

Goals provide direction to student organizations. They enhance their operation, contribute to group maintenance and development, and give group members a sense of cohesion. The process of setting goals should be tailored to each organization's needs. Some benefit by using a highly structured goal-setting process, while others prefer a more informal process.

## DEFINITIONS

**Mission:** A statement defining the function and purpose of an organization.

**Goal:** Broad, abstract statement describing an ideal intent, state, or condition.

**Objectives:** Specific statements that describe desired behavior in measurable terms and acceptable criteria of performance.

## ASSUMPTIONS

- People work better if they know what the goals of the organization are.
- If people have clear ideas about what they hope to accomplish, their chances of accomplishment are enhanced.
- Intrinsic goals produce more energy than extrinsic goals; therefore, people will work better if they set the goals for their own jobs.
- Progress is measured in terms of what one is trying to make progress toward.
- People are more comfortable in their job situation when they know how they will be evaluated.

## ADVANTAGES

- Enhances the accomplishment of a desired end and enables one to know where he is going.
- Reinforces the principles of participative management, establishes the proper environment for constructive feedback, and enhances communication between the individual and the officers.
- Facilitates a fair and clear evaluation of performance of the organization.

## COMPONENTS

A goal is a precise statement of a desired state of affairs that includes the following:

- It is realistic, attainable, feasible, yet provides challenge and growth.
- It has a target date for completion.
- It has measurable results.
- It is clear, specific, and understandable.
- It is meaningful and relevant.
- It is beneficial.
- It is flexible and has more than one method of attainment.

An organizational goal is identical to an individual goal except that it has these additional components:

- It should be created by all members.
- It should be understandable and acceptable to all members.
- It should be beneficial to all members.

## PROCESS

The process of setting goals is similar to a problem-solving process. To simplify matters, yet ensure a goal that includes all necessary components, you can set a goal by answering the 5 W's and an H.

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|--------|---|
| Who?   | Delegate responsibilities equally to all members.   |
| What?  | Generate the possibilities and narrow down the alternatives to the ones you intend to pursue. |
| Why?   | Clarify the needs and purposes that are the basis of your goals.                              |
| When?  | Identify when planning work sessions and the actual event will take place.                    |
| Where? | Determine locations of events.  |
| How?   | Decide how you will implement the selected alternatives.                                      |

## PLANNING

Planning is the process of laying out a course of action to achieve a goal. Planning is commonly thought of as little more than tasks, responsibilities, and costs set out on a time schedule, as a list of who is going to do what, when and at what cost. This is a very important step in goal setting.

Thorough planning takes several steps:

1. **GOAL** - What is the overall end result you wish to achieve by executing this plan? Your goal should include target dates for beginning and completion.
2. **OBJECTIVES WITHIN PLAN** - Each objective should state a result desired. Distinguish between long-range and short-range objectives.
3. **ASSUMPTIONS** - What are the factors that may affect your plan as it unfolds? What is the degree of probability that they will?
4. **RESOURCES** - What do you need to carry out your plan? Resources include money, people, machines, materials, time, capabilities, experience, energy, etc. Include anyone or anything that is available to you and usable. Make an inventory of all resources.
5. **CONSTRAINTS** - What are the limitations within which you have to achieve your goal? Constraints may be limitations on your resources or outside considerations.
6. **ACTION STEPS/TASKS** - What activities need to be undertaken to achieve the goal of your plan? How long will they take? Who will do them? What resources do you need for each task?
7. **SCHEDULE** - Which tasks need to be done in sequence? Which can be done parallel? Have you allowed enough time? Are your deadlines realistic?
8. **IMPLEMENTATION** - Do it!
9. **EVALUATION** - What are your milestones? What cross checks do you need to ensure that tasks will be done properly?
10. **RECYCLING THE PLANNING PROCESS** - Is there further planning needed to reach your next goal? Is there more planning needed for a particular difficult or complicated step of your plan?

## EXAMPLE OF AN ACTION PLAN

- **GOAL:** To improve membership recruitment, retention and involvement.
- **OBJECTIVE:** To develop a committee whose purpose is to increase member involvement to at least 40% by next term.
- **HOW:** Brainstorm ideas to increase member involvement. Go over this list and weed out all those ideas that are impractical or impossible to do. Discuss this edited list with the executive board. Determine which will be done and delegate the final process of setting up this system to one or two executive officers.
- **RESOURCES:** Members, executive officers, SOAR professional staff members, and Ready Reference Handouts.
- **DEADLINES:** Who: Executive board
  - When: By next term (try to set a specific date if possible).
- **RESULTS:** Acceptable - membership involvement increases by 40-70 %.
  - Unacceptable - membership involvement increases by less than 40%.
  - Better than expected - membership involvement increases by more than 70%.

## GOAL-SETTING TIPS

1. Goals and objectives are a roadmap to your future.
2. You need a map to know where you're going and whether you have arrived at your destination.
3. Make a list of activities to accomplish your goals and then schedule your time! (TO DO LIST.)
4. Planning is essential and must be done every day.
5. TO DO LIST helps you reach your goals.
6. Goals change with time and age.
7. Follow your TO DO LIST and don't PROCRASTINATE!

*Part of this information was taken from "Resources for Leadership and Organizational Development,"  
Student Organization Development Center, The University of Michigan.*