

THE S.M.A.R.T. METHOD TO SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Regardless of your job title or position within your organization, everyone should strive to improve both personally and professionally. Take time to evaluate yourself to find areas that need to be addressed to help improve yourself. Many Philosophers and Self-help experts believe in the adage:

“The only person you should try to be better than is the person you were yesterday”.



This philosophy can be used in both your personal and professional lives. As a small business owner, I wholeheartedly believe in this philosophy. I strive to provide guidance and advice to my clients while continuing to expand my job knowledge and expertise. With that said, I rely on the SMART system. To be honest, I do not know who originated the SMART system. Many “experts” claim to have developed the program and I do not even recall when my first interaction with the process, but I found that when implemented properly, you will see results.

I have seen this acronym presented in several different versions, but below is the basic breakdown of the system.

- Specific**: Specify what your goals are. Determine the who, what, where, when and why.
- Measurable**: Develop criteria for measuring progress toward your business goals.
- Achievable**: Create goals for your business that are attainable and achievable.
- Relevant**: Align your goals with the overall objectives of your business.
- Time-based**: Set an attainable timeline for completing and meeting your goals.

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Below is a sample for the implementation of the SMART system regarding your carrier operations:

Specific: Set a specific goal.... Example: Lower your UNSAFE DRIVING BASIC score by 15 percentile points and have Zero Unsafe Driving violations. You may improve your CSA BASICS in UNSAFE DRIVING by reviewing and updating your Driver's Policy. Implementing and dispensing the policy to all drivers and staff members. Any violations of the policy will be addressed with training and/or disciplinary action.

Measurable: The CSA's UNSAFE DRIVING BASIC is a measurable standard that can be compared to past and present scores.

Achievable: Set goals that are attainable. Unrealistic goals will start you on a path of disappointment and failure. In this example it is not possible to improve 15 percentile points in the CSA Scoring in a one-month period. The algorithm / scoring system will not allow for a dramatic score improvement in the month; however, setting a goal of zero Unsafe Driving violations in one month is an achievable goal.

Relevant: Improving UNSAFE DRIVING is relevant to your company's goals.

Time-Based: Set an attainable timeline. Due to the scoring algorithm for UNSAFE DRIVING, it is not reasonable to improve your BASICS by 15 percentage points in one month; however, you may attain the goal of zero violations. You may set a goal of zero violations per month and a drop of 15 percentile points by the end of next quarter, etc.

The most important process to consider is "Achievable". You must create goals that are attainable and achievable. You must be sure your team has the skills and resources needed to attain the goal. Everyone wants "Zero" violations; however, in many cases this is not achievable. The goal is to be a better carrier today than the carrier you were yesterday.

The FMCSA releases the scores monthly for all 7 BASICS. I suggest that every company review the reports upon release every month. Conduct a periodic

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the reports upon release every month. Conduct a periodic review (Monthly, Quarterly, Bi-Annually, etc.) and determine where improvement needs to be made. Consult with your team, including drivers, and create and implement a SMART plan. You should include your drivers in most major policy making decisions. The drivers will usually be the biggest participant in the implementation of the SMART plan and you will need their compliance and participation or you will not see the required results.

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