

## Setting Career Goals

Part of successful career management involves setting goals, which can include short term and long term goals. Your goal could be getting into a particular occupation, achieving a new rung on the career ladder, or earning at a higher level.

Generally, long term goals can take about three to five years to achieve, while short term goals are reachable in one to three years. Short term goals are often a stop along the way to our long term goals.

### What is your Plan for the Future?

It can be fairly straightforward to say that in five years you want to be a Director at an International Company. Or that in two years' time you want to be earning 20% more in salary.

However achieving these goals without a plan may not be as easy.

Be focused and realistic in your approach. Use the SMART approach to career goal setting.

**S** = Specific  
**M** = Measurable  
**A** = Attainable  
**R** = Realistic  
**T** = Timely

### Specific

Goals should be straightforward and emphasize what you want to happen. Specifics help us to **focus our efforts** and **clearly define what we are going to do**.

*WHAT* are you going to do? Use action words such as direct, organize, coordinate, lead, develop, plan, build etc.

Ensure the goals you set are very **specific and clear**. For example, instead of setting a goal to increase employability, set a specific goal to obtain an informational interview with a key executive at HSBC.

### Measurable

**If you can't measure it, you can't manage it.** Build several short-term or small measurements into the goal.

**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 feel satisfaction on reaching your target.



### Attainable

Don't set goals which are too far out of your reach because you probably won't really commit to doing them.

### Realistic

This is not a synonym for "easy." Realistic, in this case, means "do-able." It means that the learning curve is not a vertical slope; that you have the skills needed to do the job or that the skills are attainable.

### Timely

Set a timeframe for the goal: for next week, in three months, in six months. Putting an end point on your goal gives you a **clear target** to work towards. If you don't set a time, the commitment is too vague. It tends not to happen because you feel you can start at any time. Without a time limit, there's no urgency to start taking action now.

**Time must be measurable, attainable and realistic.**

Work with the **Goals Sheet** and state the outcomes you want to create.

### **For Example:**

- **Focus** – Brand Manager in Telecommunications
- **Desired Outcome** – Increase business connections within this area and identify the top players in telecommunications industry in BC and Alberta.
- **Time Frame** – by March 31st
- **Gaps to Achievement** – New to Canada and unfamiliar with the telecommunications industry in Canada
- **Specific Actions to Take** –
  1. Research the telecommunications industry in Canada by learning and using various tools and your library
  2. Generate initial target list of 20 companies
  3. Outreach to existing personal and business network to identify informational interview referrals to people working within these organizations
  4. Approach referrals by email, phone or letter requesting meeting
  5. Prepare list of 8-10 informational interview questions

Focus is the name of the game when it comes to moving your career forward and getting the job you want. You can always go back to your list of jobs and careers as you move forward, but being strategic first requires focus.

