



## “SMART” Goals and Objectives

After a nice “Summer Break,” you may have a number of new employees and hopefully many other employees who are ready to start the Fall Season with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

This may be an appropriate time to establish, revise or reset goals for yourself and for your employees. We can think of these goals as “performance” objectives or perhaps “development” objectives. Establishing good performance objectives can be an effective way to direct employees to coordinate their efforts so they contribute to the achievement of team goals and to the goals of the entire organization.

Performance objectives can be thought of as specific potential achievements of an employee. These objectives should be designed to be accomplished within a specific, previously agreed upon time frame. Performance objectives are developed with a concern of the employee’s responsibilities. The specific objectives may originate with the responsibilities contained within the employee’s position description. The position description may state: “Prepare the weekly Parish Bulletin in a timely, accurate and professional manner.” Stated this way, it is just a job requirement. If we take that same job requirement and focus on the individual and apply it to the organization’s goals, we could encourage the employee to be conscious of the organization’s goals and work to help accomplish those goals through their own efforts. If one of the organization’s goals is to increase efficiencies, we could state it more as a goal. Assuming the bulletin currently takes most of two days to prepare, we might state the goal as: **“Reduce the time required to produce the bulletin by 25% by December, 2008, at same or reduced costs.”** This performance objective should motivate the employee to find ways to be more effective and more efficient in creating the bulletin.

Performance objectives that are vague or hard to measure can lead to misunderstandings and poor performance. The performance objectives should be clear, measurable and easily understood. An acronym that may in the creation of clear measurable goals is to make them “SMART” goals.



- S Significant:** Synchronized with the organizations objectives. Limited to few in number.
- M Measurable:** A specific, clearly worded expectation of results to be achieved.
- A Attainable:** These goals should be within the scope or the employee’s position responsibilities.
- R Realistic:** Within the employee’s competencies, but perhaps a “stretch.”
- T Timed:** Within a reasonable time period, perhaps the employee’s review period.

(Please turn over)

It should be noted as well that well-written, clearly worded and measurable goals contain the following four elements:

**Action Verb:** Reduce  
**Result:** Time required to produce bulletin by 25%  
**By When:** By December  
**Standard:** At the same or less cost

If your organization has specific “organizational goals” such as reduce costs, improve “customer service,” or increase participation in various ministries, this is an opportunity to build elements of those organizational goals into the individual goals of each employee. Using the guidelines above, it is also advisable to ask the employee to participate creating goals that they feel would make the most impact on the organization through their efforts. This is not an exercise in giving up authority, rather, this is an opportunity to solicit from the employee what they feel is or should be important in their daily efforts. Often when a manager simply assigns objectives without discussion that is when employees may feel least likely to comply. Also, by discussing the objectives/SMART goals with the employee, the employee has the opportunity to ask questions, get clarification, provide feedback on how realistic the goal is and perhaps even enhance the goal.



Another observation about SMART Goals or Performance Objectives, when tied to the organizations’ goals, is that these are designed to move the organization forward, not just the individual employee.

You may also find helpful information on our Web page at: <http://www.sfarchdiocese.org/about-us/departments-and-offices/human-resources/hr-newsletters/> including the following related HR Connect issues:

- Issue #54      Motivating Employee Performance, June 2007
- Issue #51      Effective Time Management Techniques, March 2007
- Issue #42      "Document" Is a Verb, May 2006
- Issue #30      Characteristics of Healthy Working Relationships, April 2005
- Issue #17      Performance Management, January 2004

**Performance Appraisal:** A process by which an individual’s performance is judged and evaluated.

**Performance Management:** A process that integrates appraisal of employees’ performance with two way feedback, education, development and goal setting.

Should you have questions or need help on any of these points, please contact the Office of Human Resources at 415-614-5538 and we will be happy to assist you.