

How to set SMARTER Goals



Steve George Ph.D

Contents

Module One: SMARTER Goal Setting

Module Two: Setting a Goal

Module Three: Analysing the Goal

Module Four: Actionable Tasks

Module Five: Putting it all together

Appendices: Setting Your Major Goal Work Sheet

Steps to Achieve Main Goal Work Sheet

Specific Tasks in Completion Order Work Sheet

Brainstorming Sheet

Module One: SMARTER Goal Setting

Without doubt, the best way to be successful in life, is to set goals then have a written plan for their achievement.

We all have dreams. Something we'd like to have, do, or be at some point in the future. When we set goals to achieve them, those dreams suddenly become a possibility. If we take the time to write an action plan, and give each step a deadline, they immediately become achievable.

The trick is to go about it in the right way. Identify the steps necessary to move us towards our goals, think about any resources, or training we may require along the way, then plan a way to make it happen.

You already set goals every day. Mostly they're short term goals like, "*I will get up for work at 7:30 tomorrow morning*", or "*I must make an appointment with the Dentist next week*", etc. So your ability to make and achieve goals is already thriving, like most people, it's just the 'important' goals that seem to be eluding you.

This course is going to help you change that!

The trouble with life changing goals is they just seem to be too big, in the main they're pipe-dreams that you just can't see yourself being able to achieve. What you need to learn, is how to make big dreams become small goals and when we've finished, you'll be an expert!

There are several things you'll need to remember about setting achievable goals, but we'll deal with each of them within the context of the course.

The strategy we're going to use I call SMARTER goal setting.

- S - Specific
- M - Measureable
- A - Agreed upon
- R - Realistic
- T - Time dependant
- E - Exciting
- R - Recorded

I'll explain each of these sections for you on the following page.

Specific – The goals you set should be absolutely specific. For example, *“By the end of August this year, I will be able to comfortably present the Company’s full financial report at our Annual General Meeting and enjoy the process.”* A non-specific goal would be *“This year I’ll be able to speak in public”*

Measureable – There must be a way of knowing, without doubt that you have achieved your goal. The first example above is measureable, if you present your report at the AGM and enjoy doing it, you’ve succeeded. In the second example however, it’s very vague.... speaking in public could be talking to a friend in the park, asking a stranger for directions to a new location, or hundreds of other scenarios.

Agreed Upon – This one is very simple. The goals you set must be goals you want to achieve. There will be times when tutors, friends and family, etc. will try to tell you what you should be achieving, or doing with your life. This may not always be what you want and if you try to achieve things you aren't passionate about, it will fail.

Realistic – Don’t set yourself goals that will be too difficult to achieve within the timescale you’ve set yourself. It’s no good setting a goal that says *“I will be earning 10 times my current income within 12 months, doing the same job, but much more efficiently”* Chances are, unless you’re a bank robber, or con-artist, *‘it ain’t gonna happen!’* Also, do you believe that your chosen goal is achievable by you, maybe you’ll need some extra training, or gain some more, or different experience, etc. first, but once you have all of the information you require, is it possible you could achieve it? This cuts out goals that are either too difficult to achieve, or are not physically possible and maybe you need to restructure your goal.

Time Sensitive – You must add a date to your goals. Without a timescale, your goals are just dreams. Although the dates may change as you move through the necessary smaller steps on the road to achieving your goal. As you progress, you may come up against things that you weren’t expecting, a fork in the road may take you off-track for a while, or alternatively, you may find that some things were remarkably simpler than you expected.

Exciting - As I said a few moments ago, the most successful goals are those that you're passionate about achieving. Once you've decided on your goals, make the steps to achieve them exciting and if possible, fun! The human mind loves to do things that give you pleasure, so make it easy.

Recorded - This final step is one of the most important in the process. Most people give up on their goals simply because they fail to focus on them often enough. How many times have you set a goal at New Years, only to realise three weeks later that you're still doing the things you were supposed to be giving up? Failure to focus equals failure to achieve, so write it all down and keep copies where you'll see them every day.

Module Two: Setting a Goal

The first step is to set your Major Goal. This is the thing that all of your positive actions will eventually lead you to, the place you want to be when all of your efforts have been realised.

Write it down, then compare what you've written to the SMARTER criteria.

Is it specific? In other words, does it explain exactly what the outcome of this goal is?

Is the result measureable? How will you know when you've achieved it?

Has it been agreed upon? Is this goal something that YOU want to achieve, or is it just something that you've been told would be good for you, but you've got no real interest for?

Is it realistic? It is something that you can achieve (even if you need more resources first), within the timescale you've set?

Is it time specific? Have you attached a deadline? Remember, without a deadline, it's just a dream, not a target to achieve.

Is it exciting? Does the thought of fulfilling this goal excite you, or is it just something you'd like to achieve?

If it meets all of these criteria, then write it down on the **Your Major Goal** work sheet.

Now you're probably concerned about how you're going to achieve this great feat? Well, no matter how difficult it seems to be at the moment, between us, we're going to break it down and make it as simple as we can.

Print out a copy of the Brainstorming Sheet and at the top of the page write out your Major Goal. Underneath the goal, list out the things that'll need to be in place for you to achieve it. Eg. If your major goal was to be running a successful Widget retail store, then your list could include *"I need to take a business taxation course"*, or *"I need to arrange finance for stock"*, etc.

When there's nothing else you can think of, add these smaller steps to your sheet.

Then lastly, write down how you will know when you've achieved this major goal. What measurable things will you have when your goal has been reached?

Module 3 – Analysing the Goal

Now that you've identified your main goal, you need to build up leverage on yourself to help ensure its success. You do that by giving yourself as many reasons to succeed as possible, as well as identifying all the pain you'll feel if you fail to succeed.

You can complete this bit on the same form that you listed the goal on. To begin with, it will be worth printing off a copy, or three of the Brainstorming Sheet and using those to list all the items. Be as specific as you can and don't leave anything out. List all of the small reasons as well as the big ones!

These should include personal reasons as well as tangible ones, for example a benefit may be that because you'll be doing something you love, you'll be more 'present' with loved ones, or you'll have more money to spend on vacations, etc. The pain you might feel for failure may be that you have to get up every day and work at a job you hate with a boss who doesn't appreciate you, or if you don't succeed, you'll never be able to experience the pleasure of supplying world class widgets to the people who need them, etc.

You should also put down what it would mean to you physically and mentally, eg *"achieving each step along the route to my goal, will boost my confidence in my abilities, allowing me to take greater calculated risks in my business."*

Also, list any barriers likely to prevent your success. These could include un-supportive friends, or family, lack of money, or experience, etc. Then list how you will deal with these barriers, so they don't become an issue.

Any reason you can think of is a good one, the more reasons you give yourself to succeed, the better it will be. It's also worth remembering that people will do a lot more to escape from pain than they will to experience pleasure, so make sure you spend plenty of time writing down all the pain you'll feel and any barriers you might face along the way!

Once you have a nice long list, add them to the sheet.

Module 4 – Actionable Tasks

Now that you have your main goal and the steps needed to reach it, the next step is to break each of those smaller steps into actionable tasks that will achieve them.

For example, if one of your steps was to take a course in business taxation, then your actionable tasks could be,

1. Contact my local business forum to ask for advice on local courses.
2. Contact each of the recommendations and ask for a prospectus.
3. Compare each prospectus then make a decision on which course to take.
4. Book a place on the next available course.

You can break your steps down into as many tasks as you need, just make sure that each of the tasks is specific. eg. *"look on the internet for where I can do a course on business taxation"* isn't specific; *"contact the top three results for business taxation courses on 'Google'"*, is. Remember, as with the goals, each task needs to be measurable; you need a target so you know when you've achieved each one.

Once you have all your tasks written down, assign each of them a deadline. Obviously, some of these deadlines may change, especially if the completion of your task is reliant on waiting for information, but assign one anyway and change it if you need to later on.

You should now have all of the actions necessary to achieve your Major Goal.

The problem facing you now, is most likely you have a 'mish-mash' of tasks that don't have any structure. The final module of this short course will help you with that!

Module 5 – Putting it all Together

The final sheet will allow you to create a simple chronological list of tasks that you can work your way through, from top to bottom.

So, take your list of action steps and add them to the sheet. Put the first thing you need to do, first in the list, then work your way down until the final task is at the bottom, use extra sheets if you need to.

A survey in the Journal of Clinical Psychology (1-1-2014) found that a person who explicitly sets goals, is 10 times more likely to achieve them than a person who just has vague idea of what they want to achieve.

62% of Americans set at least one goal per year, only 8% of those achieve them! Of that 8%, just over half (64%), reach their goal and keep it for one month before slipping back, 46% last past 6 months.

This means that less than 4% of people who set goals, manage to maintain them once they've been achieved. By completing this short course, you have done what 96% of people who set goals have failed to do; you have a written, achievable plan of every step necessary.

If you look through your list of tasks, everything you need to do in order to reach the one thing you dream about doing, having, or being is right in front of you. Every task you complete builds your confidence and increases your self-belief.

The only thing left to do now in order to complete the course, is take action on your first task!

Once you've achieved your goal, don't fall into the trap of believing that everything will be fantastic now you've achieved your dream. Once you get there, and you will, you'll have other desires that your want to realise. Go through the same process with those goals and you'll get them too!

Setting Your Major Goal

My Major Goal is.....

My completion date is.....

To enable me to reach my goal, I must complete the following smaller steps.....

I will know I have reached my main goal when.....

The benefits I will gain from achieving this goal are.....

The pain I will suffer if I fail to achieve this goal is.....

Steps to Achieve Main goal

My Major Goal is.....

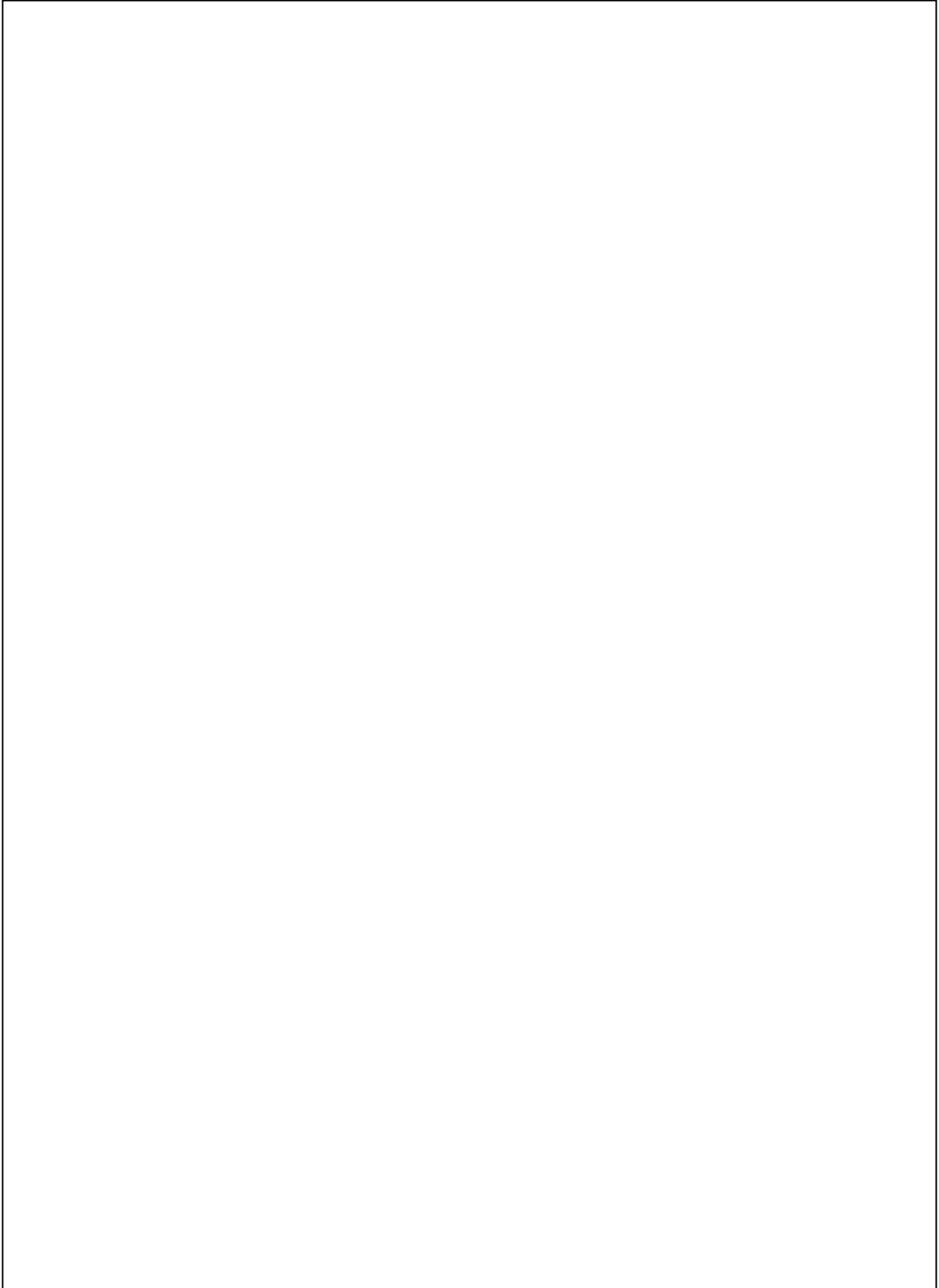
Small step required from previous page	Tasks required to complete this step	Completion date

Small step required from previous page	Tasks required to complete this step	Completion date

Specific Tasks in Completion Order

Specific Task to be Completed	Completion date

Brainstorming Sheet

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for brainstorming ideas. It occupies the central portion of the page below the title and above the footer.