



# **GOAL SETTING**

## **Preparing for Your Job Search**

- **Assess Your Values, Skills and Preferences**
- **S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting**
- **Action Plan**
- **Reward Yourself**

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## GOAL SETTING – Preparing for Your Job Search

Goal setting is a crucial factor in any effective work search, but before a person can reach goals they must set goals. By setting goals at the beginning of the process, you decide what you want to achieve and then move step-by-step towards achieving these goals. Whether it is setting guidelines for yourself around how many potential employers you are going to contact in a given week, arranging to do career assessment testing or how soon you are going to develop or revise a resume, you will need to set goals to help keep you on track. They give you long-term vision and short-term motivation, and help you to organize your time and resources so that you can make the most of your work search.

The following information will help you get started in your goal setting.

### Assess Your Values, Skills, and Preferences

A first step in setting goals is to discover what is important to you and what you want from life! You can do this by exploring your values, skills and preferences. When you look at your values, you get a better sense of who you are and what is going to drive your performance in the work force. You want to feel comfortable, both in your home and work environment. To make this happen, you need a job that will accommodate your likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses – everything that makes you who you are. The following questions allow you to do some brainstorming to set your goals and make informed decisions.

#### Consider Values:<sup>1</sup>

- What kinds of work do you like to do (eg. types of tasks, responsibilities, assignments, projects)?
- What is important to you when you are being considered for a position (eg. challenge, variety, structure, money, job security, flexibility, personal development)?
- What type of working environment interests you (eg. industry, work place culture, physical environment)?
- What is important to you in relation to working with people (eg. helping and supporting others, working alone, honesty, teamwork, open communication)?

<sup>1</sup> The Steps for Self Assessment, website: [www.careers.unsw.edu.au](http://www.careers.unsw.edu.au), accessed October 2008

## Consider Skills:<sup>2</sup>

There are three main skills you need to consider in the world of work:

- **Technical skills** are the specialized skills and knowledge required to perform specific duties (eg. driving a forklift, arranging flowers, word processing, window cleaning, gardening, bookkeeping, and nursing). Each one of these broader skills is made up of many specific skills a person must be able to do in order to complete those technical tasks.
- **Transferable skills** are the basic skills required to perform a variety of tasks. They can be "transferred" from one area of work to another (ie. skills in money handling, customer service, problem solving, communication and organization).
- **Personal skills** are your individual attributes, such as attitudes, personality, work habits, and style of operation (ie. the ability to work under pressure, to work unsupervised, and to be trustworthy, honest and reliable).

Using the chart below, you can brainstorm all the skills that you have acquired throughout your lifetime from a range of sources, which could include your hobbies, sporting activities, school and other training, volunteer duties and interests.

My Technical Skills	My Transferable Skills	My Personal Skills

<sup>2</sup> Job Search Guide "Recognize your skills and abilities," website: [www.det.wa.edu.au/training](http://www.det.wa.edu.au/training), accessed October 2008

## Consider Preferences:

- What is your preferred lifestyle (rural or city life)?
- What types of industries are you interested in (manufacturing, government, product sales, services, high-tech, communications, tourism)? Keep in mind ideas or issues that are important to you.
- Are you willing to commute a certain distance and able to assume the cost?
- What type of hours do you prefer and are they flexible with your routine (shift work, weekends, full-time, part-time or overtime)?
- Do you like having power and authority, or following guidelines and directions from others?
- Take into consideration size of company, diversity and organizational structure. Is there room for advancement for you within the company?
- Do you work well under pressure or do you prefer a slower paced or creative environment?

Another idea is to check out these books in the Work Search Centres Resource Library or access their websites to research occupations that may peek your interest:

Work Futures For Entry Level Jobs:

[www.startnow.workfutures.bc.ca](http://www.startnow.workfutures.bc.ca)

Work Futures Occupational Outlooks:

[www.workfutures.bc.ca](http://www.workfutures.bc.ca)

Learn how to make your goals smart:

[www.goal-setting-guide.com](http://www.goal-setting-guide.com)

Goal Setting:

[www.success77.com](http://www.success77.com)



## **S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting**

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Review the S.M.A.R.T. formula which will help set your goals and follow an action plan.

### **Make Your Goals SPECIFIC**

Make sure that your goals are not vague. For example, “I want a new job” should be changed to...”I want to find a new career in the technology industry” or I am going to pursue work in hospitality.” The more specific your goal is, the easier it will be to keep working towards your objective.

### **Make Your Goals MEASURABLE**

Make sure that your goals can be measured so that you will know when you have achieved it. For example, “I am going to improve my employment search” should become something like “I am going to conduct three informational interviews by next week.” If you have nothing to measure your progress against, you will not know how you are doing or when you are ready to move on to your next objective.

### **Make Your Goals ATTAINABLE**

Ensure that your goals are attainable. For example, saying that you will become a manager by next week, or that you will make the same wage in your new job as you made in your previous one may not be realistic or attainable. If you set goals that are out of reach, you may be setting yourself up for disappointment and may make your journey back to employment even more difficult.

### **Make Your Goals RELATED**

Ensure that your goal is relevant to the rest of the goals that you want to achieve. For example, “I will find a job as a Human Resource Manager within six months” would not be a relevant goal if one of your other goals is “I will get my Class 1 Drivers Licence and travel through North America in the next few months.” All of your goals should be set in a way that helps to bring you closer to your objective.

### **Give Your Goals a TIME FRAME**

Ensure that you set a time frame to achieve a goal. For example, next week, in three months or by the time I am.....? Putting an end point on your goal gives you a clear target to work toward. Remember, the time must be measurable, attainable and realistic!

## **Action Plan**

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Now you are ready to write your goals down and put them into action. Writing down your goals can help you set the process in motion. It is also important to review your goals regularly. The more focused you are on your goals the more likely you are to achieve them.

When setting goals it is important to have more than one plan. Coming up with two different plans will allow your goals to be more flexible. It is important to have a back up plan in case your circumstances change or things do not go according to schedule. It is OK to change your mind and change direction of your goals as long as you remain focused and are true to yourself.



## Reward Yourself

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Reward yourself when you achieve one of your short-term goals. Your reward may be as simple as renting a video, taking a walk in your favorite park or having a flavored coffee. By giving yourself a reward after completing your goal you will feel more motivated, energized and focused on your long-term objective. Planning a job change can be a frustrating process and can take some time. Rewarding yourself with each step may keep you on track and give you the desire to get to the next step.

When setting your goals, remember you are not alone. There are a variety of other resources available, such as other community services, networking and making an appointment with an employment advisor to help further your ideas and research.

