

## COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENT GOALS



### PLAN OF ACTION

This section in the *Effective Communication* program gives you an opportunity to keep an ongoing list of the goals you set for improving your communication results. Use the **Master List of Communication Improvement Goals** during the entire course of the program to track your progress and see all your goals at a glance. A supply of blank **Goal Planning Sheets** is placed behind the **Master List of Communication Improvement Goals** for your convenience.

#### MASTER LIST OF COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENT GOALS

Consider the following thought stimulators listed below as you identify your communication goals. Some of these may not relate to your situation; other highly relevant goals may not be listed here. Review your responses to the **Self-Evaluation Questionnaire** and the communication goals you identified on the **Communication Priorities** form. Consider all of these as you develop your **Master List of Communication Improvement Goals**. As you identify your own goals, estimate the amount of money your company will make/save when each goal is accomplished. Add to this list and revise it as you work through your *Effective Communication* program. Here is a list of ideas for setting communication goals:

1. More effective communication of strategic vision, mission, and goals
2. Heightened team enthusiasm for business mission
3. Improved performance toward goals
4. Increase in net profit
5. More favorable negotiations
6. More productive meetings
7. Faster response to customer problems and/or requests
8. Increased team cooperation

9. Smooth information flow between and within departments
10. Reduction in number of interpersonal conflicts

## GOAL PLANNING SHEETS

Review the goals you have listed on your **Master List of Communication Improvement Goals** and prioritize them. Transfer each of your highest payoff communication goals to a **Goal Planning Sheet**. The **Goal Planning Sheet** is designed to facilitate changes that will make the most significant impact on your success — professional and personal. Review the following information to use the **Goal Planning Sheet** for best results.

The form titled **Goal Planning Sheet** is designed to facilitate planning that produces results — successful results. Continue to use this process on a lifelong basis for meaningful and satisfying personal and professional development. It is the process — not the form itself — that is vital to your progress.

### Area

Enter the area of life affected by this goal. Some goals affect more than one area of life. For example, a goal to buy a new home is important to your family life, but it also involves financial goals.

### Today's Date

Enter the date when you first begin to fill out the form.

### Goal

State here, in as few words as possible, the exact goal you wish to reach. Remember to state the goal in a form that is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and tangible. Then you will be able to devise specific action steps. Consider these guidelines as you write your S.M.A.R.T. goals:

- **S** stands for SPECIFIC. A goal is specific when it is clearly defined. A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal, ask yourself:
  - WHO: Who is involved?
  - WHAT: What do I want to accomplish?
  - WHERE: Identify a location.
  - WHEN: Establish a time frame.
  - WHICH: Identify requirements and constraints.
  - WHY: Specify reasons, purpose, or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

GENERAL GOALS	SPECIFIC GOALS
“Get organized.”	“Schedule _____ minutes daily for uninterrupted planning and goal setting.”
“Get in shape.”	“Join a health club and work out 3 times a week.”
“Earn more money.”	“Seek a _____ percent raise by _____ (date) through obtaining new responsibilities”
“Have a quality family life.”	“Spend increased time of 30 minutes a week just to listen and talk with _____ (spouse, child, other family member).”
“Learn more about music.”	“Purchase season tickets to attend all the symphony concerts this year.”
“Improve my health.”	“Maintain my ideal weight of _____ and lower my cholesterol to under 200 by _____ (date).”
“Establish a deeper spiritual/ethical identity for myself.”	“Schedule a monthly lunch appointment with a positive role model or mentor.”
“Increase business knowledge.”	“Read one bestselling business book this month that applies to a project/process I am currently working on.”

- **M** stands for MEASURABLE. A goal is measurable when it can be quantified. Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to reach your goal.

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as ...

How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

- **A** stands for **ATTAINABLE**. A goal is attainable when it is humanly possible to accomplish. When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

You can attain most any goal you set — when you plan your steps wisely and establish a time frame that allows you to carry out those steps. Goals that may have seemed far away and out of reach eventually move closer and become attainable — not because your goals shrink, but because you grow and expand to match them. When you list your goals, you build your self-image. You see yourself as worthy of these goals and develop the traits and personality that allow you to possess them.

- **R** stands for **REALISTIC**. A goal is realistic when it represents an objective toward which you are both *willing* and *able* to work. A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be. But be sure that every goal represents substantial progress. A high goal is frequently easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seemed easy simply because they were a labor of love.

A goal is realistic when you truly *believe* that it can be accomplished with the time and resources available to you. Additional ways to know if your goal is realistic is to determine if you have accomplished anything similar in the past.

- **T** stands for **TANGIBLE**. A goal is tangible when you can experience it with one of the senses — that is, taste, touch, smell, sight, or sound. When your goal is tangible, or when you tie an intangible goal to a tangible goal, you have a better chance of making it specific and measurable and thus attainable.

Intangible goals are your goals for the internal changes required to reach more tangible goals. They are the personality characteristics and the behavior patterns you must develop to pave the way to success in your career or for reaching some other long-term goal. Since intangible goals are vital for improving your effectiveness, give close attention to *tangible* ways of measuring them. Ask yourself this question, “What *evidence* of accomplishment will there be when I reach this goal?”

## **Benefits to Be Gained and/or Losses to Be Avoided**

List here all the benefits you will gain or losses you will avoid when the goal is achieved. Include concrete benefits such as improved income or items you will possess. List losses to be avoided like loss of market share, obsolescence of your company's product or service, or reduction of current income.

Also include *intangible* benefits to be gained and losses to be avoided. Examples of intangible benefits include the enjoyment of greater respect from your colleagues or family, a sense of accomplishment, or improved relationships with family and co-workers. Intangible losses could include negative stress, weakened health, or loss of personal respect.

Identifying both benefits to be gained and losses to be avoided is important because these are the two driving factors in human motivation. While benefits are probably the most long-term motivators, in the short term, people often act more quickly and decisively to avoid losses.

## **Possible Obstacles/Possible Solutions**

When you know what to expect, you can plan realistically for overcoming (or working around) an obstacle. Consider likely obstacles and formulate possible solutions or actions for overcoming them. Add these strategies to your **Specific Action Steps for Achieving This Goal** on the **Goal Planning Sheet**.

Evaluating current obstacles also increases your awareness of the constraints within which it is appropriate to function. To choose the most effective course of action, you need to consider constraints like budget, preferences of other team members, and market conditions. Deciding how to handle these constraints logically and effectively should affect the action steps you choose.

## **Specific Action Steps for Achieving This Goal**

List the exact daily actions you must take to bring your goals into reality. Many goals depend upon completion of a series of action steps that must be taken in consecutive order — one after another. After listing the steps, indicate the order they are to be taken. Some of these steps might even be broken down into a number of smaller, more detailed action steps. Set a target date for each action. When you study each action step, record the date in the **Date**

**Reviewed** column. As you take action, enter the date you completed it in the **Date Completed** column. This gives you a clearly visible check on your progress.

### **Final Target Date**

After you have completed your list of **Specific Action Steps for Achieving This Goal**, you can predict how long it will take to do the entire job. Go back to the top of the form and enter the **Final Target Date** into the space provided.

### **Who Needs to Know About This Goal?**

Identify the individual(s) who can help support your commitment to this goal.

### **Method of Tracking Progress**

Identify a tangible way to evaluate or measure your progress. This provides you a sense of accomplishment that motivates you even more.

### **Does This Goal Support My Values?**

The goal you identify must be personally meaningful to you and be consistent with your values. When these two conditions are met, you enjoy a sense of purpose and a high level of motivation to work toward the goal. In addition, you enjoy a deep sense of accomplishment upon reaching the goal.

### **Is It Worth the Time, Effort, and Money to Reach This Goal?**

Now that you know what will be required in time, effort, and money to reach your goal, ask yourself an important question: **Is it worth the time, effort, and money required to reach this goal?** If your answer is “Yes,” go to work and enjoy the benefits of achievement. If your answer is “No,” you can discard the goal without feeling a nagging doubt about what you “should have done.” You know that the goal does not fit either your values, needs, desires, or current priorities. It is your right and privilege to discard it. Sometimes your answer to this important question is “Yes, but later.” Some other goal may be more urgent at this time, so this goal can wait until some later date. Keep each **Goal Planning Sheet** and reactivate it at an appropriate time.

### **Affirmations to Support This Goal**

When you decide to pursue a goal, write some special affirmations to support your decision and help you take action with enthusiasm! Make your affirmations positive. Express them in the first person and in the present tense to give them the impact of your commitment.

Read or repeat them several times a day to encourage yourself in using the attitudes they describe. Reading or repeating affirmations raises your confidence in your ability to lead and succeed.

### **Visualization**

To strengthen your commitment and belief in your ability to achieve your goal, use the last section of the **Goal Planning Sheet** to decide how you will incorporate **Visualization** into the pursuit of your goal. Decide on the visualization items you will use and how you will use them. You may also find it helpful to use the full-sized **Visualization** form provided in your Plan of Action. Remember, seeing is believing!

### **Date Achieved**

When you have accomplished your goal, record the date in the space **Date Achieved**. Celebrate your success and enjoy the benefits that are yours for setting a goal and working until you reach it.

As you seek continuous professional and personal improvement, it is vital for you to set specific communication goals. Setting specific goals improves your communication abilities; you see results almost immediately. Remember . . .

*To reach any destination, you need to know where you are going so you can plan the best way to get there.*