys along with correlation cross-sections in AccuMap. Work on this study will be documented in PowerPoint format and completed by the end of Q3.
- Ensure Jade choke strategy is optimized through:
  - a. Completing monthly choke review with the choke manufacturer.
  - b. Minimizing production choke repair costs by optimizing choke change out frequencies.
  - c. Ensuring adequate choke availability for change out frequencies.
  - d. Delivering choke optimization workscopes for J04/J06—end Q3.
  - e. Zero loss of containment as a result of choke operations.

## BACK-HOME APPLICATION Step 3: Meet with Your Manager (and Others) to Get Input and Support

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### *Moving from writing goals to collaborating on goals*

In today's complex and interdependent work environment, the real benefits from goal setting do not come from the process of writing your goals. The real benefits come from the process of discussing your goals with those who can help you fine tune your thinking and achieve alignment—people who can provide you with vital support. Clearly your manager plays a key role in this process, but your collaboration should also include other people you work with. Your role is to initiate these conversations and make them work for you.

### **Others you can engage in the process**

- Peers
- Former Managers and Co-workers
- Colleagues
- Coaches and Peers
- Mentors (formal and informal)
- Team Members

*Exceptional results come when you move from writing goals to collaborating with others on your goals.*

The next two pages will help you prepare for and participate in an effective goal-setting conversation with your manager.

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### Step 4: Refine and Submit Your Goals for Approval Step 5: Implement—and Continue the Dialogue with Your Manager (and Others) to Get Ongoing Feedback, Input and Support

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#### ***Interim Results Reviews and Other Follow-Up Conversations***

After your goals have been submitted and approved, you will need to have follow-up conversations as your circumstances change. In addition to quarterly and mid-year results reviews, there are a number of other likely triggers for follow-up conversations.

*(Check any that you may have recently experienced.)*

- a new assignment or role
- new business priorities or changing customer expectations
- changing competitive forces
- new work initiatives in groups that interact with your own
- new laws, regulations or technologies
- changing economic factors such as interest rates, exchange rates, price of oil, etc.
- random, unforeseeable events that impact you
- a new manager/supervisor
- a restructuring of the organization/business unit/department/team
- the arrival of new team members
- a new product or customer