



Alumni Mentorship+ Program

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Essential Questions to Ask to Facilitate the Goal-Setting Process

Articulating clear goals is critical to the success of a mentorship relationship. While some mentees enter into a mentorship relationship with well-defined goals, most mentees come with a general idea about what they want to learn. That idea should be considered the starting point; using the questions below, work together to talk out your goals. These questions are meant to probe the mentee to stimulate deeper thinking and reflection and facilitate the goal-setting process.

Brainstorming Your Goal

1. What is going on right now in your workplace setting?
2. What are some of the challenges you are facing?
3. What is your strongest attribute?
4. What has been holding you back?
5. Where do you see yourself in five years? What do you believe you need to do to get there?
6. What skills and talents are you not using?
7. How can you make a bigger impact on your company/organization?
8. What is the most important goal you want to achieve this year?

Creating a SMART Goal

1. Why is this goal important to your future development?
2. Is this the goal you should be working on right now?
3. Is the time frame we have set realistic for accomplishing your goal?
4. What processes can we put in place that would help us stay on track?

What Is a SMART Goal?

- Specific:** The goal should be concrete and action-oriented. What, specifically, are you trying to achieve? When writing a goal, ask yourself: what do I mean by this? Is there another way to write this goal to make it more understandable or obvious for what I mean? Does the goal start with an action verb (for example: improve, create, develop)?
- Measurable:** How will you know when you have accomplished the goal? How will you track and measure progress? How do you define success? Be sure to include this with your goal.
- Achievable:** The goal should require work, but be attainable. Is the goal too big? For example, “become CEO of my company” is probably too big of a goal for a one-year mentorship program. Or perhaps the goal is too easily achieved? Do not set your sights too low! Make sure that the time frame you set is realistic. Do you have the ability and commitment to reach the goal? What additional resources, time, money, or capability, will be needed for you to reach the goal? Does the goal set you up for failure?
- Relevant:** Is this a worthwhile goal? Is this the right time? Is this goal in line with your long-term objectives?
- Timely:** Set a time limit; there should be a specific time frame for accomplishing the goal which will keep you accountable.

Adapted From: Meyer, Paul J (2003). *What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals.* Attitude Is Everything: If You Want to Succeed Above and Beyond. Meyer Resource Group, Incorporated, The. ISBN 978-0-89811-304-4.

SMART Goals Checklist

Review your goal -- you should be able to answer each of the questions below affirmatively. If you cannot, it means more work is required to articulate your SMART goal.

Question	Yes/No
1. Is the goal clearly future oriented?	
2. Is the goal realistic?	
3. Will the goal be challenging enough for me? Will it be too challenging?	
4. Will this goal require me to make a personal investment of time, energy, and effort?	
5. Will this goal contribute to my growth and development?	
6. Is this goal achievable within the time frame of this relationship?	
7. Will I feel a sense of pride and satisfaction in accomplishing this goal?	
8. Will this goal produce concrete and measurable results?	
9. Is this goal in my best professional or personal interest?	

Adapted From: Zachary, Lois J. and Fischler, Lory A. *The Mentee's Guide: Making Mentoring Work for You.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.