



People Make The Difference whitepaper

May 15 2017

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Are your goals SMART or HARD?

Goal setting is an extremely important part of our professional, personal and team development – it's important to write down our goals so that we can then track our progress and make adjustments as we trundle towards those goals. There is one method of goal setting that gets promoted endlessly – SMART goals. There is nothing wrong with SMART goals, but in recent years, a new goal setting method has taken hold – HARD goals.

What are SMART goals?

The early 1980's saw the invention of SMART goals, an acronym to help individuals define and manage their goals and in the time since, it's become a hugely popular method for leaders and teams to use when it comes to achieving goals.

Specific: managing to specify a goal is half the battle – what is it that you want to achieve? Why do you want to achieve it? How are you going to achieve it?

Measurable: when you achieve the goal, how will you know? How will you measure your success?

Achievable: is your goal achievable for *you*? Your goals might be possible for someone, but if they're not possible for you, you will struggle enormously.

Relevant: to find out whether your goal is really relevant to you, ask yourself why you want to achieve it and whether achieving it will really solve your problem.

Time: how long will it take? When do you need to have achieved this goal?

What are HARD goals?

Coined by Mark Murphy, HARD goals provide a very similar tool for goal setting and managing, but they have a slightly different focus:

Heartfelt: you need to care about why you're trying to achieve this goal – if you don't care, then why bother?

Animated: can you visualise what it will be like when you achieve your goal? Picturing it, having it alive in your mind, makes it all the easier to achieve.

Required: your goals must be *necessary*. Once you've achieved your goal, will you have made a positive impact in some way? If your goal affects nothing and no one, it's not necessary.

Difficult: this is the hardest part about HARD goals. There is no need for your goals to be so difficult that you can't ever achieve them but they *must* be challenging – if they're easy, then you would have achieved them before you had the chance to write all this down. Facing challenges is how you grow, whether you succeed or not.

HARD goals are a little less analytical in nature than SMART goals – instead of focusing on deadlines, measurability and relevance, they focus more on the emotional connection we have to our goals. The analytical side of goal setting is not such a bad thing, it's great for tracking and adjusting, but at the end of the day, our emotional attachment to our goals is what drives us forward and keeps us willing to persevere, even when we fail.

Both methods are incredibly valuable in different circumstances and for different people; perhaps using the two acronyms together will help you achieve your best when it comes to your team's goals.

If you're ready to start leading your team to success when it comes to goals, contact People Make the Difference for training workshops, one-on-one coaching and Coach On Call services. To find out more, call us on 0412 333 415 or visit peplemakethedifference.com.au.