



# SORDILL CONSULTING

*Organizational Training & Development*

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

## *The Why, When, and How of Effective Goal Setting*

At this time of year, many of us make New Year's resolutions and strive to make positive changes in our lives. These resolutions can be personal or professional in nature and unfortunately, often get lost in the day to day routine before being realized.

The purpose of this Newsletter is to provide you with some tools and strategies for making and achieving effective goals at any time of the year and in any context that is appropriate for you.

Let's start with **WHY** we should set goals. First off, if you want everything to stay the same, then you probably don't need to set goals, just continue doing what you've been doing. However, if you have noticed that you could be doing better or that something has changed in your life that requires you to respond, then goal setting is an appropriate exercise for you.

So, ask yourself – Can anything be improved? Is there a need for new skills, knowledge or behaviors? Has anything changed in my life that means I need a plan to respond effectively? Am I working on any projects that would go more efficiently if I did some goal setting?

The **WHEN** of goal setting pretty much follows the **WHY**. If you have a need to set a goal or goals, then you should do so at the beginning of the process. If you have begun to work toward something meaningful and have not set goals, then the **WHEN** is **NOW**. It's never too late to

go back and set goals so you will be able to manage your success.

That leaves us with the **HOW**. The model you are going to read about here is one that many of you probably have heard of before. It's called **SMART Goals**.

**SMART Goals** are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timed.

**Specifically** what do you want to achieve? This should be a simple outcome or statement. For example:

If you want to develop your skills in project management, your statement might be something like:

*To develop my skills as a project manager.*

To **Measure** this goal, you will need to identify ways to assess whether or not the goal has been met. Sometimes you can use numerical or statistical data to measure goals. However, other goals lend themselves more effectively to descriptive measures. You can measure any goal, it is a matter of finding the right method.

For the goal of developing project management skills, you might do an assessment of your current skills and experience managing projects as compared with desired skills and experience.

For example:

*Current experience* might include – having participated as a member of project teams, taking direction from others, supporting the work of others.

*Current skills* might include – exposure to goal setting, time lines, PERT and GANTT charts, project management software expertise, job knowledge and competencies.

*Desired experience* might include – leading a project team, acting as liaison between project team and senior management, identifying projects to be assigned, assessing the cost/benefit of projects.

*Desired skills* might include – leadership and management skills, decision making, problem solving, delegation, negotiation skills, organizational skills, higher level goal setting, and project management software expertise.

**Achievable** means that the goal is within your grasp and is literally possible for you to achieve. This phase is best addressed by creating a plan for action. In this section of the goal setting model, you should identify resources needed, roles for yourself and others in achieving the goal, steps and strategies to be used in executing the goal.

So, the first question to ask yourself is are you capable of increasing your expertise in this area and do you have the time and means to do so.

In this case, we'll assume that you are capable of developing your project management skills and will have the time and means to do so.

The second part is to identify what you will need in terms of time, money, support or equipment, etc. to accomplish the goal.

You might decide that you need your boss to agree to support your efforts. This might include paying for you to attend courses or providing you with updated software or coaching from your boss or others. It might also mean that you will need to be assigned to lead a project so you can learn on the job. Your boss will need to agree to give you the time, support and resources to accomplish the goal.

The other option is that you might decide to do this on your own. You might need to identify courses or purchase books to learn what you need to know and you might practice on personal projects.

The third piece is to list steps and strategies to be used. In our example, some of the steps might include:

1. Talk with your boss about your desire to develop your project management skills. Ask how he or she might support your efforts and what role he or she might be willing to play.
2. Identify appropriate courses to learn specific skills.
3. Identify and suggest projects that you'd like to be assigned to and ask for increased levels of responsibility.
4. Create a spread sheet identifying costs associated with courses, software, etc. Discuss this with appropriate others and identify ways to cover necessary costs.
5. Find a coach or mentor to walk you through the process so you will know what to expect and have someone available for questions and guidance as needed.
6. Assess project teams and project leaders you have been associated with in the past and identify most effective behaviors to emulate and least effective behaviors to avoid.
7. Identify situations in which to practice your skills and assess areas still needing development.

Next, you will need to clarify ways in which this is a **Realistic** goal for you to work toward. Why is this important? What value will it add? Why does it make sense for you to achieve this goal?

In response, you might say it is important because: It makes you more marketable; It will allow you more growth in your current position; You will need to be able to lead projects in the future as your organization grows, etc.

Finally, you're ready for the last phase, which is to make the goal **Timed**. What we are looking for here are a beginning date, interim dates for monitoring, assessing, and adjusting the goal, and an anticipated completion date.

So for our sample goal, you might say you plan to start the goal on February 1, 2003, and you will plan to monitor once per week until April 1 when you think you'll have accomplished the goal.

When you check in each week, you should ask yourself:

- ❖ Does the goal still makes sense?
- ❖ What progress are you making against your measurables?
- ❖ What actions have you taken?
- ❖ What do you still need to do to accomplish this goal?
- ❖ Should you make any changes to the plan? If so, what changes are appropriate?
- ❖ Where are you on the time line? Will you be ahead of behind or on schedule?

❖ Again, what adjustments need to be made so you are successful in achieving your goal?

If everything checks out, then continue doing what you were doing.

If things need to be changed, adjust your course and continue working toward your goal.

If the goal no longer makes sense, then acknowledge the reality of your situation and move on to another goal that is relevant to your current needs.

By using this model for goal setting, you will be more in control and achieve greater success and satisfaction in areas that are important to you.

You can use this for your own development or when working with others. The key to using this with others is to be sure to partner with them in the process allowing them to take a leadership role in deciding how to measure and achieve the goal.

Best wishes for success in setting and achieving your goals!

*Programs and Services Offered by* **SORDILL CONSULTING** *include:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assertive Communication Skills</li> <li>➤ Change Management</li> <li>➤ Coaching, Feedback, and Managerial Communication</li> <li>➤ Communication Strategies</li> <li>➤ Conflict Management</li> <li>➤ Customer Service &amp; Telephone Skills</li> <li>➤ Executive Coaching</li> <li>➤ Facilitation</li> <li>➤ Getting Organized</li> <li>➤ Goal Setting and Achievement</li> <li>➤ Handling Problem Employees and Terminations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Individual Professional Development</li> <li>➤ Interviewing Techniques</li> <li>➤ Leadership Skills</li> <li>➤ Listening Skills</li> <li>➤ Managerial and Supervisory Skills</li> <li>➤ Managing Up</li> <li>➤ Managing Interpersonal Relations</li> <br/> <li>➤ Meeting Management</li> <li>➤ Mentoring</li> <li>➤ Myers Briggs Type Indicator</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

- Motivation
- Negotiating for Success
- One on One Coaching
- Organizational Skills
- Outdoor & Executive Challenge
- Performance Management
- Performance Reviews
- Presentation Skills
- Problem Solving Techniques
- Project Management
- Sales and Sales Management
- Sexual Harassment Awareness
- Strategic Planning
- Stress Management
- Team Development
- Time Management
- Train the Trainer

**For more information** about programs and services, or to request future newsletters via email, please call Pat Sordill at 978-266-9524 or send an email to: [pat@sordill.com](mailto:pat@sordill.com).

Visit our web site at: [www.sordill.com](http://www.sordill.com)