

Setting Goals To Improve Your Career

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<https://youtu.be/5OYmX8hmJJE>

Video: How to Hold Yourself Accountable to Your Career Goals with Don C

Multi-hyphenate creative Don Crawley, the current creative strategy/design advisor for the Chicago Bulls, shares his tips for accountability and how it helped him grow throughout his career.

Setting specific, measurable goals can provide a path to improve your career and achieve certain accomplishments. You can use goal setting when given a certain task or project, or to personally advance in some way. You can set goals towards promotions, creativity, education and many other various ways to improve your life and career.

Let's look at why setting goals can help improve your career, what types of goals you can set and how to set goals.

Why setting goals is important

Setting goals is important because it gives you a framework to achieve milestones. Wanting to do or complete certain things in life is a great start. Goal setting provides a path for you to actually do them. There are two types of goals you should consider setting: short term and long term.

What are the short-term goals?

Short-term goals are more immediate goals you set for yourself to achieve your larger, long-term goals. You can think of short-term goals as milestones or stepping stones. Short-term goals usually exist in a short timeframe, anywhere from days or months to one or two years. Examples of short-term goals might include completing small tasks or projects, gaining experience or taking classes. You will use what you accomplished in the short term to complete your long-term goals.

What are long-term goals?

Long-term goals are usually large goals you want to achieve over several years. You will use several milestones to achieve long-term goals, setting short-term goals to achieve along the way. Long-term goals might include getting a job in a certain career, being promoted to a certain level or completing a lengthy, complicated project.

Setting personal goals

Setting goals for your personal life will help you reach personal achievements. You might set personal goals to advance several categories in your life for things like hobbies, health or education. Setting personal goals can help you achieve success in your career as well.

Advancing your interests by building experience in hobbies you enjoy or skills you want to improve can easily transfer into your professional life. These are often good things to include on your resume if relevant to the jobs you're applying for. Spending time improving on things you want in your personal life can also help you be more focused and energetic at work by paying attention to your work-life balance.

Here are a few personal goals examples:

- Advancing hobbies like playing a musical instrument or playing a sport
- Improving on skills like graphic design or public speaking
- Increasing your knowledge about a certain topic or area of study
- Focusing on building or improving relationships
- Financial goals like saving for a certain purchase
- Physical goals like training for a marathon or completing a certain fitness challenge

Setting professional goals

Setting professional goals can help you both complete certain tasks or projects and achieve any personal career goals you might have. If your company or manager doesn't have a specific framework for you to set goals in your job, you might consider setting your own career goals. You can also set your own goals if you are self-employed. Your career goals should address both your current situation and your larger long-term career ambitions.

Here are a few professional goals examples:

- Being promoted to a certain position
- Completing a large project
- Solving a complex problem

- Improving certain soft or technical skills
- Successfully switching careers or industries
- Getting a certain award or recognition



How to set goals

While there are several different ways to set goals, there are a few steps you can take to ensure the best possibility of success. Your goals should have five key elements to make them achievable. These five elements make up what is known as the “SMART goal” framework. SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based. Let’s take a closer look at how to set a SMART goal:

1. Make your goal as clear and detailed as possible

For example, instead of “*I want to be better at public speaking,*” you can say, “*I want to successfully give a 10–15 minute presentation to an audience of 50 or more people.*”

2. Define how you will measure success

For example, if you want to switch from a job in sales to a job in marketing, you might set milestones along the way that address how to develop the skills and experience marketing employers are looking for. To do this, you might set your measurement as learning and focusing on one skill per month.

3. Check whether your goals are achievable

Setting goals you can accomplish within a reasonable timeframe will help keep you motivated and focused. You should work to understand the full scope of your goal ahead of time to ensure it is possible to accomplish.

For example, if you are in your first professional developer job and your goal is to become a senior-level .NET developer, you might need to set smaller, short-term goals before reaching this larger goal. If you find that a goal is not achievable because you don't have enough experience, one of your new goals should be to gain more experience.

4. Make sure your goal is relevant

You should set goals that align with your values and contribute toward your long-term goals. Each goal you set should be relevant and meaningful to you, moving you closer toward where you want to be. To make sure you are setting relevant goals, you might ask yourself, *"how will achieving this goal help me?" "Does accomplishing this goal contribute toward my larger, long-term goals? Why does this goal matter to me?"*

5. Set a beginning and end date

Setting a timetable to achieve your goal can both help keep you motivated and on-schedule.

Before setting a goal end-date, be sure to research all the milestones and possible roadblocks you might run into along the way. For example, if your goal is to get promoted to the next level at your company, you might give yourself six months. If you haven't achieved your goal, you might give yourself extended time or reconsider whether your goal is achievable and realistic.

Setting both personal and professional goals will help give a structure and path to success.

Many employers value candidates that have a record of setting and achieving goals. This shows that you can be a focused, goal-oriented employee. Employers often ask about goals in interviews, so you should prepare to talk about your goals and what you're doing to achieve them during the hiring process.