

HARVARD ManageMentor®

Goal Setting

Why Set Goals?

Set Goals

Accomplish Goals

Evaluate Goals

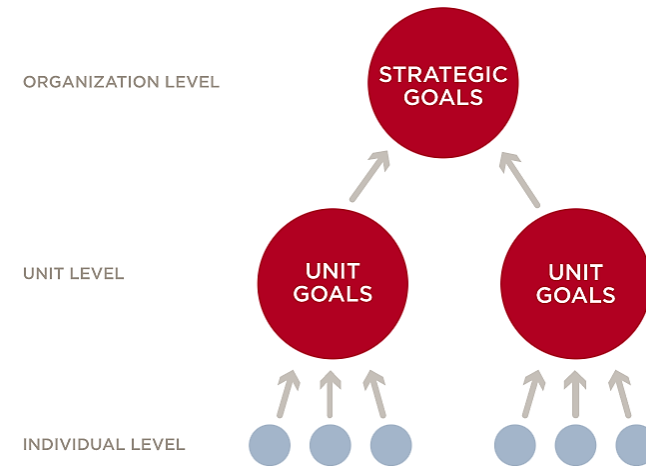
Why goals matter

- Goals motivate behavior change
- Goals provide direction
- Goals sustain momentum
- Goals generate feedback
- Goals build character

Types of goals

- Organization-focused goals
 - Unit goals
 - Individual goals
- Personal development goals
 - Personal
 - Professional
- Short- and long-term goals

Goal alignment



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The goal-setting process

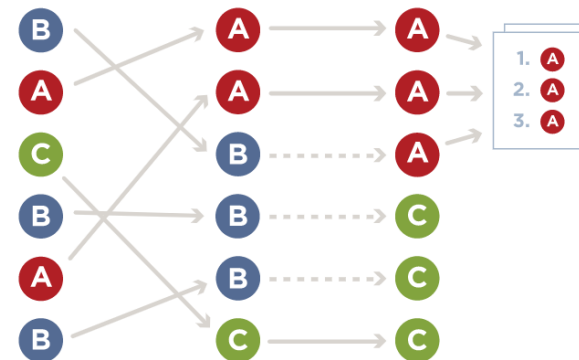
- Brainstorm with your team
- Use your networks
- Prioritize your goals

The A-B-C of prioritizations

- **Value:** The benefits that achieving the goal would deliver for your group and/or organization.
- **Importance:** The degree to which achievement of a particular goal would support your organization's objectives.
- Priority A goals have high value and primary importance.
- Priority B goals have medium value and secondary importance.
- Priority C goals have some value but not much importance right now.

Characteristics of effective goals

- Challenging
- Balanced
- Clearly expressed



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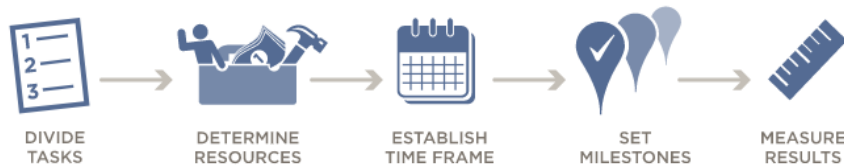
Evaluate Goals

Start with small, specific goals

- Focus initially on small, specific goals.
- These give a clear sense of direction.
- They'll also can score quick wins.

Break goals into tasks

- Breaking a goal into those tasks can provide further direction and motivation to work steadily toward attaining it.



Raise the bar

- Each time your team accomplishes a goal, use the resulting momentum and lessons learned to set slightly more challenging goals for the future. Over time, setting and achieving challenging goals will become skills in your group.

Overcome obstacles

- Share your goals with colleagues and friends.
- Adjust goals that turn out to be incompatible with one another..
- Focus on completing tasks related to your most important goals.
- Keep the future in sight.
- When you hit snags, remind yourself of the benefits you'll garner by reaching your goal.
- Be flexible about how you accomplish your goals. Ask for help if you need it

Avoid common pitfalls

- Neglecting priorities not related to the goal.
- Engaging in unethical behavior.
- Taking unacceptable risks.
- Over relying on incentives and rewards.
- Focusing only on the short term.

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Monitor progress

Continually Evaluate Goals



- To monitor progress, try these tips: Review – Update - Revise
 - **Review** upcoming tasks and required resources related to the goal. Make sure everyone's prepared to tackle those tasks according to the plan for achieving the goal.
 - Reassess your goals and ask whether they're still creating value for and important to your group or organization.
 - Identify impact of goal achievement

Capture lessons

- **Update** everyone involved as you make progress toward a goal. Listen to and address any concerns raised.
 - If you and your team achieved a goal too easily, make future goals more challenging.
 - If a goal took too much effort, make new goals a little easier.
 - If a goal proved unrealistic, make sure that new goals better reflect available resources, including time.
 - If individuals lacked needed skills while pursuing a goal, make strengthening or acquiring those skills a priority for the future.
 - If team members lost motivation, find ways to engage them in setting new goals and determining how to achieve them. In addition, continually communicate new goals' value to your group and the organization.

Sustain achievement in the longer term - revisiting it as time passes

- **Revise** completion dates if something changes; for example, delivery is delayed for a resource needed to complete a task. Review the impact of these changes on later tasks and adjust the plan accordingly.
 - Revisiting goals you have accomplished helps foster a culture of ongoing improvement and achievement in your group and organization. It demonstrates that you and your team know how to get things done and how to learn from your experiences. It can also inspire you and your team: If momentum slows while everyone's working toward a particularly challenging goal, you can reenergize and reassure your people by reminding them of previous successes and the effort it took to achieve them.

Time Management

Own Your Time

Harness
Energy and Focus

Defeat Distractions

Take Charge of
Your Productivity

Overcome
Time Pressure

- **Where does the time go?**
 - We live in a world where busyness is a point of pride, a signal of a full life.
 - The “pings, dings, and rings” of devices condition us to respond immediately to minor tasks, but often crowd out more important work.
- **If you feel overwhelmed...**
 - When you feel overwhelmed, it’s hard to be effective.
 - Brain scans show that stress decreases activity in the regions responsible for critical thinking and judgment.
- **Make time work for you**
 - Smart habits can help you get more of what you want from your time.
- **To manage your time well, learn how to:**

Harness energy and focus	Discover when you are mentally at your sharpest, and learn how to plan for and protect this “prime time.”
Defeat distractions	Recognize what takes you off track, and learn how to refocus quickly.
Take charge of your productivity	Develop a broad toolkit of productivity strategies.
Overcome time pressure	Build positive work-life habits and look out for others' wellbeing.

Time management isn’t about cramming more into your schedule. It’s about **making smarter, more purposeful choices** with the hours you have.

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Harness Energy and Focus:

Boost your productivity by tackling the right tasks at the right time. Identify when you're most alert for accomplishing important work, and when it's time to switch to routine tasks.

- **When are you most productive?**

- The hours when you are at your peak—alert, optimistic, and focused—are particularly valuable for accomplishing important work.
- Most people's peak time lasts 2 to 3 hours.
- Night owls are slow to start but creative in the morning, slumping midday, and at their productive peak at night.

- **Optimize your peak time**

- Your peak hours are like gold—spend them wisely!
- To get the most of your peak time each day, first identify three important things you want to accomplish.
- **Next, write down your top three goals.** Keep them clear and brief—about the amount of text that would easily fit on a sticky note.
- By writing three goals, you're setting peak time priorities for that day. You're not replacing a more complete to-do list or a project tracking system.
- Finally, decide which of the goals you've identified for the day would benefit most from peak time.

- **When you hit a slump**

- Slumps are inevitable. Your biological peak won't last forever.
- When you're starting to lose energy and focus, don't force your way through a task that suddenly feels twice as difficult. You'll only waste time and, potentially, make errors.
- Recognize that your energy has petered out and take a short break.

- **Make the most of your second wind**

- Many people experience an afternoon slump, but there's good news:
- Mood and energy begin climbing again in the late afternoon and early evening. Yes!
- During your rebound period, revisit the three goals you wrote down for the day. Is there anything left to accomplish?

- **How'd the day go?**

- At the end of each day, reflect on how you invested your focus and energy. **How well did you match energy to task?**
- Use those insights to inform tomorrow.

"We are smarter, faster, dimmer, slower, more creative, and less creative in some parts of the day than others." *

—Daniel Pink, American author

Reserve your peak time for complex, important work. Don't squander it checking your email or sitting in meetings where you barely contribute.

Do: Refresh yourself.

Do: Tackle routine work.

Do: Let ideas "simmer."

Don't: Make judgment calls.

How should I set my top priorities? Ask yourself, "For today..."

What is
strategically
important?

What can I do to
drive future
results?

What activity will
fulfill me?

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Defeat Distractions:

What are your biggest distractions? By understanding what diverts your attention from your work—whether digital devices, coworker interruptions, office noise, or worry and frustration—you can learn how to manage it.

- **Digitally de-clutter:** Turn off alerts, close extra browser windows, and put your phone out of sight.
- **Reduce interruptions** by establishing boundaries and managing your location.
- **Be aware** of how office noise and activity affect your concentration.
- **Reduce procrastination** by addressing the root causes.

- Sometimes, we put things on lists. And it seems like the right thing to do, or we think it's a high priority. But when we really start to evaluate it, **it's not actually that important.**
- we avoid tasks because the task is somehow disconnected from the why. There is not a good sense of like, **"why are we doing this?"**
- **We have so much on my plate.** When I think about what I have to get done next week, or even tomorrow, or even in the four hours sometimes, I'm like, "I can't do it. I can't do it." So I get completely paralyzed. But if all shrink the time frame to, what do I need to get done in the next half an hour? The next 10 minutes? The next five minutes? And when I'm feeling really overwhelmed, the next 30 seconds? Then I can start to move forward.

- **Feelings can be distractions, too**



Sounds that soothe	White noise Natural ambiance—surf, wind, birdsong
Tracks that distract	Instrumental music
Sounds that soothe	Music with lyrics Podcasts
Tracks that distract	Radio stations

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Take Charge of Your Productivity:

Long hours don't make you more productive—being intentional with your time does. Discover strategies to keep your work on track and help you maintain your focus.

- To achieve important goals, **try preloading your calendar, accountability partnerships, and if/then planning.**
- To become more efficient at routine work, **try timeboxing, batch processing, and making a game out of the task.**
- **Multitasking** is really “task switching,” and it **makes you slower and more error-prone.**
- **Say no and/or renegotiate requests from others** so that you have time for what matters most.

If you can't say no, try to renegotiate. Think about:

Redesign the task so you get a payoff.	<i>"Rather than updating the old PowerPoint, I'd like to create a new presentation that I can also use with our suppliers."</i>
Condense or eliminate aspects of the work.	<i>"I'd like to try bimonthly updates at first. If people are feeling confused, we can go to weekly sessions."</i>
Ask to complete the work by a different date.	<i>"I'd love to help, but I have to visit two client sites this month. May I start next month when I'll have more capacity for this?"</i>

Timebox

- **How it works:** Set a time limit, reserve that time in your calendar, and stop when the time is up.
- **Example:** Timebox 15 minutes each week to write up project status reports.

Batch process

- **How it works:** Combine similar tasks to make them more efficient.
- **Example:** Review and approve team schedule requests all at once.

Gamify

- **How it works:** Create a fun challenge to incentivize you and spark creativity.
- **Example:** Bragging rights to anyone who can complete their follow-up calls by Wednesday!

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Overcome Time Pressure:

A big source of stress is feeling that you need to be on the job 24/7. Learn how to leave work behind, eliminate time wasters, and develop healthy habits for using your energy and time.

- Evaluate yourself and others by important work produced, **not by long hours or always being available.**
- Address time sinks by **figuring out the root cause and considering multiple solutions.**
- **Examine your daily habits—sleep, food, physical activity**—and aim for good choices as often as possible.
- Reflect on your days and **use those insights to develop good habits.**

Each day, reflect on how you spent your time:

*What made you
happiest today?*

*What do you regret
not doing today?*

*What do you want
to make time for
tomorrow?*

Apply your insights to the priorities you set each day.

**“How we spend our days is, of
course, how we spend our lives.”**

—Annie Dillard, Pulitzer prize-winning author and naturalist

When we feel good—physically
and mentally—it’s easier to
manage time well.