How to Make SMART Business Goals

S.M.A.R.T is an acronym used in Goal Setting. It stands for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-based.

So what's the difference between a smart goal and an un-smart goal?

Un-Smart Goal: We want to make more sprockets.

Smart Goal: The sprocket department will raise sprocket production by 20% by the end of this year.

The first goal leaves a lot of unanswered questions. No one knows who is in charge. There's no way to tell when the goal has really been achieved. For effective goals to function as yardsticks for tracking a company's performance and progress, they must state how much of what kind of performance and by when it is to be accomplished. They must be relevant, aggressive yet achievable, and be stated in measurable or quantifiable terms.

Jack Canfield in his book, The Success Principles, states that "Vague goals produce vague results." There is no place in your life for vague goals. Your subconscious mind will fulfill whatever it focuses on and if your goals are ambiguous or incomplete, then you will achieve results that are also ambiguous or incomplete. You want to make your goal as detailed as possible in order to achieve the specific results that you desire. A specific goal is one that is clearly defined in such a way that anyone could come by and understand what you intend to accomplish. Your goal should contain a detailed description of what you want to accomplish; when you want to accomplish it by; and the action(s) you will take to accomplish it.

S is for Specific: What, Why, Who, Which, Where?

Specific reminds you that a goal has to be defined in order to be achievable. Specific goals are not vague - they state exactly what needs to be accomplished. When goals are specific, they let team members know what's expected. Specific goals answer the "W" questions: what, why, who, where, which and et cetera.

M is for Measurable: Set Criteria to Measure Progress.

Measurable goals are just that - measured. Setting criteria to measure progress helps you, and your team, achieve what you want. It lets you reach your goals and experience success. Accomplishment brings an exhilarating feeling that you keep your team excited for the next goal. To set measurable goals, answer the following: How Much? How Many? What does the end look like? How will I know when I have accomplished this goal?

A is for Attainable: Within your reach in your present situation

Set goals that are difficult, yet attainable, is very important. People like to be stretched - but not so much that they feel undue stress. Many people develop new attributes and abilities as they stretch to achieve their goals. Success in achieving a goal builds self-esteem. How can this goal be accomplished? What do I need to accomplish this goal? (List items, people, programs, etc.)

R is for Relevant: Will this goal that you are setting REALLY make a difference?

Goals need to be relevant to the situation at hand. Team members, who see the relevancy to themselves and own the goals, are more likely to be successful. A goal must be something that you and your team are both willing and able to work towards. Good questions for relevancy are: Why is this important to me? To my team? To the company? Can this be accomplished?

T is for Time-based: A goal without a due date isn't a goal, its wishful thinking. Make a commitment to a deadline.

Commitment to a deadline helps your team focus their efforts, and creates a sense of urgency and importance. It helps in overcoming the interruptions that invariably happen in everyday life. Setting a deadline also encourages you and your team to unconsciously find a way to get the work done.

Examples of smart goals

Bad example of a SMART goal:

> "I want to have a lot of money".

Good example of a SMART goal:

> "I want to make one million within 10 years by starting an internet marketing business selling personal development products all over the world and by providing life coaching consultancy and conducting live seminars."

Bad example of a SMART goal:

> "I want to lose weight".

Good example of a SMART goal:

> "I want to lose 20 lbs by April 15th 2012. I will perform a half hour of cardio and half hour of strength training per day, 5 times a week and I will only eat starchy carbohydrates 3 times a week."

Bad example of a SMART goal:

> "I want to write a book".

Good example of a SMART goal:

> "I want to write a work book on "*How to add 10 years to your life"* that is at least 150 pages in length and get it completed by June 30th 2008. I will write at least 4 pages every weekday until I complete the book."